

How can a new tax system restore growth and bring equity

A forum organized by:

Financially Wise and Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan

26 September 2023, Mövenpick Hotel

Welcome note by :

- Iskandar Boustany, Representative of Financially Wise
- Lamia El Moubayed Bissat, President of the Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan

9:30 OPENING PANEL

This panel comments on the findings of the diagnostic work conducted in 2022 and discusses tax measures and reform sequencing that can be considered by the Ministry of Finance to lead on an approach that would allow to meet the dual objectives of efficiency and fairness.

- Youssef El Khalil, Minister of Finance of Lebanon
- Frederico Lima, Resident Representative for Lebanon, IMF
- Alessia Squarcella, Deputy Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Lebanon
- Karim Daher, Lawyer and Tax expert

Moderator: Ramzi El Hafez, Founder of InfoPro and Lebanon Opportunities

Break

11:20 Plenary Session 1: What does Lebanon need to comply with international practice?

This panel discusses new tax instruments that are being tested at the global level and looks into the lessons learned from other countries. It reflects on how Lebanon can learn from these experiences to raise revenues as it seeks to finance the provision of public services and improve fiscal sustainability, while promoting equity and restoring growth.

- Georges Maarawi, Director General by interim of the General Directorate of Public Finance, Ministry of Finance of Lebanon
- Rachel Beach, UNDP Regional Tax Advisor
- Nicolas Bou Khater, President of the Lebanese Business Leaders Association (RDCL)
- Nadim Daher, Board Member, Lebanese Association for Taxpayers' Rights (ALDIC)
- Iskandar Boustany, Consultant in Public Financial Management, Financially Wise

Moderator: Sabine Hatem, Senior Economist, Director of Cooperation and Partnerships at the Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan

Break

13:00 Plenary Session 2: The road ahead - A tax system that caters for all

This panel looks into the role of fiscal policy in reducing inequality, notably in the case of Lebanon, where employment in the informal sector reached 48.3% in 2022 (CAS, 2022) and inequality and vulnerability have been exacerbated with the economic and financial crisis. It also discusses the private sector's expectations in terms of tax adjustments, and its views on collaborating with the Government and Parliament to devise a new tax policy.

- Louay El Hajj Chehade, Director of Revenues, Ministry of Finance of Lebanon
- Iman Tabbara, Attorney at Law and Board member of the Private Sector Network
- Nabil Fahed, Vice Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon
- Marie-Noëlle Abi Yaghi, Co-Director, Center for Social Sciences Research and Action

Moderator: Sami Atallah, Founding director and head of research at The Policy Initiative

Concluding remarks