بناء نظم مالية عامة قادرة على الصمود في مواجهة الصدمات والأزمات الجيوسياسية

Building Resilient Public Finance Systems amid Geopolitical Shocks and Crises

المنتدى العربي للمالية العامة والموازنة

ARAB PUBLIC FINANCE & BUDGETING FORUM

Beirut, 1-2 December 2026 بيروت، 1-2 كانون الأول/ديسمبر

Under the Auspices of the Minister of Finance of Lebanon H.E. Yassine Jaber

Draft Agenda

Day 1 - 1 December 2026	
08:30-09:00	**Registration and welcome coffee**
09:00-09:30	**Opening remarks and key notes** • Dr. Rania Al-Mashat, **Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary** of ESCWA • Dr. Sudhanshu Handa, **Chief Economist and Director,** Global Practice for Economic and Social Policy, Center of Excellence for Child Poverty, UNICEF • H.E. Mr. Yassine Jaber, **Minister of Finance**, Lebanese Republic • H.E. Mr. Nabil Fahmy, **Secretary-General** of the League of Arab States (TBC) **Master of ceremony** • TBD
09:30-10:00	**Keynote speaker:** H.E. Dr. Youssef Boutros Ghali, Former Finance Minister, Egypt
10:00-10:10	**Group photo**
10:10-11:00	**Item 01.** Public Finance Amid Compounding Crises—Protecting People and Advancing Development *Panelists will share their experiences on how Arab countries protect essential services for vulnerable households amid recurring shocks while maintaining fiscal sustainability. Drawing on the messages of the ESCWA-UNICEF Report, they will discuss how more reliable revenues, more efficient social spending and affordable financing can preserve fiscal space for long-term investment in sustainable development.* **Scene-setting:** Dr. Niranjan Sarangi, Leader of the Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster, ESCWA **Moderator:** Dr. Rania Al-Mashat, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA **Speakers:** • H.E. Mr. Yassine Jaber, Minister of Finance, Lebanon • H.E. Minister of Finance, Egypt (TBC) • H.E. Mr. Mohammed Yisr Barnieh, Minister of Finance, Syria • H.E. Dr. Estephan Anton Salame, Minister of Finance and Planning, Palestine Q and A
11:00-11:30	**Coffee break**

صفحة الحدث Event page

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11:30-12:30	**Item 02.** Protecting Social Expenditure Amid Fiscal Pressures: Opportunities for building fiscal resilience
	Panelists will share country experiences on protecting and reprioritizing social expenditure as needs evolve during crises. Drawing on the recommendations of the ESCWA-UNICEF Report, they will discuss how medium-term planning, more flexible budgets and expenditure reforms can keep essential services running, protect investments in human capital and strengthen fiscal resilience. **Moderator**: UNICEF or ESCWA (TBD) **Speakers:** • H.E. Dr. Samah Abdul Rahim Hussein Hamad, Minister of Social Development and Acting Minister of State for Relief Affairs, Palestine • H.E. Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Syria • H.E. Mr. Bihi Iman Egeh, Minister of Finance, Somalia • H.E. Mr. Omar Al Fanek, Secretary General, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan Q and A
12:30-13:00	**Break**
13:00-14:00	**SPECIAL EVENT** **[Agenda – TBC]**
14:00-15:00	**Lunch**
15:00-15:30	**Keynote speaker:** Dr. Olivier Thévenon, Head of the Child Well-Being Unit at the OECD Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity
15:30-16:30	**Item 03.** Financing for Children Amid Fiscal Stress: Lessons for Equitable and Resilient Budgeting
	Panelists will share how governments protect spending on children's education, health, nutrition and protection when budgets tighten. Drawing on the Public Finance for Children approach and ESCWA's Social Expenditure Monitor, they will discuss how tracking spending on children and strengthening child-sensitive social protection can support more equitable and resilient budgets. **Moderator**: UNICEF (Moderator or Speaker) (TBD) **Speakers:** • Mr. Ali Abdulhafiz Hussein, Director, Institutional Support Department, Ministry of Social Development, Jordan • Mr. Ashraf Al-Barghouthi, Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Development and Planning, Ministry of Social Development, State of Palestine • Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Ali Al-Hawri, Undersecretary for Economic Studies Sector, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Republic of Yemen • UNICEF Expert (TBD) Open discussion

16:30-17:30	**Close of Day 1 - Networking reception**
Day 2 - 2 December 2026	
09:00-09:30	**Registration and welcome coffee**
09:30-10:30	**Item 04.** Harnessing Artificial Intelligence and Digitalization for Equitable and Efficient Public Finance
	Panelists will share how artificial intelligence and digital systems can improve revenue collection, budget decisions and oversight, and help governments deliver support quickly during shocks. Drawing on country examples, the session will show how use of digitization can help governments allocate resources more efficiently and assess whether social spending reaches those who need it most. **Moderator**: Ms. Monique Newiak, Director, IMF METAC **Speakers:** • Ms. Amra Srdanovic, Public Financial Management Advisor, IMF METAC • Mr. Abdullah Zaiter, Director of Digital Transformation, Ministry of Finance, Syria • Dr. Bassem Kamar, Executive Director, Economic Policy, Arab Monetary Fund • IMF Resident Representative for Lebanon (TBC) Open discussion
10:30-11:00	**Coffee break**
11:00-12:00	**Item 05.** Managing Fiscal Risks and Building Resilient Public Finance Systems: The Role of Domestic Resource Mobilization
	Panelists will share how governments can broaden tax bases, review exemptions and strengthen tax administration to build more reliable and equitable domestic revenues. They will discuss how medium-term fiscal planning, monitoring contingent liabilities and building contingency reserves can help governments respond quickly to shocks and protect essential social spending. **Moderator:** Dr. Niranjan Sarangi, Leader of the Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster, ESCWA **Speakers (Tentative):** • Dr. Lamia Moubayed, Advisor to the Prime Minister and President of Institut des finances Bassil Fuleihan, Lebanon • Ms. Milad Ziad Abdel Mawla, Director General of Budget, Ministry of Finance, Iraq • Dr. Ziad Abdel Samad, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) • EU or ESCWA (TBD) Open discussion
12:00-12:30	**Coffee break**
12:30-13:30	**Item 06.** Expanding Fiscal Space: Leveraging Public, Private and Innovative Financing Mechanisms
	As development assistance declines and borrowing costs rise, panelists will explore how Arab countries can strengthen domestic fiscal buffers, secure affordable financing and mobilize private capital through debt swaps, thematic bonds and blended finance. The deliberations will help identifying instruments and mechanisms to manage fiscal risks while protecting social investment. **Moderator**: Dr. Ali Awdeh, Director of Research Department, Union of Arab Banks

	Speakers: • Ms. Clelia Kalliopi Helena Rontoyanni, Practice Manager, Governance, MENAAP, World Bank • Mr. M. Ahmed Ould Abbe, Director General of the Budget, Ministry of Finance, Mauritania • Ms. Kaouther Chelbi, Minister Plenipotentiary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad, Tunisia Open discussion
13:35-14:00	**Closing remarks**
	ESCWA **UNICEF**
14:00-15:00	**Lunch**