

## Urban Policy Working Group (UPWG)

### Minutes of Meeting

<b>Meeting organizers</b>	UN-Habitat
<b>Meeting attendees</b>	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), KfW, World Bank, Live Love Lebanon (LLL), Public Works Studio (PWS), independent urban planner & architect, American University of Beirut Nature Conservation Center (AUB-NCC) in their capacity as part of the <a href="#">3RF Consultative Group</a> , AUB-Beirut Urban Lab, UNOPS, UNRCO / 3RF Secretariat
<b>Unable to attend</b>	Beirut Governorate, Beirut Municipality, Municipality of Bourj Hammoud, Public Corporation for Housing, UN ESCWA, Nahnoo, Beit El Baraka, EU, EBRD, Lebanon Reforestation Initiative, Order of Engineers and Architects, UNICEF, UNESCO
<b>Location</b>	Hybrid: UN ESCWA and online
<b>Date</b>	22 February 2024
<b>Duration</b>	1.5 hours
<b>Meeting nr.</b>	5
<b>Agenda</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Presentation on revision of draft position paper – UN-Habitat</li> <li>2) Update on Beirut Urban Recovery and Development Strategy – World Bank</li> <li>3) Discussion on way forward for the position paper – Group</li> <li>4) AOB</li> </ol>
<b>Link to previous minutes</b>	<a href="https://www.lebanon3rf.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/Urban-Policy-WG-MoM-and-Presentation-29Sep2023-final.pdf">https://www.lebanon3rf.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/Urban-Policy-WG-MoM-and-Presentation-29Sep2023-final.pdf</a>

Minutes of meeting	
<b>1) Presentation on revision of draft position paper – UN-Habitat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Please see annexed the presentation.</i></li> </ul>
<b>2) Update on Beirut Urban Recovery and Development Strategy – World Bank</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objective of the consultancy remains the same as outlined during the previous UPWG meeting. The scope will encompass a rapid diagnostic, building on existing data, such as the UN-Habitat (2021) <a href="#">Beirut City Profile</a>. Based on the diagnostic, an urban development and recovery vision with strategic objectives will be proposed and a detailed action plan will be fleshed out. The ToR still includes supporting a Planning and Coordination Unit at the Beirut Governorate.</li> <li>• Procurement timeline: six shortlisted firms were invited to submit more detailed proposals by early March 2024 with the aim to start the contract in April 2024 for a period of 11 months, culminating in a strategy document in early 2025.</li> <li>• The Governor of Beirut has been briefed, and the deliverables of the consultancy will be validated with him at different intervals.</li> <li>• Synergies with the UPWG's position paper: while the reform priorities across urban sectors outlined in the paper are at the national level, some recommended related actions could be taken up and tested at the Greater Beirut level through pilot initiatives. So, the timing of this paper is good for exploring alignment with the Beirut Urban Recovery and Development Strategy upcoming work.</li> </ul>



### 3) Discussion on way forward for the position paper – Group

- **3RF Secretariat:** We want the position paper to serve a purpose. This could include using it as a means of gathering resources or as an advocacy tool to be shared with various stakeholders. During our last meeting it was suggested that we involve Members of Parliament (MPs) and relevant Parliamentary Committees. There is also potential to present it to the 3RF Principals (including RC, the WB Regional Director and the EU Ambassador), as well as to a donor group related to the 3RF. It would also be valuable to gather feedback from the group on our next steps.
  
- **UN-Habitat:**
  - Our first priority is to finalize the paper and secure the endorsement of the WG at their earliest convenience.
  - We need to discuss how we will proceed with the dissemination of the paper. We have discussed the option of translating it into Arabic.
  - As mentioned during our last meeting, we should identify relevant policymakers, MPs and Parliamentary Committees to present the paper to, possibly categorized by themes and sectors.
  - We have drafted a concept note related to organizing a consultative meeting on the “Old Rent Law,” which is one of the action points under the reform priority 1 identified in the position paper related to developing and endorsing a national housing strategy.
  - Also, we will be seeking out synergies with the World Bank-led Beirut Urban Recovery and Development Strategy.
  - We would like to now gather feedback from the other UPWG members about these suggestions and others they might have about the way forward.
  
- **MoIM:** Endorsement of the paper is not an end in itself. In order for the paper to be endorsed, supported, and for it to be a useful tool, it needs to be discussed at the political level with MPs and relevant government entities that are not present in today’s meeting. It needs to be taken to a higher level: the Central Management Unit (CMU) must be involved in taking it to the Prime Minister’s Office and convening relevant government representatives to discuss the content of the paper. The fact that some entities did not provide feedback on the paper does not mean they endorse it – they have to be actively involved.
  - **Action point 1:** UPWG (co-)leads will reach out bilaterally to the members of the WG who were not present at today’s meeting to validate that they have no objection to the content of the paper.
  - **Action point 2:** UPWG (co-)leads will reach out to CMU and offer to present the paper to any group of government representatives that the CMU deems relevant to convene for this purpose.
  - **Action point 3:** Members of the UPWG will suggest to the WG (co-)leads relevant MPs and/or Parliamentary Committees to reach out to for presenting the paper.
  - **Action point 4:** 3RF Secretariat will also discuss with the 3RF Technical Team, which stakeholders (e.g. donors) to present the paper to.
  
- **AUB-NCC:** Thank you UN-Habitat for drafting the paper and incorporating as much as possible the feedback received. The nature of urban planning means that there will always be things we disagree with due to our different disciplinary backgrounds and related priorities. We agree



with the MoIM's feedback. It would help to add an explicit section on limitations/caveats in the paper, focusing primarily on scope, resource and research limitations. The paper should be a tool for further dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders, including school children, citizens, universities, MPs, etc. with the aim to spark a change of culture regarding how we see our cities. You can challenge specialized organizations to build on the document and develop more comprehensive papers on the specific themes. As such, the paper can be a living document, updated periodically with results and indicators.

- **UN-Habitat:** Unfortunately, we currently lack the resources for consultations with such a wide spectrum of stakeholders, especially citizens, even though it would be very important to do this in the future.
  - **Action point 5:** UN-Habitat will highlight the limitations of the paper in a separate section, taking the points already mentioned in the Methodology section, and adding a few points regarding the scope and lack of resources as well. And in general, UN-Habitat will finalize the revised version, including adding some feedback that is expected from the World Bank and making final formatting/editing changes).
- **World Bank:** There are two layers to consider: 1. the content of the paper (the World Bank is still compiling some feedback and will share this with UN-Habitat soon, as mentioned above); 2. the process to follow going forward. If we say the document represents the UPWG's position, we need everybody's explicit endorsement. But if we say the paper will be used to generate technical debate and will be a living document that does not represent every single stakeholder's position, then we might want to call it a "policy brief."
  - **Action point 6:** UN-Habitat will rename the document to be a "Policy Brief" instead of a "Position Paper."
- **LLL:** Community engagement is important to build trust and create a culture of participatory urban planning and development in Lebanon. It is also important to address the issue of the electoral law that does not allow residents of cities to make their voice be heard because they are registered elsewhere.
- **Independent urban planner & architect:** It is important to finalize the paper, get all members of the WG to endorse it, and get support from higher-level stakeholders. But what is equally important is to define a few pilot projects from the paper, which can be really transformative. Perhaps two-three sub-groups can discuss the themes in more detail and see how to find financing for such pilot initiatives.
  - **Action point 7:** Following the presentation of the paper to different stakeholders (see action points 2–4 above), there may be a need to convene further sub-thematic meetings on specific priorities to find ways of making progress on some of the recommended policy actions outlined in the paper.
  - **Action point 8:** UN-Habitat will convene a meeting on the "Old Rent Law," which pertains to priority one (National Housing Strategy), as they have already developed a concept note for this.

#### 4) AOB

- **3RF Secretariat:** Each 3RF WG has been asked to submit a list of three reform priorities in their sector to support the 3RF communications team in developing advocacy messages and



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communication products. We will be using the three priorities outlined in the paper as the basis for this, unless any of the WG members objects (no objections raised).

- **Action point 9:** UPWG (co-)leads to submit reform priorities related key messages to the 3RF communications experts as per the above.

**Documents shared**

UN-Habitat PowerPoint presentation from the meeting.



**REFORM  
RECOVERY  
RECONSTRUCTION**  
FRAMEWORK

# 3RF Urban Policy Working Group (WG)

## Meeting 5



22 February 2024

# Meeting agenda

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- Presentation on revision of draft position paper – UN-Habitat
- Update on Beirut Urban Recovery and Development Strategy – World Bank
- Discussion on way forward for the position paper – Group
- AOB



**UN-HABITAT**

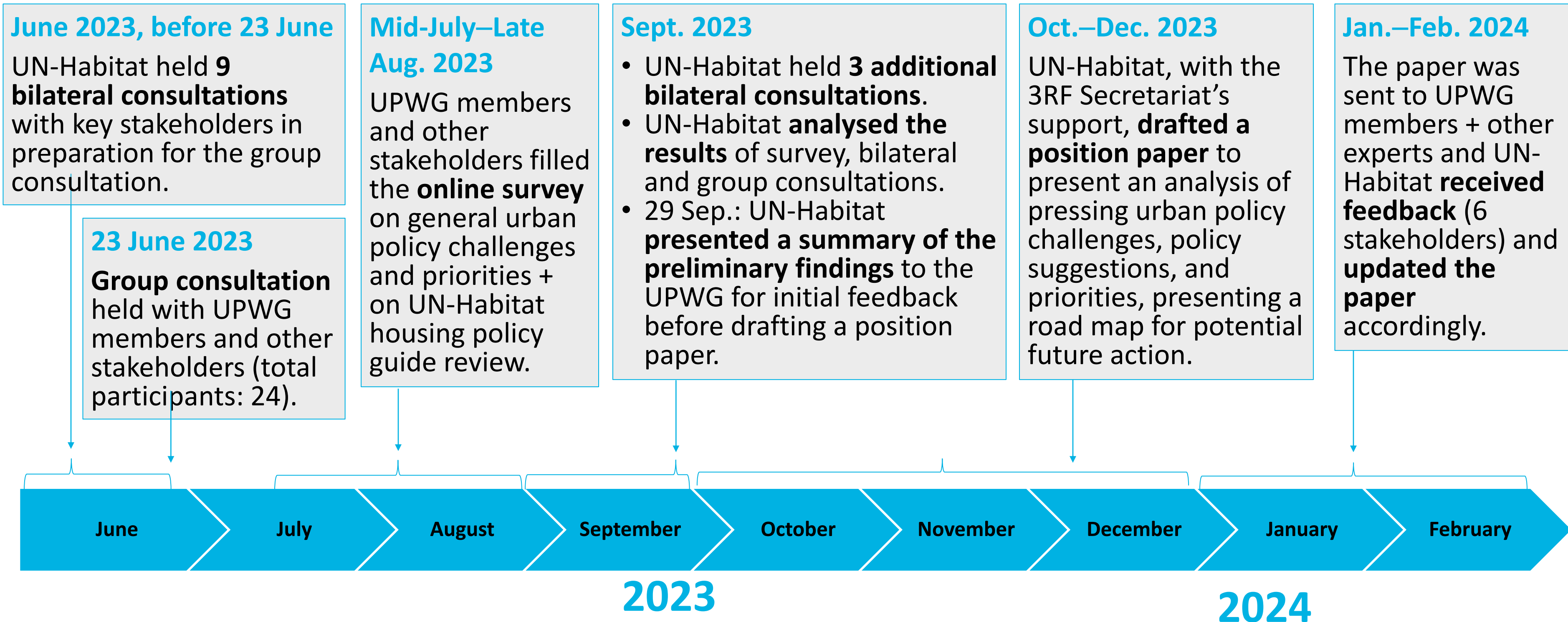
**3RF Urban Policy Working Group (WG)**



# **Identification of Urban Policy Challenges and Priorities in Lebanon**

**Position paper revision presentation**

# Position paper development timeline





# Addressing feedback – Main points

Comment	Action by UN-Habitat
Insufficient information on the type/background of the consulted stakeholders and respondents of the survey.	Expanded the Methodology section, including adding a table of the stakeholders consulted/survey participants (Figure 1) and the list of entities that are members of the UPWG (Annex 1).
Lack of clear transitions and linkages between the paper's sections (e.g. between data collected and analysis).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Methodology was expanded to explain how data collection and analysis were conducted and are related to each other, and what each section of the paper contains.</li> <li>Note: The consultations, especially bilateral ones, were not structured in a specific manner; the discussions were more organic and consulted stakeholders were not asked to link challenges to specific policy recommendations. However, the gathered information was consolidated and structured as much as possible into subsections for ease of presentation.</li> </ul>
Absence of an overarching vision for the paper/reform process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This was covered in the newly drafted Introduction section.</li> <li>(It was previously also done by linking the different policy recommendations to the four city objectives identified in the globally endorsed Urban Monitoring Framework: safe and peaceful, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of description of the social, economic and environmental consequences of the challenges identified.</li> <li>Need to add a better linkage with Lebanon-level challenges and sectors, such as the economy.</li> </ul>	These points were briefly added in the new Introduction section. However, a clear causal linkage between each challenge and its impact(s) was hard to make, given the interconnected and complex nature of urban settings. Plus, it would have made the challenges section quite lengthy if we were to add the impact(s) of each challenge separately.

## Addressing feedback – Main points *(continued)*

Comment	Action by UN-Habitat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weak urban environment and climate change challenges section</li><li>• Missing urban environment and climate change policy reform suggestions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expanded the urban environment and climate change challenges (subsection 4.6).</li><li>• Added a diagram (subsection 5.6) about related policy reform suggestions.</li></ul>
Lack of clarity about how/why three reform priorities were identified and consolidated (Section 6).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the introductory part of Section 6, it was explained that "Some policy recommendations were combined, considering the multisectoral and integrated approach to urban development planning."</li><li>• Note: It was decided to combine some of the recommendations because we had to bring the number of priorities down to three; this was also logical, given that several suggestions from different sectors are inter-related and mutually influential.</li></ul>

## Newly added Introduction – What does it cover?

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1. What's the context in Lebanon? Why is reform needed? Why now?
2. Objective of the position paper – What does it aim to do and not do?
3. Who is the paper aimed for? To help them do what? – Target audiences.
4. What/Which framework(s) is the paper in line with?
5. Why is urban policy reform relevant to and significant for Lebanon? And what does it aim to achieve? (What could be the consequences of a lack of such reform?)
6. In general, what is the vision within which the paper identifies urban policy priorities? What kind of cities/urban development do we want in Lebanon? >> Linkages with the global UMF "city objectives".

## Way forward – Group discussion

### Urban policy priority 1:

Develop and endorse a national housing strategy.

### Urban policy priority 2:

Prioritize the enhancement of urban mobility and public spaces, through sustainable city-level strategies, while concurrently working to strengthen legal frameworks and regulations to protect public properties against privatization and ensure their proper management and utilization.

### Urban policy priority 3:

Create local development planning units within municipalities or unions of municipalities in main cities.

## Next steps – Some ideas



- Endorse the position paper by the UPWG.
- Disseminate the paper >> How? To whom? (Possibility of translating the paper to Arabic?)
- Identify relevant policymakers/Members of Parliament to present the position paper to (based on theme/sector).
- Conduct thematic consultative meetings with interested UPWG members + other relevant individual experts? A starting point could be the Old Rent Law?
- Synergies with the World Bank-led Urban Recovery and Development Strategy?