



NEAR EAST FORESTRY AND RANGE COMMISSION

TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

Beirut, Lebanon, 11 - 14 December 2017

INFORMATION NOTE

I. DATES AND VENUE

1. The Twenty-third session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC) will be held in Beirut, Lebanon, from 11 to 14 December 2017.
2. The official opening ceremony of the NEFRC will take place at 09:00 a.m. on Monday, 11 December 2017.
3. The event will take place in Raouche Arjaan by Rotana Hotel, in Beirut.
4. The Raouche Arjaan by Rotana Hotel is located in the heart of Beirut, 10 minute walk from the Lebanese American University, Chouran Beirut, Lebanon; Tel: 00 961 (0) 1 781111; Fax: 00 961 (0) 1 782222.

Email: rayan.fayad@rotana.com

II. LANGUAGES

5. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in Arabic and English.

III. DOCUMENTATION

6. The commission documents will be made available to participants in Arabic, English and French. They will be sent out before the sessions and posted on the NEFRC Commission website: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/31112/en/>. Delegates are kindly requested to take their own documents to the meeting since very few copies will be available during the sessions.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS/LIAISON AGENT

7. Participant's personal correspondence can be addressed to the attention of:

Dr Chadi MOHANNA

Director
Directorate of Rural Development and Natural Resources
The Ministry of Agriculture
Tel: (+961) 1 848 445
Mobile: (+961) 3 456 794
Email: cmohanna@agriculture.gov.lb

Mrs. Pascale Milan

Administrative officer
Directorate of Rural Development and Natural Resources
The Ministry of Agriculture
Tel: (+961) 1 849 621
Mobile: (+961) 3 435 495
Email: pmilan@agriculture.gov.lb or pascale_milan@yahoo.com

V. TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Formalities for entry into Lebanon

8. Participants requiring entry visa to Lebanon are advised to apply for their visas from the Lebanese Consulate or competent Diplomatic Mission in their country before leaving for Beirut, minimum of three weeks prior to the date of travel.
9. Participants are advised to provide, at least two weeks prior to arrival, the name of carrier, flight number, time of arrival and other related information to the Liaison Agent.

VI. HOTELS

10. For accommodation in Beirut, participants may consider the following hotels:

- Raouche Arjaan by Rotana. Tel: +961 1 781 111 (4*)
USD 80+10% VAT per night per person for a single room,
USD 95+10% VAT per night per person for a double room

Breakfast at the buffet included.

Address: P.O. Box 13-5325, Chouran Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: +961 (0) 1781111; Fax: +961 (0) 1782222

- Movenpick Hotel Beirut
USD 140+11% VAT per night per person for a single room

Breakfast at the buffet included.

Address: Mövenpick Hotel Beirut
General de Gaulle Avenue Raoucheh

2038 6908 Beirut, Lebanon
Tel: +961 1 869666; Fax: +961 1 809326
Site: www.movenpick.com

- Holiday Inn Dunes
USD 95+10% VAT per night per person for a single room,
USD 105+10% VAT per night per person for a double room
Breakfast at the buffet included.

Address: Radisson Blu Hotel, Beirut Verdun
Dunes Center, Verdun Main Street
Tel: +961 77 11 31; Fax: +961 77 11 77, M: +961 71 666 201

Layal.jaber@radissonblu.com

Site: www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-beirut-verdun

11. Main criteria in the choice of these hotels were Premium quality– price ratio and security measures and proximity to Conference Room. Participants are encouraged to make reservations by contacting directly the hotel or have reservations made for them upon request (at least ten days in advance) c/o Ms Myriam Aziz (myriam.aziz@fao.org) & Ms Suzan Zeidan (szeidan@agriculture.gov.lb).

12. All funded and self-funded participants will have to pay for their accommodation when checking-out of the hotel. All extra costs, including dinner, room service, telephone, bar etc. will have to be paid by the individual conference participant upon departure. The Lebanese Government and FAO cannot be held liable for any such costs incurred.

VII. TRAVEL FACILITIES

13. The official travel agencies of FAO in the country are as follows:

- 1- The Travel Club, contact person:

Ms. Carole Chalita
Travel Supervisor Agent
Email: travel1@the-travelclub.com
74 Nasra Street, Maasarani bldg., Ashrafieh
Tel: +961 1 209 409/209 509/209 900 Ext: 104
Fax: +961 1 209 709
P.O.Box 16-5712 Beirut, Lebanon

- 2- The Kurban travel, contact person:

Mr. John Tawk
Senior Travel Supervisor Corporate
Email: corporate@kurbancorporate.com
Kantari, Ground Floor, Kurban & Daouk Building, Army street
Tel: +961 1 420620
D. +961 1 420620
Fax: +961 1 370129
P.O.Box 11-1954 Beirut, Lebanon

- 3- The World Wide Travel & Tourism s.a.l; contact person:

Ms. Nancy Tarabay
Email: nancy.tarabay@worldwidetravel-lb.com
Clemenceau, Minet EL-Hosn. Justinian Str.
Beirut – Lebanon. P.O.Box: 113-5663
Tel: +961 1 366 505/6/8. Ext 104.
Fax: +961 1 366509

14. All participants are advised to finalize, at an early date, return travel arrangements. Immediately upon arrival in Beirut, participants are advised to contact the Liaison Agent for confirmation of their departure date and time.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION

15. Airport transfer will be provided by the host country from airport to the hotel and from the hotel to the airport. Please note that you might be sharing airport transfer with other participants.
16. Contact person for airport transfer is Mr Rabih Mouchawrab (+961 3 452 951).
17. Please ensure that you send your flight information and details, including arrival and departure dates and times and the flight numbers to Ms Suzan Zeidan (szeidan@agriculture.gov.lb) with a copy to Ms Myriam Aziz (myriam.aziz@fao.org) before 25 November 2017.
18. Please indicate if you would NOT like to make use of the pre-arranged shuttle-service both from and to the airport.
19. Upon your departure, kindly make sure to be ready to be picked-up from the hotel's lobby at least three hours prior to your flight time.

IX. FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND BANKING

20. The official Lebanese currency is the Lebanese pound or lira (LL). Notes are available in denominations of: LL1,000; LL5,000; LL10,000; LL20,000; LL50,000; and LL100,000. There are also LL250 and LL500 coins. In daily dealings, foreign currency can be exchanged at the official rate at hotels or banks. U.S. dollars are used widely throughout the country. Restaurants, hotels, and stores often quote their prices in U.S. dollars, and many establishments will convert and provide U.S. dollar prices for you upon request. The bank rate at present is approximately USD1= LL1500. Internationally-recognized credit cards are accepted in hotels, major shops and restaurants.

X. MEDICAL SERVICES AND SECURITY

21. Each traveller should carry an international travel insurance to cover any medical emergency. Medical and first aid services will be available at the Conference premises. For medical emergencies please press the emergency button on the nearest phone and for all other medical services, call the reception.
22. Strict security measures are observed at the conference venue. Metal detectors are in operation at all the hotel's Buildings entrance. Participants are advised not to leave briefcases or any valuable items unattended in conference rooms.
23. Once Participants have checked into their hotels, it is advisable to leave important documents such as passports in the hotel safe and to carry a photocopy.
24. The following numbers may be useful in case of emergency outside the hotel: Medical Emergencies 140; General Emergencies 112; Fire 125.

XI. REGISTRATION

25. Participants are requested to kindly complete the attached registration form and return it as soon as possible to the addresses indicated before 25 November.

XII. ACCESS TO CONFERENCE VENUE

26. Shuttles will be available for the participants who are staying in the listed hotels above

XIII. CAR RENTAL

27. Participants requiring cars can make their own arrangements with local car hire firms. The average rental price is about 30 USD/day. Following are recommended Car Rental companies:

- Avis. Tel: +961 1 762621
- Formula. Tel: +961 1 501155
- Hertz. Tel: +961 1 427783

Car rental can also be arranged at the hotel concierge desk.

XIV. TAXIS

28. Taxis are the most reliable for public transportation in Lebanon. This service can be provided by the concierge team (Ground Floor, Lobby area) at the hotel. You can also contact the following taxi companies:

High Taxi. Tel: +961 1 328728

Smart Taxi. Tel: +961 1 496060

Comfort Taxi. Tel: +961 1 697666

Ready Taxi. Tel: +961 1 397993

XV. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

29. Apart from buses, people are served by either service or taxis. 'Service' is a lot cheaper than taxis however, to avoid misunderstanding, agreement over the pricing needs to be made before setting off. Note: Meters are NOT used in Lebanon. Prices for Taxis must be negotiated before entering the vehicle.

30. Service-taxis are probably the most popular means of transportation in Lebanon and recognizable by their red plate. People can take a service or taxi just by hailing in the street. If there are no passengers, it has to be specified if it is needed as a "taxi" (private cab) or as a "service" (shared cab).

Types of taxis in Lebanon

31. Service-taxis "share" taxi

One has to specify one's destination and enter the taxi only if one's destination corresponds to the itinerary of the Service-taxi. The driver stops to pick up additional passengers anywhere on the streets and drop them off generally in main squares and main streets. It remains advantageous with very low fares.

32. Service-Taxi Taxi

Local LBP 2000 (\$1.32) per person or LBP 4000 (\$2.64) per person depending on how close/far the destination is. All prices within Beirut should not exceed LBP 4000 per person (Maximum of LBP 5000 for Beirut outskirts). (Note: If the driver says 'Servicene', he means double the 'Service' price, i.e. LBP 4000 per person). Long Distance LBP 5.000 (\$3.50) to LBP 30.000 (\$20)

33. Traditional Taxis

The driver must not pick up additional passengers. Most of these taxis are not equipped with meters, so negotiate the fare before embarking. The estimation of the fare is therefore often an approximate.

34. On-call taxis

Pick up people who have pre-booked by phone. They don't respond to hails in the street. They don't have a meter so passengers should ask the operator the price when they are booking the taxi, and double check with the driver at the end of the journey.

XVI. CONFERENCE VENUES

Catering and Dining Facilities

35. The hosted country will cover the coffee breaks and lunches from 11 to 14 December for all participants. Dinners are on charge of each participant.

WiFi Coverage

36. WIFI is provided for the conference attendees at the meeting rooms.

XVII. BANKING AND CURRENCY EXCHANGE FACILITIES

37. The official Lebanese currency is the Lebanese pound or lira (LL).

38. Banking hours are Monday through Saturday, 8:30-14:00.

39. Internationally-recognized credit cards are accepted in hotels, major shops and restaurants.

40. The SGBL Bank and the BLOM bank are located on the Ground Floor, of the Tayar Building, one block next to the hotel and are open from Monday to Friday from 8 am till 2 pm. The Libano-Francaise Bank, is located on the Ground Floor, of the building facing the Hotel, and is open from 8 am to 2 pm. Cash dispensers (ATM) for credit card withdrawals are located at the entrance of Le Mall inside Hilton Habtoor Beirut Grand Building.

XVIII. WEATHER

41. The weather during December is usually cold in Lebanon (between 11° and 18 °).

XIX. ELECTRICITY

42. Electric current is 220 volts cycles. A two-pin plug, with round pins is commonly used (Type C, similar to many European countries).

XX. SHOPPING

43. Shops and businesses are typically open Monday through Saturday, 9:00-18:00. Hours vary, and in summer many establishments close early. Restaurant hours vary, and many restaurants, especially in Beirut, are open late. Sunday: official shutdown (Except big stores and trade centers).
44. Shops open from 9:00a.m. to 7:00p.m. except on Sunday.
45. Big stores and trade centers open daily even on Sundays and holidays (from 9:00a.m. to 11:00 p.m.). Small shops open in local areas almost all day long.
46. Nearby Shopping centres are:
 - ABC Hamra
 - Beirut Souks, Beirut Downtown

For more information related to Restaurants, Shopping and Businesses, please visit <http://www.whereleb.com/>

XXI. STUDY TOURS AND EXCURSIONS

47. A field trip will be organized on 13 December 2017. Location to be confirmed later.
48. Transportation and meal will be provided for all participants.
49. All participants are invited by the host country to a Gala Dinner on 13 December 2017 at 8:00 p.m.