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(C.P.S.P.S.)

**Preparatory Assistance
National Programme for Improving the Living
Conditions of the Poor in Lebanon (Leb/98/004)**

END OF PROJECT REPORT
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A. INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background

The Mapping of Living Conditions in Lebanon is the first output of the Poverty Strategy Initiative of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) supported by the UNDP Lebanon Country Office, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) and technical assistance from FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science (Norway). The Mapping of Living Conditions, which shall be addressed as the Poverty Mapping in this report, was approved by the Council of Minister and publicly launched on 17 October 1998.

Realizing the need to strengthen national capacity and develop a national framework for poverty alleviation, UNDP assisted the Ministry of Social Affairs in formulating a Preparatory Assistance Project (PA) aiming to develop a National Programme for Improving the Living Conditions of the Poor in Lebanon. The Ministry of Social Affairs, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and UNDP signed the PA document in October 1998.

It is important to note that the launching of the project coincided with a change in the Government and the appointment of a new Minister to MoSA. The new Minister of Social Affairs, after initial briefings, embraced the project and its potential to contribute to national efforts for improving living conditions of the poor. The Commitment of the Ministry of Social Affairs was, furthermore, demonstrated as it organized for a coordination committee of UN supported projects and the concerned departments of MoSA to ensure sustainability, enhance ownership among Ministry staff and maintain consistent and efficient use of resources.

It is worth mentioning that the objectives of the project are aligned with the agenda of the new Government which considers social development and poverty alleviation a national priority as declared by the new President of the Republic and the new Prime Minister in their inauguration speeches.

A.2 Outputs

The activities of the project and the progress attained until April 2002, reinforce and confirm the achievement of the following outputs:

- The technical design and institutional arrangements for the implementation of a Multi-Purpose Poverty Survey and a Social Outlook for Lebanon. The objective of these studies is to support the government identify an income poverty line (Note should be made that the Unsatisfied Basic Needs threshold was depicted in the Poverty Mapping). **(Objective 1, Output 1.1)**
- A Programme to Support Regional Development Development in Akkar – North Lebanon. **(Objective 1, Output 1.2)**
- MoSA central staff's capacity strengthened to integrate project activities into the Ministry's programme. This is being done through the development of a coordination mechanism for UN supported projects and Director of MoSA departments. **(Objective 2, Output 2.1)**
- MoSA Social Development Centers staff, in the regions, strengthened to assess the needs of their communities, formulate development projects and coordinate with community

groups and NGOs. This is being developed through focused training, which has so far benefited 150 staff members across the country. (Objective 2, Output 2.2)

- Implementation of micro-projects for poverty alleviation in Aakar, one of the poorest areas of Lebanon, according to the findings of the Poverty Mapping. These projects aim to promote income generation and job creation; economic empowerment of women and promoting gender mainstreaming, strengthening local government services; and strengthening civil society organizations, coordinating with NGOs. (Objective 2, Output 2.3)
- Additional resources mobilized for the implementation of the activities and programmes that would result from the preparatory assistance project. (Objective 4, Output 4.1 and 4.2)

A.3 Project Resources

The financial resources of the project consisted of Government/MoSA cost-sharing in the amount of \$285,000, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo, Norway in the amount of \$524,000, and UNDP-\$200,000. In addition, The Fares Foundation has made a contribution of \$15,540 (covering printing cost of the seven North Booklets of Kadas).

A.4 Project Staffing

The project's operations began in October 1999. The Director-General of MoSA, Ms. Nimat Kanaan acts as the National Project Coordinator (NPC). The core staff consisted of 5 professionals including the Project Manager, Mr. Adib Nehmeh, a Project Assistant, a Field Coordinator, a Capacity Building Officer and a Field Officer. By mid 2000 the project staff was reduced to three, as both the Field Coordinator and Field Officer quit the project for another job opportunities. Three National UN Volunteers were recruited in May 1999 to assist locally with the implementation of the micro-projects in the North. Their duties were fully completed by June 2000.

A.5 Financial Statement

Enclosed is the last budget revision that UNDP has undertaken on the PA Project Leb/98/004. According to this statement the project has spend a total amount of 832,285.00 USD between October 1999 and end of April 2002, a balance of 134,000.00 USD will be transferred to the second phase of the Project (Leb/02/002).

A.6 Resources Mobilization Efforts

The project is also playing a catalytic role in identifying *potential sources of additional funding* needed to ensure the full implementation of the objectives and the outputs stipulated in this initial phase of preparatory assistance (**objective 4, output 4.2**).

It is very important to note that efforts are on-going to submit proposals for the needed funds. Proposals for the implementation of the Multi-Purpose Poverty Survey were submitted to all of the Central Administration of Statistics, the World Bank, the European Union, and the Governments of both Italy and Norway. CAS has contributed with a total amount of 532,000 USD covering the total cost for completing the field work of the survey (which should be used during the second phase of the Project)..

B. ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

The section describes the activities that have been developed and implemented to date. The achievements are divided into three main headings: Activities that contribute to capacity building of MoSA; the progress made towards the implementation of the poverty surveys and studies; and micro-projects for community development / poverty alleviation in the region of Akkar-North Lebanon.

B.1 Capacity Building of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Improved Coordination of MoSA Programmes

(Objective 2, output 2.1 and 2.2; objective 3, output 3.1)

I- Training

1. Training on the concept of Sustainable Human Development and the role of the Social Development Centers in promoting local development.

The training session extended for 3 days (13-15 April 1999) and targeted 40 staff members from different Development Centers in addition to around 15 staff members from other UN/MOSA projects and from other MOSA departments.

2. Training of MoSA Social Development Centers Staff on Identification of the local community, its needs and proposing community development project accordingly.

The training programme benefited around 150 MoSA and Social Development Centers staff from 45 Social Development Centers across the country and was implemented in the different regions (to facilitate attendance of staff in remote areas):

Region	Date	Number of Beneficiaries
Tripoli - North Lebanon	21-23 June, and 12-14 July	14 Centers and 34 Members
Nabatiyeh - South Lebanon	28-30 June, and 15-17 July	19 Centers and 44 Members
Zahleh - Beqaa	5-7 July, and 19-21 July	12 Centers and 32 Members

The training programme was designed to introduce the trainees to a number of techniques related to development work and then training on how to use such techniques. This was done in two phases whereby each phase contained a theoretical component followed by a practical activity to execute what was learnt. The practical training resulted in the preparation of **44** village monography (phase 1) and **33** project proposals (phase 2). Topics of proposals included rehabilitation and / or establishment of social institutions for the youth, solid waste treatment projects, establishment of agricultural centers, cooperatives, etc; reproductive health programmes; irrigation projects, etc. All proposals were submitted for review by the project team and the respective committee to provide comments and assistance for follow-up to study feasibility of implementation with in cooperation with other agencies / institutions.

3. Third Phase of Training- Practical Training of Phase Two

As a result of the above training activities, a selection of 5 groups of SDSC staff members (6 members from each Mohafaza - a total of 30 participants) who showed excellent potential

and desire for learning and development work, were nominated for an extensive and practical follow up training. The third phase training programme included an intensive practical training on conducting feasibility studies, need assessment, proposal writing. In addition it prepared the group to follow up on the practical implementation of the local-community-development projects in the field as well provide consultation and technical assistance to other members in other SD centers. As a result five project proposals were produced based on an intensive and thorough need assessment of the local communities. At present efforts are put to mobilize resources for the implementation of the five projects proposed. Preliminary discussions were made with Procter and Gamble (YES detergent) who showed a great deal of interest yet they decided that the topics of the proposals do not fall within PG priorities.

II - Mainstreaming the Results of the Poverty Mapping ✓

More than 50 presentations and lectures were made by the Project Manager on the findings of the Poverty Mapping, on the subject of poverty, and other developmental issues through the press, TV, radio, conferences, workshops and fora with NGOs and development stakeholders, and the UN system agencies inside and outside the country.

III - Building Information Capacity of MoSA

The project solicited a consultancy for developing a proposal for building information capacity of the MoSA. The consultancy resulted in two proposals:

1. For a Social Website for MoSA
2. For an information management system and network (and relevant applications - (beneficiaries, programmes, activities, help desk, etc..) in the Ministry's Headquarters and 10 Social Development Centers across the country (including 5 centers to assist the Disabled and 5 Regional centers providing a variety of welfare services).

The proposals yielded positive results to the Ministry, as a result a joint project was signed between OMSAR and MoSA to build the information capacity and automate the Handicapped Rights Project at the Ministry.

IV - Producing 26 monographs on the Kadas of Lebanon

copy available

The production of 26 booklets on the 26 Kadas of Lebanon, in cooperation with the Institute for Social Sciences (Lebanese University) falls within the framework of building the capacity of the MOSA Social Development Centers. The booklets (70-80 pages each) briefly list the main socio-economic indicators of each kada, describe the main characteristics (geographic, economic, etc) with a short analysis on the characteristics of the population, their living conditions, the community and any special issues worth mentioning. The objective of these booklets is to update, unify and elaborate on all data collected up till present for each kada so that the SDSCs can adopt this data to develop and promote their programmes and services in the regions. In addition, the booklets shall provide a mechanism for regular (yearly) data updating.

All 26 Booklets have been finalized including one National Booklet for all Lebanon. Efforts were put to secure funds from the private sector for final editing, design and printing. Booklets of the North received full funds needed from the Issam Fares Foundation. Several other potential donors representing different regions were contacted for potential funding however with no positive feedback. Launching of Booklets shall take place on April 3, whereby a number of

booklets (or sets of booklets) will be distributed to concerned parties (government institutions, UN and other International agencies, research centers, etc.). The remaining number of Booklets will be subject for selling at reasonable encouraging prices (income of selling will fund the advocacy workshops). In addition, the second phase of the project should witness streamlining these booklets in the regions and among the civil society. Mini-workshops will be organized in a number of kadas to advocate for the booklets as a source of data and helping tool for setting up intervention plans in the regions.

V - Ensuring a participatory mechanism for the management of the project

The project has been instrumental in formulating a number of relevant committees to ensure broad-based participation among those concerned in MoSA, official institutions, civil society and national experts. The aim of the committees is to integrate the project's activities into the concerned departments of MoSA and hence promote participation and empowerment of MOSA staff to insure sustainability. The respective committees are:

1. A Technical Committee

Composed of the National Project Coordinator, the Project Manager, representatives/Directors of departments in MoSA, CDR, and UNDP. The functions of the Committee are to review and approve the proposed activities to be implemented within the project. The committee has had more than 6 meetings, in which it reviewed and approved 15 proposals of the micro-projects in Aakar, reviewed the curriculum, proposal and procedures for the training of MoSA /SDSC staff mentioned above.

2. Sub-Committee on Surveys and Studies (*Social Outlook and the Multi-Purpose Poverty Survey*)

Consists of FAFO Consultant, International Technical Advisor, a representative of CAS, National Expert of the Housing and Population Survey, and Director in MoSA, Social Outlook Coordinator in addition to the Project Manager. The function of the committee was to set up the design and technical structure of the questionnaire and sample as well as follow up on data collection and analysis of the Multi-Purpose Survey. In addition, it is entrusted with following up on the production of the national living condition report through analysis of existing data (the Social Outlook). The Committee met more than 10 times including missions of FAFO consultant, Mr. Ole Ugland and Dr. Moh'd Hussein Bakir, international consultant on poverty (the missions of Dr. Bakir resulted in the first draft of questionnaire and sampling frame of the Multi-Purpose Survey).

3. Coordination and sustainability between Departments of MOSA and UN/MOSA joint projects

The project played a catalytic role in formulating a mechanism of cooperation and coordination between the departments of the Ministry and the UN projects. To this end a Unified Coordination Committee was formed presided by the Minister of Social Affairs and coordinated by the Director General. Members of the Committee included the UN/CDR Coordination Officer, Chiefs of the Ministry's departments, UN/MOSA project managers, and UN officers (UN agencies involved are UNDP - UNFPA and UNIFEM). The Objective of the Committee is to strengthen integration of projects' activities within the Ministry's scope of

work, improve coordination, establish effective means and channels of communication, and insure efficient use of resources (financial, human and time).

B.2 Poverty Survey and Living Condition Report

(Objective 1, output 1.1)

I - The Multi-Purpose Survey

The Survey was supposed to be launched with the beginning of the year 2000. However, due to several administrative and financial obstacles the Project suffered from a delay in the implementation. CAS changed three Director-Generals and two different governments were changed which has interrupted the work progress.

1. A Partnership between MoSA and the Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) was forged and defined.

CAS would be sub-contracted to implement the field activities of the Multi-Purpose Poverty Survey. This partnership represents a breakthrough in the coordination of data collection in Lebanon, resolving a prolonged disagreement between MoSA and CAS.

2. Sample Design (increase to 14,000 households) of the Multi-Purpose Poverty Survey:

The objective of the survey is to assist in calculating a national poverty line, and hence the methodology consists of enlarging the existing data on Household Income and Expenditure for Greater Beirut -- undertaken by CAS in 1998 and released in August 1999. In light of the newly released data, the sample design of the Multi-Purpose survey was reviewed, jointly by FAFO, MoSA/Project and CAS. The review recommended increasing the sample size from 6,000 (as per previous proposal) to 14,000 households in order to ensure a representative sample for each of the district to be surveyed.

3. Resource Mobilization Proposal for securing additional funds needed to implement the Multi-Purpose Poverty Survey.

The change in the sample design of the Survey imposed additional cost to the budget available from the initial contribution of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo, Norway of \$489,000. Total cost of Survey implementation was finally estimated at 1,000,500 USD. Based on discussions of possible interest by the World Bank, a proposal was sent to them. However, the World Bank declined to provide financial assistance to this end. Several donors were contacted as well in this respect - the EU, the Government of Italy, the Government of Norway, etc, and all were unable to assist. CAS contributed with a total amount of 532,000 USD covering cost of all field work of which they are responsible to fully implement (in full coordination with MoSA and UNDP). The Ministry of Social Affairs and the UNDP covered up for the deficit amount (468,500 USD). The MoSA funded a total amount of 368,500 USD as part of its contribution in the second phase of the Project and UNDP supplied the remaining shortage of 100,000 USD.

4. Questionnaire.

A first draft questionnaire was designed during a mission of the Dr. Bakir, poverty international consultant. The questionnaire together with the list of indicators were sent for

comments and feedback to more than 10 social science consultants and development experts and researchers. A meeting was held to discuss comments and feasibility of questionnaire during the month of June 1999 and modifications on the questionnaire and list of indicators were made accordingly (in full coordination with FAFO, Dr. Bakir and national expert of PHS). Another meeting was held with the same and other social science consultants mid 2000 to re-discuss the questionnaire and list of indicators post modifications. The remarks of the consultants were considered and the questionnaire was modified accordingly.

In addition a number of meetings were held with the CAS technical staff. The meetings discussed the sample design, time frame, budget and methodology to be adopted for the survey. The meetings hosted the Survey's technical consultant, Dr. Marwan Houry, and the international consultant, Dr. Mohamed Bakir.

In brief, all preparatory procedures including set up of methodology, design of sample frame, identification of indicators and first draft of the first questionnaire and diaries are finalized. Contract between Project and CAS and CAS terms of Reference were drafted in collaboration with UNDP and MoSA and are ready for signature. Accordingly, survey is ready to be launched with the beginning as soon as PSD of second phase of the Project is signed. Expected time frame to complete the survey including analysis of data and publishing of reports is 30 months.

II - The Social Outlook - *o.s.n.g.*

The Social Outlook is a national living conditions profile consisting of consolidation and analysis of existing data. The aim of the report is to provide data and information for policy makers to suggest recommendations. The overall preparation of the report was conducted in full cooperation with FAFO, Norway.

1. The survey and study committee suggested the Report's Framework, table of contents and names of local authors to draft all background papers. The initial agreement was to have an author and co-author (one local and one from FAFO) for each chapter. However, it later proved to be impractical and inefficient due to two main reasons. One, we could not access the raw data and; two, most available resources are in Arabic.
2. Background papers were modified twice based on nationals and FAFO's set of comments, however it was agreed that modifications based on FAFO's set of comments will be made upon editing.
3. An agreement was made with the Consultation and Research Institute to edit, harmonize and translate all chapters and convert into one final comprehensive Report. The Agreement with CRI noted that deadline for submission of work is end of August 2001. However CRI suffered from a number of difficulties in translation and editing especially those related to updating certain data and changing certain indicators.
4. Final editing of the Arabic version of the Report was finalized by CRI. A reading committee consisting of three members was asked to read and comment on the report. Comments of reading committee are at present in the hands of CRI to be incorporated in the report. The English version of the report will be finalized based on final draft of the Arabic report.
5. Initially, the Social Outlook should have been published by the end of the year 2001. However, it was delayed first due to financial and administrative restrictions and second due to CRI inability to meet with the agreed upon deadline.

6. Accordingly, the Arabic report at present is in the process to be edited based on the reading committee remarks and then printed and distributed. The English report will be printed by FAFO, as soon as it is fully completed. Expected time frame for final editing, translation, design and printing ranges between 3-5 months.

B.3. Micro development projects in the region of Akkar and Bab el-Tebaneh

(Objective 2, output 2.3)

1. Solicited and reviewed 15 proposals for community based projects in North Lebanon (specifically, the cluster of Joumeh, Fneidek, and the neighborhood of Bab-El-Tabbaneh in Tripoli) from local community groups, NGOs, and municipalities in collaboration with the Social Development Centers of the MoSA in the region. The three pilot areas were identified based on the findings of the Mapping of Living Conditions and a rapid field assessment conducted at the start of the project. The 15 Projects were implemented between 1999 and 2000 and all are terminated leaving a very positive impact on the living conditions of the people in question. The areas of the projects varied between vocational training for youth, income generation for women, agricultural orientation, etc. **(see Annex - Summary of projects implemented).**
2. Within the framework of increasing awareness on poverty in Lebanon, a short documentary film - "khiar wa Laban" - was produced to reflect the living conditions and needs of the communities in the deprived and remote areas (the clusters of Akkar and Bab el-Tebaneh). Two other documentary films (el-Bidayah - Laissou Wahdahom) were produced on the project's achievements including capacity building of MoSA and the implementation of the community development projects in the North). Finally, one short film - "nosf el-tareek" - was made portraying the situation of the Handicapped in Lebanon and the role the Ministry of Social Affairs have played so far in improving the conditions of the handicapped. A producer was subcontracted to this end; films produced participated in different media activities, conferences, seminars and workshops.
3. As a result of implementing the micro development projects in the North and working closely in the region of Akkar, the Project drafted a socio-economic overview on the living conditions in Akkar - "*Akkar: a Story of Deprivation*". The paper portrayed the living conditions of the people in Akkar including a briefing on the population, housing and education indicators, health, labor and the economic activity in the region. In addition, the paper identified five main fields of intervention at different levels to promote the living conditions of the people in the region. The paper acted as a draft Project Document for a regional development Project for the region of Akkar to be implemented between UNDP and CDR.

3rd. LESSONS LEARNT

The implementation of the project was rather smooth and did not encounter any major obstacles, however both time limitations and the bureaucratic procedures have somehow slowed the implementation of a number of activities.

In addition, one can say that the project objectives may have been very ambitious for a Preparatory Assistance, accordingly, the number of activities implemented and the achievements made were rather impressive for a Preparatory Assistance.

However, the project has learnt from some of **the negative and positive lessons** encountered during the implementation of this phase.

- UNDP, MoSA and CDR provided good support and trust. Coordination was always smooth and easy. Moreover, the project coordinated with other UN agencies (WB, UNFPA, UNICEF, etc.) and local administrations (CAS) in addition to other UN/MoSA joint projects which resulted with a common strategy and plan of coordination between these agencies and projects on one hand and MoSA on the other, in order to increase effectiveness, facilitate work and accelerate the decision making process.
- The overall feeling was that the impact of the project's activities, whether those related to the field or to the studies, was rather explicit. All partners (Lebanese University, Consultants, SDSCs, Civil Society organizations in Akkar and Tripoli, etc.) were very cooperative and helpful and showed willingness to make good use of the outputs produced.
- The Project realized the need to have all outputs produced accessible, user-friendly and responds to the needs of the target groups.
- The Project encountered some difficulties relative to the knowledge of the administrative procedures of the different institutions, namely, MoSA, UNDP and CAS. Each had a different set of regulations and a different pace of work. Moreover, the staff of each of these institutions are often not familiar with the regulations and procedures.