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UN System-Wide Offer in Response to the Spillover Impacts of the Middle East Crisis

A coordinated, country-driven framework to help nations respond to spillover pressures, protect development gains, and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

CONSOLIDATED SYSTEM-WIDE FRAMEWORK

01

THE SPILLOVER IMPACTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS & THE RISK OF BACKSLIDING ON THE SDGS

The Middle East crisis is generating spillover effects well beyond the countries directly affected by conflict, transmitting the shock through energy, food and fertilizer, trade and transport, tourism, investment and remittance channels. These pressures are most acute in countries with high import dependence, narrow fiscal space, limited reserves or pre-existing fragility, and risk accelerating backsliding on the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** through higher prices, slower growth, deeper inequality and weaker resilience. Slower economic growth, declining private sector activity, job losses, reduced incomes and increasing informality are among the most immediate impacts experienced by households.

Impacts differ significantly by country context

Findings from a survey of more than 100 Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) and UN country teams (UNCTs) show that vulnerabilities vary by national circumstance:

Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

Report heightened risks around vulnerable households, social protection coverage, fiscal pressures and cost-of-living shocks.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Are more exposed to energy and fuel price or supply pressures.

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

Face stronger trade, supply-chain, import, food security and fertilizer risks.

Fragile & conflict-affected settings

Face compounded pressures where macroeconomic stress intersects with humanitarian needs, displacement, weak service delivery, social cohesion and organized crime risks.

Government responses remain largely short-term

Policy responses are differentiated, but many remain short-term and fiscally costly, including subsidies, tax reductions, price controls and broad buffering measures. LDCs and LLDCs emphasize fuel, food, fertilizer and supply-chain measures; SIDS combine fuel and energy support with social protection and financing responses; complex settings link price-shock responses with humanitarian and displacement-related measures; and Middle-Income Countries (MICs) balance cushioning with fiscal sustainability. For windfall countries benefiting from higher energy revenues or improved terms of trade, the priority is to avoid pro-cyclical spending and channel temporary gains toward resilience, economic diversification beyond fossil fuels, clean-energy investment, social protection buffers and debt reduction.

02

THE ROLE OF THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN SUPPORTING COUNTRIES TO RESPOND TO THE CRISIS

Irrespective of the pace of progress toward lasting peace, many developing countries will continue to experience secondary effects through higher prices, disrupted trade routes, tighter financing conditions and uncertainty. The development challenge is therefore twofold: to help countries respond to immediate spillover pressures while ensuring that short-term coping measures do not become a longer-term source of fiscal stress, vulnerability to volatile fossil fuel markets, and SDG and climate backsliding.

This frames the central question for the UN system: how to protect people — especially women, children and youth — and economies now, while helping them move from crisis cushioning toward recovery, resilience, renewed SDG acceleration, and reduced structural dependence on fossil fuels through clean energy, electrification and energy efficiency. The response must link immediate policy and programme support with longer-term efforts to rebuild fiscal space, strengthen systems and reduce exposure to future shocks — including through employment creation, labour market resilience and decent work — keeping the SDGs and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as the guiding framework for action.

Why the UN development system is well placed

It combines country presence, normative expertise, policy advice, convening power and operational capacity. Through Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UNCTs, the system can help governments assess the specific channels through which the crisis is affecting their economies and populations, identify the most vulnerable groups, and align support with national development priorities and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

This support builds on work already initiated under the Secretary-General's Middle-East Task Force and the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) development workstream, including country-level assessments, regional analysis and coordinated engagement across UN entities. The needs are not uniform: LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs, fragile and conflict-affected settings, MICs and windfall countries each require differentiated support. A coherent UN response should therefore be **modular, country-driven and focused** on connecting immediate crisis response with longer-term resilience — including fiscal space, social protection, food systems, energy resilience and the clean energy transition, essential services and SDG financing.

This points to the need for a practical system-wide offer that does not create a parallel process, but enables RCs and UNCTs to draw on the full menu of UN system capacities to support national priorities, respond to spillover effects, and accelerate progress toward more resilient, inclusive and sustainable development pathways.

03

COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR THE UN SYSTEM-WIDE OFFER

3.1 Functional service lines

The offer is organized around **six common service lines**. Together, they help countries move from understanding the nature of spillover risks to designing, financing and delivering practical responses — and provide a common frame for RCs and UNCTs to match country demand with the capacities of UN entities, ensuring support is coordinated, time-bound and focused on the changes countries seek.

SERVICE LINE 01

Policy, financing and protection options

Translate analysis into actionable policy choices — helping governments determine which policy levers can reduce a shock's impact on people, markets and public systems. Includes macro-fiscal advice, financing strategies, targeted subsidies, social protection, cash transfers, jobs and livelihoods measures, food and energy security measures, and human rights, gender and Leave No One Behind (LNOB) safeguards.

AIM — To shift from fragmented or short-term crisis measures toward coherent policy packages that protect the most affected populations, preserve development gains and create pathways to recovery. **22 UN entities offer policy advisory and dialogue support.**

SERVICE LINE 02

Rapid assessment and shared analytics

Help countries understand how external shocks are transmitted across channels — food, fuel, trade, financing, jobs, migration, displacement, organized crime risks, public services and social cohesion.

AIM — To create a shared evidence base that governments, RCs, UNCTs, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and partners can use to prioritize action — moving from reactive, partial-information decisions toward coordinated responses grounded in timely, comparable, country-specific analysis. **21 UN entities offer data, monitoring, rapid assessment or analytical support.**

SERVICE LINE 03

Operational surge and continuity of critical systems

Support countries where spillovers are disrupting essential services, markets or delivery systems — including health, food and cash delivery, logistics, procurement, energy, infrastructure, urban recovery, MSMEs and livelihoods.

AIM — To keep critical systems functioning during periods of stress while creating space for national authorities to stabilize delivery, reducing service interruptions and preventing short-term disruptions from becoming deeper development setbacks. **Flexible delivery: 20 entities offer blended/hybrid support, 18 short-term missions, 17 virtual support, 15 longer in-person deployments, 14 reorientations of in-country capacity.**

3.1 Functional service lines (continued)

SERVICE LINE 04

HDP nexus, early recovery and transition planning

Connect immediate crisis response with longer-term recovery and resilience — especially in fragile, conflict-affected and displacement settings — across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus.

AIM — To ensure emergency support does not remain disconnected from development, peacebuilding and resilience objectives, helping communities move from repeated crisis response toward sustainable recovery pathways with attention to local systems, displacement dynamics, social cohesion and the risks of renewed instability. **17 UN entities offer HDP nexus, displacement or fragile-context support.**

SERVICE LINE 05

Coordination and country-level matching

Use RCs and UNCTs as the entry point for demand — matching country needs with entity capacities, coordinating UN-IFI and development-bank engagement, avoiding duplication, and developing practical, time-bound country packages.

AIM — To turn the system-wide offer into a coherent country-level response rather than a set of separate institutional contributions, strengthening alignment between national priorities, UN capabilities and partner financing so countries access the right mix of support at the right time. **16 UN entities offer coordination, convening, contingency planning or partner engagement support.**

SERVICE LINE 06

Safeguards and inclusion

Mainstream gender equality, LNOB, human rights, disability inclusion, protection, displacement sensitivity, digital/data safeguards and environmental sustainability across all support.

AIM — To ensure crisis responses do not unintentionally deepen exclusion, inequality or risk — making support more people-centred, rights-based and future-oriented while strengthening trust, accountability and resilience. **23 entities identified LNOB, 21 gender equality, 20 digital/data or AI-enabled support, 19 fragile/displacement settings.**

3.2 Thematic packages

The six service lines can be deployed through **six thematic packages** that reflect the main spillover channels. These are not stand-alone silos — they provide practical entry points for combining policy advice, analytics, operational support, coordination and safeguards into integrated country responses.

■ Food security & systems

Addresses how external shocks affect food availability, affordability, production and rural livelihoods. Includes food-security and market analysis, price and availability monitoring, fertilizer and rural-livelihood exposure analysis, targeted food or cash assistance, local procurement, rural finance and agricultural resilience.

AIM — To protect food security in the short term while strengthening the resilience of food systems over time — moving from emergency food interventions alone toward integrated responses that stabilize access, support producers and reduce exposure to future shocks. **8 UN entities report relevant capacity.**

■ Financing and economic advisory

Helps countries assess and respond to fiscal, financing and macroeconomic pressures created or intensified by spillover shocks. Includes macro-fiscal analysis, financing gap assessments, debt and financing options, public expenditure advice, social protection financing, IFI/development-bank engagement and resource mobilization.

AIM — To help governments identify feasible financing choices and protect priority spending under constrained conditions — strengthening the ability to finance crisis response and recovery without undermining longer-term development priorities. **13 UN entities are able to contribute in some form.**

■ Fuel and energy transition

Addresses the impact of fuel and energy shocks on households, services, infrastructure and national economies. Includes fuel-shock analysis, energy affordability, service continuity, renewable energy and efficiency options, critical infrastructure support, and financing models for energy resilience and a clean-energy transition.

AIM — To help countries manage immediate energy affordability and continuity risks while reducing structural exposure to future fossil fuel price shocks — transitioning toward more resilient, affordable and sustainable energy systems. **8 UN entities report relevant capacity.**

3.2 Thematic packages (continued)

■ Trade and logistics

Focuses on how shocks affect trade flows, transport and insurance costs, shipping, supply chains, customs and corridor bottlenecks, procurement, MSMEs, value chains and logistics.

AIM – To help countries identify and address the practical constraints that prevent goods, services and critical inputs from moving efficiently – reducing disruption to markets, livelihoods and essential supplies while strengthening the resilience of trade and logistics systems. **15 UN entities report relevant capacity.**

■ Social protection and inclusion

Supports countries to protect people, jobs and livelihoods from the social and economic effects of shocks. Includes active labour market policies, enterprise and MSME support, wage protection, skills development and reskilling, shock-responsive social protection, transfer-value adjustments, support to displaced and migrant populations, labour mobility, remittance-related measures, and gender, LNOB and human rights safeguards.

AIM – To ensure responses reach those most affected and help prevent temporary shocks from becoming long-term poverty, exclusion or labour market scarring – building stronger, more adaptive systems that protect incomes and sustain livelihoods before, during and after crises. **16 UN entities report relevant capacity.**

■ Local recovery, resilience and service restoration

Supports basic service restoration and strengthening, early recovery and stabilization, urban and rural livelihoods, responses to displacement pressures, and resilience to future shocks.

AIM – To help communities, local authorities and service providers recover functionality after disruption while building stronger systems – moving from restoring services only to rebuilding local capacities, livelihoods and resilience in ways that reduce vulnerability to future crises. **21 UN entities report relevant capacity.**

The response areas are therefore not simply a catalogue of UN capacities; they describe the pathways through which the UN system can help countries move from crisis diagnosis to coordinated action, and from immediate mitigation to more resilient, inclusive and sustainable systems.



3.3 Operating model

The operating principles of the system-wide response are to be **country-driven** and to **use existing deployment mechanisms**. RCs and UNCTs identify demand based on government priorities, socio-economic impact assessments, Cooperation Frameworks and other country planning instruments. DCO and relevant regional platforms help match demand with the most appropriate entity capacities, drawing on the six service lines and thematic packages.

Support is deployed through existing mechanisms — country offices, regional commissions, issue-based coalitions, surge rosters, technical facilities, humanitarian and development coordination platforms, and partnerships with IFIs and development banks.

The offer is **phased across three horizons**, aligned with the strategic priorities, outcomes and timeframe of the Cooperation Framework:

Immediate	Rapid diagnostics, policy advice, contingency planning, transfer-value adjustments, food and fuel monitoring, service continuity and operational surge.
Near-term	Deeper country diagnostics, financing strategies, social protection and livelihoods packages, trade and logistics measures, and early recovery planning.
Longer-term	Moving from crisis cushioning to resilience by strengthening national systems, reducing exposure to volatile fuel and commodity imports or single trade routes, rebuilding fiscal space, investing in energy and food-system resilience, and accelerating SDG and climate-aligned recovery.

04

DELIVERY ARCHITECTURE AND ROLES

The survey confirms that the UN system has the expertise, operational footprint and coordination architecture needed to support countries facing the socio-economic spillover effects of the Middle East crisis. The challenge is to convert this breadth of capacity into a coherent, country-driven offer tailored to differentiated needs and linked to available financing. By organizing support around common service lines and thematic packages, the UN can move beyond fragmented entity-specific responses toward an integrated system-wide platform for action.

27

UNSDG members ready to provide assistance to impacted countries

22

Entities already delivering support on the ground

18

Entities able to deploy within two to four weeks

Rolling out the offer requires a simple coordination architecture built on existing mechanisms and aligned to country demand. At country level, the RC leads overall coordination and strategic engagement of the UN response, while UNDP serves as technical lead for shaping and operationalizing the socio-economic response package. Regional and global mechanisms reinforce this arrangement by consolidating offers of support, providing surge expertise and sharing lessons across countries.

Resident Coordinator (RC) – convening leadership

The RC provides convening leadership for the country-level response: convening the UNCT, guiding high-level engagement with government on priorities and response options, ensuring coherence across UN entities, and linking the socio-economic response to the broader UN development, humanitarian and political architecture. The RC also guides strategic engagement with development partners and IFIs and brokers agreement on the division of labour across the system.

UNDP – technical leadership

UNDP provides technical leadership for the socio-economic response offer: leading technical assessments of needs and response options, mapping available tools and capacities, translating the Common Framework into concrete support packages, and preparing joint workplans for implementation – drawing on the comparative advantages and normative mandates of specialized resident and non-resident entities. UNDP also coordinates technical inputs across the system, mobilizes expertise and analytical support, and supports follow-up, implementation tracking and reporting.

Broader UN development system & partners

UNCT members and other country-level partners are critical to developing comprehensive socio-economic response packages tailored to country contexts and priorities. With 27 UNSDG members ready to provide assistance – 22 already doing so – the diverse expertise and mandates of UNSDG entities will be crucial for deploying coordinated, coherent and impactful support. This division of labour allows the RC to lead high-level coordination and government-facing engagement, while UNDP ensures the response package is technically coherent, actionable and responsive to evolving needs.

Consolidated indicative menu of support options



Survey responses from 27 UN entities show a strong, rapidly-deployable offer: 22 entities are already providing support and 3 report capacity to mobilize quickly; 18 can provide additional assistance immediately or within two to four weeks. The principal constraint is not expertise but financing – 26 entities report offers that are partially available or mostly contingent on additional funding. Capabilities concentrate in five areas: policy advisory and dialogue; data, monitoring and rapid assessment; HDP nexus support; coordination and partner engagement; and jobs, social protection, poverty reduction, gender and LNOB support. This is an indicative menu – not an exhaustive list – to help RCs and UNCTs define country-level offers and the right mix of entities.

Functional area / Thematic area	Food systems 8 ENTITIES UNRWA, ESCWA, UNCTAD, IFAD, UNDP, UNIDO, WFP, FAO	Financing & economic advisory 13 ENTITIES ESCWA, UNCTAD, DESA, ESCAP, UNDP, WHO, ILO, UNHCR, IFAD, IOM, FAO, UNIDO, UNODC	Fuel & energy transition 8 ENTITIES ESCWA, UNCTAD, ESCAP, UNHCR, IFAD, UNDP, UNIDO, UNECE	Trade & logistics 15 ENTITIES UNRWA, WHO, ESCWA, UNCTAD, ILO, ITC, ESCAP, IFAD, IOM, UNDP, UNIDO, UNODC, WFP, FAO, UNECE	Social protection & inclusion 16 ENTITIES UNRWA, OHCHR, ESCWA, ILO, UN Women, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNFPA, ESCAP, IFAD, IOM, UNDP, UNODC, UNV, WFP, FAO	Local recovery, resilience & service restoration 21 ENTITIES UNRWA, WHO, UNOPS, ESCWA, ILO, UN Habitat, UNDRR, UN Women, ITU, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNFPA, ESCAP, IFAD, UNV, IOM, UNDP, UNIDO, WFP, FAO, UNODC
Rapid assessment & shared analytics	Food-security/market diagnostics; price & availability monitoring; fertilizer & rural-livelihood exposure analysis; targeting data for food/cash response.	Macro/fiscal impact scans; debt/financing gap analysis; distributional & human-rights/economic transmission analysis; INFF-style rapid diagnostics.	Fuel-price shock exposure analysis; energy access & service-continuity diagnostics; renewable/backup power needs mapping; geospatial infrastructure assessment.	Trade-flow & supply-chain disruption mapping; shipping/transport cost monitoring; customs/corridor bottleneck diagnostics; MSME/sector vulnerability analysis.	Vulnerability, poverty, jobs & gender/LNOB impact assessments; transfer-value adequacy analysis; population/displacement & migration risk monitoring; community engagement.	Conflict/fragility & displacement analysis; organized crime risk analysis; early-recovery needs scans; service-delivery & local-market disruption assessments; risk dashboards.
Policy, financing & protection options	Advice on food/cash transfer design, subsidy targeting, rural livelihood protection, local procurement, market-stabilization & food-systems resilience.	Fiscal, macroeconomic & financing options; resource-mobilization packages; UN-IFI/development-bank engagement; protection-sensitive policy guidance; strengthened regulatory frameworks & financial investigations (AML/CFT).	Fuel subsidy/price-mitigation advice; renewable-energy transition options to reduce future fossil-fuel exposure; critical-service energy prioritization; financing models for energy resilience.	Trade facilitation, tariff/customs & corridor policy advice; procurement options; support to stabilize supply chains & reduce logistics costs; Maritime Domain Awareness & monitoring technology.	Protection, cash/top-up options, wage/job measures, LNOB/gender-sensitive targeting, human-rights safeguards; strengthened identification of trafficking victims & referral mechanisms.	Policy options linking relief to recovery; stabilization & social cohesion measures; service restoration priorities; displacement-sensitive programming.
Operational surge & continuity of critical systems	Scale food/cash delivery; support procurement & local sourcing; maintain nutrition/food assistance pipelines; deploy food security & market experts.	Deploy economists/financing advisors; surge support to RC/UNCT products; prepare financing briefs, donor packages & IFI engagement materials.	Deploy energy/infrastructure experts; support fuel efficiency, buffer stocks & alternative power; maintain critical health, water, food & logistics systems.	Common logistics services; emergency procurement; rerouting cargo & transport corridors; warehousing, fleet, aviation & supply-chain surge support.	Rapidly adapt delivery platforms; scale cash/social assistance; deploy gender/protection/jobs experts; use volunteers & rosters for implementation support.	Deploy surge teams/rosters; engage community/national volunteers; restore basic services & infrastructure; support early recovery, debris/waste management, urban recovery & field coordination.
HDP integration, early recovery & transition planning	Link immediate food assistance to rural livelihoods, markets, local procurement, agricultural recovery & resilience-building in fragile settings.	Connect crisis financing with recovery plans; align humanitarian-development financing; support prevention, resilience & recovery funding windows.	Use energy access & renewable solutions to restore services, reduce fuel dependence & support community resilience in fragile/displaced contexts.	Restore market access & supply corridors; support transport/logistics continuity as part of recovery; reduce dependence on single routes or suppliers.	Use social protection as a bridge from relief to recovery; support livelihoods, social cohesion, displacement responses & inclusion of vulnerable groups.	Integrated local recovery packages covering services, livelihoods, local governance, displacement, social cohesion, resilience & stabilization.
Coordination entry point	RC/UNCT coordination with food security, agriculture, logistics & social protection actors; align country requests with agency tools & pipelines.	Single UNCT economic advisory offer; coordinate UN-IFI engagement; align analytical products, financing asks & donor messaging.	Coordinate energy/fuel inputs across infrastructure, logistics, health & social protection actors; prioritize critical-service continuity needs.	Coordinate common logistics, procurement, trade & market-access support; connect UNCT demand to WFP/UNOPS/ITC/UNCTAD-type capacities.	Coordinate LNOB, gender, protection, jobs, migration & social protection actors; ensure coherent targeting & delivery through national systems.	Use RC/UNCT as the matching platform for modular offers; link humanitarian, development & peace actors around recovery priorities.
Safeguards & inclusion	Ensure food/cash support reaches women, refugees, displaced people, persons with disabilities & other LNOB groups; monitor protection & accountability.	Apply human-rights, gender & LNOB tests to fiscal, subsidy, austerity & financing options; assess distributional impacts before policy choices.	Prioritize energy access for essential services & vulnerable groups; include environmental sustainability & disability/gender considerations.	Assess differential impacts of supply-chain disruptions on MSMEs, women-owned firms, workers, migrants & vulnerable consumers; protect access to essentials.	Mainstream gender, LNOB, disability, human rights, displacement & digital/data safeguards in social protection, jobs & cash responses.	Embed protection, human rights, gender, LNOB, disability, environmental sustainability & conflict sensitivity in recovery & stabilization packages.