

STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AUGUST 31st

Q&A / KEY MESSAGES

What are the objectives of the Stockholm Conference?

Sweden will host the Stockholm International Conference on August 31st, in close collaboration with the Lebanese government and with the support of the United Nations and the international community.

The Conference aims to extend support to the Lebanese government's efforts towards humanitarian assistance, rapid recovery and early reconstruction for the next four months. The Stockholm Conference is also an answer to the call of the UN Security Council Resolution 1701 for immediate steps to extend rapid recovery and humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese people.

Moreover, the Conference will lay the foundations for a broader donors' conference to be held at a later date, which will address Lebanon's longer-term recovery and reconstruction efforts.

Who will be attending the Conference?

The government of Sweden has extended invitations to close to 60 governments and organizations. Ministers and senior officials from main donor countries and international organizations are expected to participate.

Who will be attending from Lebanon?

A high-level Lebanese delegation headed by Prime Minister Fuad Siniora and composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Economy & Trade, Health, Social Affairs, Education and Environment will be attending the Conference.

What should the Lebanese people expect from the Conference?

Lebanon sees in this conference a gesture of international support and solidarity with its people who have suffered from the savage Israeli aggression which started on July 12th, and which has seriously damaged the country's infrastructure and crippled its economy, and has left thousands of people homeless and in dire need of basic assistance and shelter.

What will the government of Lebanon be presenting at the Conference?

The Lebanese government, supported by the international community, initiated a series of early recovery efforts designed to address the immediate needs. The document to be presented at Stockholm provides an initial assessment of the direct damages caused by the conflict in a number of critical sectors. It also provides concrete project proposals addressing some of the most crucial and immediate needs.

What are the most affected sectors?

The Lebanese government has identified urgent needs in the following areas: displacement, shelter rehabilitation & temporary shelters; mine action and protection; infrastructure (electricity, telecommunications, transport, government infrastructure); basic social services (health, education, water and sanitation); environment; employment creation, social security and safety net; industrial and agricultural production.

What do you consider as being the Government's priorities in this phase?

Given the magnitude of the damage, and the subsequent need to prioritize and sequence appropriate responses, we see a clear distinction between the humanitarian efforts that have been undertaken during and immediately after the conflict, the early recovery initiatives that will be undertaken until the end of this year, and the full-scale recovery and reconstruction program for the country that will build upon the achievement of the first two phases.

What do you mean by early recovery?

The main objective of the national recovery process is to establish the critical elements to resume normal economic activity. It provides the conditions for the return of the displaced (in many cases through temporary housing), partial restoration of infrastructure and access to basic services and establishes the mechanisms for the implementation of the full reconstruction plans.

How will assistance be provided?

Donors can channel early recovery assistance through a variety of mechanisms:

- An Early Recovery Fund, established by the Government of Lebanon for the early recovery phase. The Fund is designed to finance Government projects quickly through the support of UN agencies and other implementing partners, within the scope and timeframe of the national early recovery process.
- Donor agencies, including United Nations agencies, the World Bank Group, the European Union, Bilateral Development Agencies, as well as international and local NGOs.
- The adoption scheme for villages, bridges & schools.

How much funds do you expect to raise in Stockholm?

Ultimately the Stockholm conference is about solidarity with the people of Lebanon and about asserting the sovereignty of the Lebanese state. We hope that the conference will contribute to speedy and coordinated international efforts to support the people of Lebanon and restore some form of normalcy in the lives of those affected.

Will this conference be followed by another in the near future?

We see the conference as the beginning of a process of a comprehensive long term reconstruction program, paving the way to a broader donor's conference, which will also help address the high debt service burden, and which is to be held at a later date.