



UNITED NATIONS

الأمم المتحدة
ESCWA

Welcome to ESCWA

Practical Information about ESCWA
and Lebanon

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Welcome to ESCWA

Practical Information about ESCWA
and Lebanon



www.escwa.un.org

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WELCOME TO ESCWA

Table of contents

P.5 I. ESCWA

P.5 Membership

P.5 Objectives

P.5 Mission

P.7 II. Lebanon in Brief

P.7 History

P.7 Geography and climate

P.8 Time

P.8 Language

P.8 Religion

P.8 Currency

P.8 Culture

P.9 Visas

P.9 Accommodation and hotels

P.11 Getting around Beirut

P.11 Shopping

P.12 Banking

P.12 Communications

P.12 Schools and universities

P.13 Personal safety

P.13 Roads and driving

P.14 Medical care

P.14 Map

P.14 Useful websites

P.15 ESCWA useful numbers

P.15 Lebanon useful numbers

P.17 III. Your first day at ESCWA

P.17 Your first day

P.18 Your first week

P.19 Your first pay

P.20 Miscellaneous

P.23 IV. Salaries and related allowances/benefits

P.23 Salary

P.23 Post adjustment

P.23 Rental subsidy

P.23 Rental deductions

P.24 Dependency allowance

P.24 Education grant

P.25 Assignment grant

P.25 Repatriation grant

P.25 Non-removal allowance

P.25 Hardship allowance

P.26 Mobility allowance

P.26 Medical insurance subsidy

P.26 Pension fund

P.27 Leave



I. ESCWA

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) traces its roots to the establishment of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) on 9 August 1973 pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV). The purpose of setting up the Commission was to raise the level of economic activity in member countries and strengthen cooperation among them. It was also intended to meet the need of the countries in Western Asia for the services of a regional economic commission to promote the development efforts in the region.

In recognition of the social component of its work, the Commission was entrusted with new responsibilities in the social field by virtue of Economic and Social Council resolution 69/1985 of July 1985. Its name therefore became the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). For more information, please see: <http://www.escwa.un.org>.

Membership

ESCWA comprises 18 Arab countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Objectives

1. To support economic and social development in the countries of the region;
2. To promote cooperation between the countries of the region;

3. To encourage interaction between member countries and promote the exchange of experience, best practice and lessons learned;
4. To achieve regional integration between member countries, and to ensure interaction between Western Asia and other regions of the world;
5. To familiarize the outside world with the circumstances and needs of the countries in the region.

Mission

ESCWA provides a framework for the formulation and harmonization of sectoral policies for member countries, a platform for congress and coordination, a home for expertise and knowledge, and an information observatory. ESCWA activities are coordinated with the divisions and main offices of the Headquarters of the United Nations, specialized agencies, and international and regional organizations, including the League of Arab States and its subsidiary bodies, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

ESCWA has been located in a number of Arab capitals. It started in Beirut (1974 - 1982), moved to Baghdad, Iraq (1982 - 1991), Amman, Jordan (1991 - 1997), and returned to Beirut, Lebanon in 1997, its permanent headquarters. In the following chapter, information about Lebanon is presented for your reference.



hinterland, and to this day accentuate the western orientation of the coastal dwellers. Above all, the mountains, which were carved by numerous deep valleys cutting across the western slopes, constitute a separating element which until recently hindered a centralized administration of the country.

Most of Lebanon has a Mediterranean climate, with warm, dry summers, and cool, wet winters, although the climate varies somewhat across the landform belts. The coastal plain is subtropical, with 900 mm (35 in) of annual rainfall and a mean temperature in Beirut of 27°C (80°F) in summer and 14°C (57°F) in winter. In the Lebanon Mountains, temperatures decrease and precipitation increases with elevation: heavy winter snows linger well into summer, making the Lebanon Mountains more pleasant in the summer than the humid coast; higher altitudes receive as much as 1,300 mm (50 in) of annual precipitation. The Bekaa Valley and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains are situated in the rain shadow of the Lebanon Mountains and as a result have hot, dry summers and cold winters with occasional rain.

Time

Lebanese time is G.M.T. +2 hours in winter (end of October to March) and +3 hours in summer (April to September), when daylight savings time is observed.

Language

While Arabic is Lebanon's official language, English and French are widely spoken. Most Lebanese speak at least two or three languages, and visitors will find no problems communicating. Many establishments provide signs, menus and information in both Arabic and English.

Religion

There are two major religions in the country: Islam (Shia, Sunni and Druze) and Christianity (Maronite Church, Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church and Armenian Apostolic Church).

Currency

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. United States dollars \$ are used widely throughout the country. Restaurants, hotels, and stores often quote their prices in dollars, and many establishments will convert and provide dollar prices for you upon request. If you plan to use dollars, it is advisable to bring small bills (\$1 to \$20 notes).

The \$/LL exchange rate is relatively stable, hovering around \$1=LL1,500 (as of November 2014). Money or travelers checks can be exchanged at banks, private money exchange shops and major hotels. Major credit cards (Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Diners Club) are accepted at most large establishments throughout the country. ATMs are also widely available in Beirut and larger cities and will usually dispense both dollars and Lebanese pounds.

Culture

The Lebanese cultural heritage combines the ruins of temples, castles and streets, statues, monuments, sarcophagus, funeral steles, thrones, inscriptions, mosaics, as well as relics including of tools, offerings, jewelry, utensils, armory and coins. All that in addition to modern artworks of sculpture, paintings, music and more.

Based on this cultural and architectural richness found in Lebanon and accumulated throughout the ages, Lebanese museums were established in order to preserve this distinguished heritage and to make it accessible to the public.

Today, Lebanon has many public and private museums spread all over the country and some are found inside archeological sites (Beiteddine, Baalbek, Byblos etc.), or inside monasteries and religious shrines. Besides, there are private museums named after Lebanese craftsmen, artists, writers and intellectuals.

- Cultural activities:
<http://www.agendaculturel.com/fr-Accueil>
- Cinemas:
<http://lb.cineklik.com/?ref=main>

Visas

Newly recruited staff members can obtain entry visas to Lebanon at Lebanese embassies in their countries of residence upon notification from ESCWA.

Upon arrival to the duty station, you need to apply for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) ID for yourself and your eligible dependents by filling forms provided to you by the Visa Team which are also available in ESTAD. The MOFA ID is your residency permit in Lebanon.

When applying for the MOFA ID, you need to provide the following supporting documents: copy of national passport, copy of UNLP if available, copy of entry visa and airport entry stamp and three (3) standard passport photos.

For passport photos, staff members should wear a shirt with a collar, necktie (for men) and preferably a jacket. National clothes are accepted.

Accommodation and hotels

ESCWA has arrangements for special rates with several nearby hotels which might be helpful upon arrival, (please contact HR for an updated list of those hotels).

You will need to wait until you have arrived in Beirut to begin searching for an apartment. The process of looking for an apartment can take anything from 2 to 8 weeks or longer. There is no need to rush – for the first 30 days, your Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) should be more than enough to cover your costs, and you only receive a rental subsidy after this period has run out, i.e. one month after you've been in the country.

Most international staff live in either Hamra (West Beirut) or Achrafieh (East Beirut). Both are pretty much walking distance to work - about half an hour. Both are comparable in terms of amenities/safety; in the end, it generally comes down to a question of personal choice. Quieter surroundings can be found a bit further away from the city.

Brokers are in contact with landlords and handle the whole process of looking for apartments, drawing up contracts, making inventories and handling any problems. Brokers take one month rent in fees from both the tenant and the landlord. ESCWA will reimburse around 80 per cent of your share above your housing threshold the first time you use a broker. Don't be afraid to ask your broker for anything: the combined fees they get from you and your landlord represent very good money by Lebanese standards! Make sure you ask about their charges in advance and see if you agree, as very few might charge you daily fees for showing you apartments and for the time they spend with you!

A cheaper way of finding an apartment is simply to ask concierges in buildings you like whether anything is available. Some people have found apartments by walking around the area they want to live in and asking around.

Things to look for when viewing an apartment:

- A generator in the building (unless you are happy to live without electricity for at least three hours a day);
- A landline (since it can be a hassle to get one, see more below);
- Noise (in particular from construction sites or traffic, the majority of Beirut has construction sites);
- Parking space (how large it is, and whether it is convenient) – while you may feel totally unnerved by driving upon first arrival – you will soon come to realize that with the lack of good transportation, you will consider buying a car later (see later section), so planning ahead with the apartment may help;
- Air conditioning (AC) and heating;
- What else is included (building charges, satellite TV subscription, concierge, etc.);
- A room for a helper (you may choose to get a helper to do domestic chores), could it serve as a good storage room; most apartments will have this;
- Storage facilities (does it have enough built in wardrobes?);
- Access to common facilities (pool, rooftop terrace, BBQ facilities, etc);
- Access to a supermarket;
- Access to taxis, etc. (will it be a hassle to tell a taxi driver how to bring you home each time?)
- Sense of community – some areas can seem very impersonal while other places are very close-knit are residents have been with each other for decades. If this is something you value, then look/ask around to see if you can tell how your neighbours will take to you moving in.

Generally, asking around may be the best option if you want to avoid brokers, but remember it's not necessarily a very reliable or safe option, particularly as a foreigner. You can also check weekly advertising newspapers and sites to at least get an initial idea of what to expect and where to rent, but you should look at those with a precaution as a broker might be behind the advert, e.g.:

- <http://lebanon.dubizzle.com/en/beirut/home/>
- <http://www.propertyfinder.com.lb/en/>

Hint1: Take a camera to the viewings, so that you can remember what you saw, because if you see 10 apartments or more, you will not remember what you liked about the first one.

Hint 2: Everything is negotiable – there are no set prices for rent. Don't take the first price as a given. Having said that, good properties come and go very quickly ...

Hint 3: If you can't bring the price down – make sure to ask for additional things to be included in the deal.

Hint 4: Always ensure you put the “diplomatic clause” in the contract (2 months notice). Ideally, you would want to pay 3 months' rent at a time, rather than 1 year up front, but most landlords want at least 6 months' rent in advance.

There is an excel sheet on the ESCWA intranet which you can use to calculate your housing subsidy.

Getting around Beirut

Beirut is not very big, and most areas are accessible by foot. There are some buses in Beirut; if you can find one going in your direction, it should cost you no more than LL1000 (\$0.67), and you can hop on and off wherever you need. They can be quite slow, however.

Most people get around by taxi. There are two kinds of taxis – the “service” (pronounced the French way – “ser-vees”) and the normal taxi. The service runs as a kind of shared taxi – other people may get in en route to your destination. If you are OK with this, then tell the taxi driver “service” and make sure he agrees before getting in the taxi.

For any taxi, you should always agree on the price with the driver before getting in. Standard maximum prices are:

- LL2,000 for a service
- LL8,000 - LL10,000 for a taxi going a significant distance (e.g. Hamra-Downtown, Hamra-Achrafieh)
- LL10,000+ for further distances

You really should not pay more than these prices, as this causes inflation for everyone (including less affluent Lebanese who may not be able to absorb increased costs). However, there are plenty of taxi drivers and (especially if you look non-Lebanese) they will look for you. You can therefore negotiate prices and hold out for lower ones.

If you want a taxi for a specific journey (e.g. an airport pick-up) it might be best to call ahead (average cost is around LL20.000). Taxis can also be hired to go out of town, again either as individual taxis or services. Usually they will depart from specific locations depending on your destination:

- The North (Jounieh-Byblos-Tripoli): taxis

depart from the Charles Malik bus station near Beirut Port

- The South (Sidon-Tyre): taxis depart from the Mazraa (or Cola) bus station

However, going along the coast can also be done by buses departing from the same places - this is usually cheaper. People at the bus station will usually offer you a service taxi first, but if you tell them you want a bus, this is no problem.

- www.mot.gov.lb
- <http://www.tourism-lebanon.com/>

Shopping

You can buy almost everything in Lebanon, but prices are not very low: most things are comparable in price to Europe. Some specialized regional food might be difficult to find, and if you can find it, it is likely to be comparatively expensive.

It is really easy to get cash as there are ATMs pretty much anywhere. US dollars and Lebanese liras are totally interchangeable at a stable rate of LL1500 to \$1. If you pay for something with a large banknote, you may well receive change in both Lebanese Lira and dollars. You really only LL for taxis and they even take dollars if you don't have liras.

Major supermarkets include TSC (Verdun, Achrafieh, City Mall and Downtown) and Spinney's (Achrafieh etc.), Bou Khalil (Hamra), and Coop (Hamra). In addition to groceries, they also sell some household items and are not bad as a first port of call if you don't know where to find something. Another option for household items is BHV (City Mall and Jnah).

As for electronics, it may be wise to consider getting them from abroad (with a friend or if you travel) then bring them back with you.

Generally electronics are more expensive here in comparison to US/EU internet prices.

- List of malls:
<http://www.tourism-lebanon.com/MallsInLebanon.asp>

Banking

Byblos bank is close to the ESCWA premises. The ESCWA staff Council received several offers from different banks for staff (check Staff Council pages on the Intranet)

- List of banks:
www.bdl.gov.lb/downloads/download/82/en

Credit cards / loans / UNFCU

If you are a 'credit card' person, you will find that you will not be able to get a local credit card unless you put a "bond" into an escrow account [most probably due to the possibility of diplomatic staff leaving at short notice!]. Getting a car loan, etc. is also difficult for the same reason.

It is recommended to open a United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU) account (New York, USA based) - UNFCU has very good rates for car loans. Also, you can use a credit card (55 days interest free, etc.) from UNFCU. UNFCU is there to serve UN staff. However, not having a local office here in Beirut makes it difficult to open up a bank account. It is best to find someone travelling to UNHQ (NY or Geneva) or to possibly wait until you are there on a mission/induction to submit your application.

You can split your pay so that some portion goes into UNFCU (or another foreign account) and some portion goes into a local bank account. Some people do this, so that in case of emergency, not all their money is stuck in one place (banks will normally be the first to lock up their money in case of problems).

Communications

The country code for Lebanon is (961). This is followed by the local area code and the telephone number. The area codes for mobile phones are: (03), (70), (71) or (76). The area code for Beirut is (01). If you are dialing Lebanon from outside the country, omit the (0) in the area code.

There are 2 main mobile phone providers, Alfa and MTC Touch, with MTC Touch generally being considered slightly cheaper. Pay as you go is potentially more expensive than getting a monthly plan, but it could take a while to set up a monthly plan.

- www.alfa.com.lb ,
<http://www.touch.com.lb>

Landlines normally need to be in the name of the owner of your apartment so you need to organize this when you move in. You can get a land line through Ogero (www.ogero.gov.lb). Usually it takes around 2 weeks to be installed.

Regarding Internet there are two options: an ADSL line (for which you need a landline), or a USB dongle with a provider such as Mobi. You also have the wireless option, which requires a router and a cable.

- List of Internet providers:
<http://www.lebweb.com/dir/lebanon-internet-providers>

Schools and universities

Schools

Generally, the requirement for higher education is the Lebanese Baccalaureate obtained at the completion of secondary school, but the French Baccalaureate and some other international standard diplomas are accepted as equivalent. Some private

schools offer the International Baccalaureate as well (see ACS below). School starts at age 4 with Kindergarten and follow the northern hemisphere dates (Sept till Jun). Childcare / pre-schools: Most local areas have a “garderie” (nursery) to look after children under 4 years old. They tend to be French speaking irrespective of the area you live in (with the one exception being the one at ACS).

- List of private schools:
http://www.schoolnet.edu.lb/schools/private_schools.htm

Universities

In 1866 the American University of Beirut (AUB) was founded and other universities in Lebanon followed, starting by the University of Saint-Joseph (USJ) in 1875, then the Lebanese American University (LAU) 1947 as a Beirut College for Women. Founded in 1951, the Lebanese University (LU <http://www.ul.edu.lb>) is the only public university in Lebanon. Currently there is one public university and 28 private universities in Lebanon granted a license from the Ministry of Education.

Having Arabic, French and English as the main languages of instructions universities in Lebanon offer multilingual degree programs for the bachelor’s degree, the master’s degree and the doctoral degree. Institutes of technology usually provide only courses for the bachelor’s degree.

- List of private universities:
http://www.higher-edu.gov.lb/english/Private_Univ.htm

Personal safety

Generally, crime in Beirut is quite low. There are usually people on the main streets 24/7, and people in the main areas are

usually friendly and will help out if needed. However, as in most cities you are advised to guard your personal effects such as handbags/laptops, particularly when using shared taxis (see below). Females should also be on guard against verbal harassment by males.

You will receive regular security updates from the UN Security Information Operations Center, based in Lebanon, via email and SMS.

If anything happens, call UN SIOC on +961-5-428-112/3 for help.

Roads and driving

Driving in Lebanon has improved (amazingly over the last year) and still continues to improve. While there appears to be a disregard for any rules, and traffic police appear to be powerless to enforce any form of order, with a bit of patience ... you will find driving bearable. You may find that you are more comfortable behind the wheel than being a passenger.

It is the only way to really explore the beautiful countryside – but obviously, you don’t need to consider this in the first month that you are here.

You should take time to be informed about what the Host-country agreement with the UN provides in terms of tax and duty free privileges for new car purchases.

Unlike in other duty stations, all levels of international staff at ESCWA are provided with diplomatic license plates (there are differences depending on level of the staff member) – this makes things a lot easier, i.e. less hassle at checkpoints, etc. (The Travel and Visa Unit will give you all the details about this).

Rental cars are available for hire for weekends, etc, but you will sometimes need to book early

to avoid disappointment – this does not leave a lot of room for spontaneity / last minute trips to the mountains.

Medical care

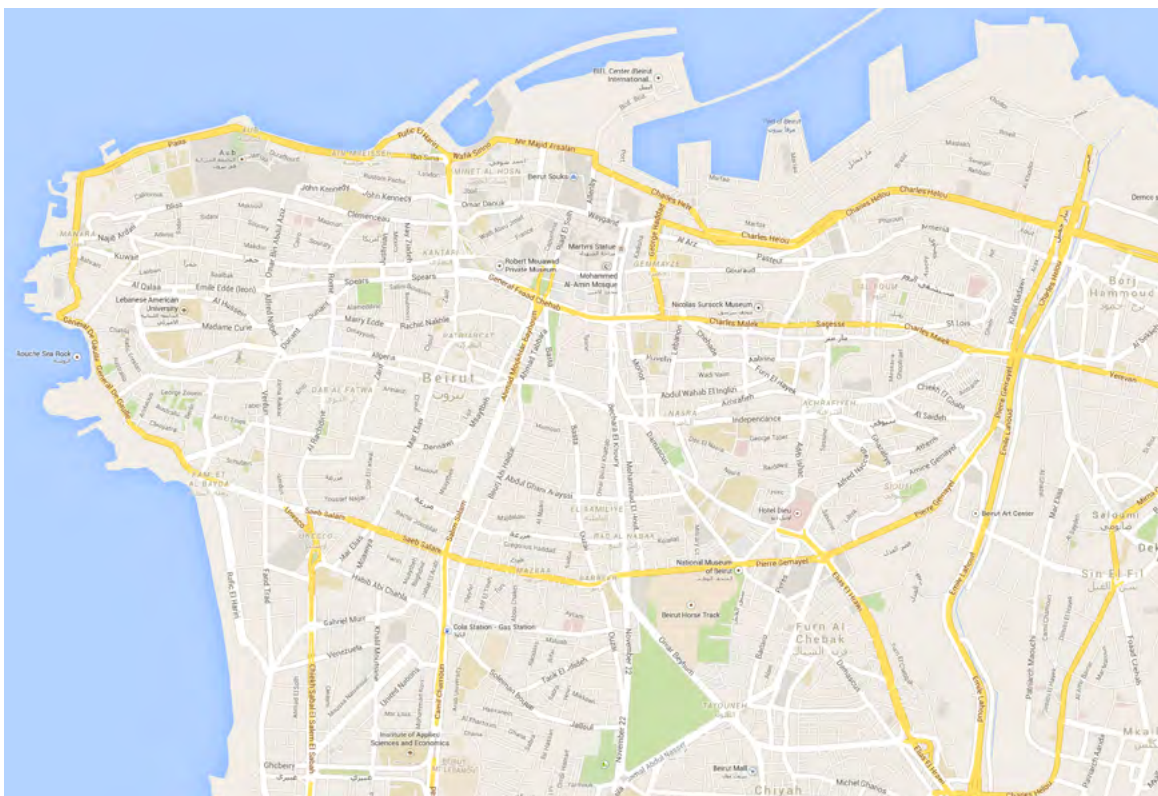
Of course, visit the ESCWA Doctor for any concerns that you may have. Most drugs are available at pharmacies (without the strict limitations of EU/USA), but you will need to have a prescription to be reimbursed by the medical insurance. Some pharmacies close late and some even open 24 hours, e.g.

- In Achrafieh, Pharmacie Le Gabriel (near Chili's restaurant /Hospital Rizk);
- In Hamra, there is one close to the Hallmark store, Abdel Aziz Street going towards AUB;
- In Corniche El Mazraa , Mazen Pharmacy, Mazraa Main Street.

Most hospitals have arrangements with Vanbreda International (<https://www.vanbreda-international.com/en>).

- List of Hospitals:
<http://www.syndicateofhospitals.org.lb/hospitals/>

Map



Useful websites

- Yellow pages: <http://www.yellowpages.com.lb/>
- Beirut Airport: <http://wap.beirutairport.gov.lb/>
- <http://www.lebanon---tourism.gov.lb>

ESCWA useful numbers

Operator	1234
Reception desk	1000
HRMS	1305/1306
Cafeteria	1020
Cashier	1304
ID card	1008
Library	1204
Medical Unit	1145/1146
Staff Council	1554/1437
Telephone operator	9
Travel and Visa Unit	1132/1188

Lebanon useful numbers

Beirut International Airport (Inside Lebanon)	150
Red Cross	140
Directory	120
Ogero	1515
Lebanese army	1701 1702
Internal Security	112 160 1772 1717
Fire Department	175
Civil Defense	125



III. Your First Day at ESCWA

Your first day

We have included the following checklist to guide you through your first day.

The list is not exhaustive and in some instances will include steps you may not have to take depending on your contractual status.

Office	Task	Contact	Location
1. Human Resources Management Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-in Induction List • Verify original documents: personal documents and academic degrees • Complete induction papers forms • Complete F-10 claims for: payment of assignment grant, payment of relocation grant, reimbursement of travel expenses, reimbursement of medical expenses • Participation in the health and life insurance plans • Receive briefings from HR Partners on conditions of service, allowances and benefits, applicable payroll deductions of staff members. 	Human Resources Assistant and Officer	UN House 3rd floor
2. Budget and Finance Section Cashier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary distribution form • Important: It is advisable that local currency and/or foreign currency accounts be opened on the day of arrival before meeting staff of the Financial Services Section as banking information is required on the salary distribution form. 	Finance Assistant	UN House Cashier 3rd floor
3. General Services Section Travel and Visa Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive briefing from Visa Assistant on diplomatic privileges and immunities and visa requirements • Receive briefing from Visa Assistant on Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Application. • Note: Driving license (two 4 x 5 cm photographs required) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) ID card (two 4 x 5 cm - photographs required) will be requested after arrival. 	Visa Assistant	UN House 1st floor

Office	Task	Contact	Location
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A United Nations Laissez-passer (UNLP) may be issued after arrival. The application is to be downloaded from ESCWA Intranet and requires a 51 x 51mm photograph. 		
4. Security and Safety Section Pass Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for ID card and Access Card. Make appointment for Briefing on Fire and Evacuation 	Security Officer	Pass Office
5. Information Communications Services Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receiving briefing on computer facilities at ESCWA Receive briefing on telephone services and billing at ESCWA. 	Information Technology Assistant	UN House 2nd floor

Your first week

In your first week during lunch breaks or at convenient times you may wish to familiarize yourself with the following:

Catering services

Cafeteria, Ground Floor : Open from 8:00 to 15:00

Garage facilities and parking regulations

ESCWA staff members can fill in a parking application form available online and submit to the General Services Section with the following supporting documents:

- Valid driver's license;
- Car registration;
- Insurance policy (Mandatory bodily insurance & Material damages minimum \$50,000)
- ESCWA ID

A charge of \$20 per month will be applied to all ESCWA staff holding a parking permit at the UN House. Parking charges will automatically be deducted from the monthly payroll.

Permit holders will be charged these fees regardless of vehicle size and type: motorcycles and scooters will be charged the same amount as cars.

The minimum charge will be for a complete month, with no pro-rating for shorter durations.

Library services

The ESCWA library mission is to provide the most recent economic and social information in a very efficient and professional means, and access to information in all formats to ESCWA staff, member countries and academic researchers. The Library builds and maintains collections and services to meet the requirements of the ESCWA work programme as set by member States. The Library does this by acquiring and organizing resources, providing direct and mediated access to information, participating in cooperative networking with UN Regional Commissions, UN agencies and university libraries within the region, and teaching its users to locate, obtain and evaluate information.

The ESCWA Library has a specialized collection of United Nations and ESCWA

official documents and publications in print and digital formats related to economic and social development in the region. The Library also provides access to a comprehensive collection of electronic resources, including full text databases: books and journals in a wide variety of subject areas. Staff members of the United Nations are invited to arrange appointments for comprehensive briefings on the library resources and services by calling ext. 1204/1207 by e-mail: bakleh@un.org. The Library offers a variety of services that responds to staff needs such as: training on using information resources and finding quality information, document delivery service, answering staff enquiries, etc.

ESCWA Library is located on the second floor of the UN House. It is open from 07:30 until 15:00 each working day. ESCWA staff members are invited to use library resources and services by visiting the Library on the second floor, or via the Library Intranet page <http://intranet.escwa.un.org/library/main.asp>.

Medical services

The Joint Medical Service (JMS) is headed by a Medical Officer who is accountable to the Director of ASD at ESCWA and to the UN Medical Director at MSD, UNHQ. The service is staffed with a full time Medical Officer, two registered nurses and one staff assistant. It is located on the first floor of the UN House (West Wing) and working hours are from 7:30 to 15:00. Staff are encouraged to make an appointment prior to seeking medical consultations for non-urgent cases either by calling ext. 1145 or 1146, or by email to: soubra@un.org or louka@un.org.

JMS provides health services (mainly occupational health & safety services) to ESCWA staff members and to all UN staff under JMS.

The health services provided to ESCWA staff are:

- Medical examinations and consultations;
- Medical clearances for recruitment,

reassignment and mission deployment of staff;

- "Walk-in" clinic;
- Travel health clinic;
- Emergency and first-aid care;
- Referral to outside specialists or hospitals;
- Preventive health services including Seasonal Flu Vaccination Campaigns;
- Issue, evaluate and certify sick leave for staff, pregnancy/maternity leave;
- Assistance with Health Insurance (Van Breda) and follow up;
- Ergonomic work station assessment;
- Disability, compensation and medical evacuation;
- Psychosocial assistance in conjunction with Staff Counselor when available;
- Courtesy medical services to the participants to the meetings conducted by ESCWA, and to visitors and contractors.

For more information, you may access the following link: <http://intranet.escwa.un.org/medicalunit/main.asp>.

Staff bulletin board

An Electronic Bulletin Boards is accessible from the ESCWA Intranet. It includes details of events to be held by ESCWA, a listing of apartments for rent or sale and goods or vehicles for sale by staff members.

Social Media

<https://twitter.com/escwaciu> (ESCWA Media Office on Twitter)

<https://www.facebook.com/unescwa/info> (ESCWA on Facebook)

Your first pay

Salaries are paid monthly, during the last week of the month. Gross base salary will be subject to United Nations staff assessment, equivalent to an income tax, and withheld at source. Salaries can be paid in two currencies.

They may be deposited into up to two bank accounts, i.e. a US dollar account at a Lebanese bank and a US dollar account at any bank. Instructions on how the salary should be paid need to be given to the ESCWA Cashier.

For information on salaries and related allowances/benefits, please refer to Annex IV.

Miscellaneous

Working hours

There is a five-day work week, Monday to Friday. The official working hours of ESCWA are from 7:30 to 15:00 from Monday to Friday without lunch breaks for a total of 37.5 work hours per week. The core hours, during which every staff member must be present at the office, are from 9:00 to 15:00 daily.

Flexible Working Arrangements are available under the following options

- Staggered working hours (flexibility within the working day). Under this Option, staff members may request to start work between 07:30 and 09:00 hours and may leave between 15:00 and 16:30 hours, bearing in mind that the core hours are from 09:00 to 15:00, and provided that the total working hours per day equal seven hours and a half, excluding a lunch break.
- Compressed work schedule (the equivalent of ten working days in nine).
- Scheduled break for learning (maximum 3 hours/day for maximum 2 days/week).
- Work away from office (telecommuting up to 2 days/week).

Flexible working arrangements are adjustments to staff member's regular work schedule on a recurring basis to respond to their work-life needs. They are not a staff member's entitlement and managerial discretion would prevail in the approval of

individual flexible working arrangements schedules.

Number of staff

Currently there are 416 staff members working for ESCWA, of which 413 work in Beirut, and 3 in Amman.

Office temperature

The office is air-conditioned and the temperature is maintained at 22 to 25 degrees, occasionally warranting the use of a jacket or sweater.

Telephone

For internal connections, simply dial the number of the extension you require. If you wish to speak to the operator, dial "1234". For an outside line, dial "0", and wait for the dial tone; then dial the number required.

Staff Union

All staff members of ESCWA and its associated offices, including personnel employed on a non-reimbursable loan basis, are ipso facto members of the Union. However, only subscribing members are eligible to vote in elections or stand for election. The Staff Association elects on biennial basis the Staff Council members, to organize and coordinate various activities of the Association including various sporting and cultural activities. Major activities of the Staff Union are reported on its site through the ESCWA bulletin board and on the ESCWA intranet.

Language classes

Staff members on permanent, continuing and fixed-term appointments can enroll in Arabic, English, French and Spanish language classes (beginner, intermediate and advanced), depending on demand. Details can be obtained from the Training Unit, Human Resources

Management Section, located on the 3rd floor of the UN House. Special arrangements for language courses in Chinese and Russian can be made, if requested, by the Training Unit.

Arabic classes only are given in-house. Other language courses are given at the respective cultural centers.

United Nations group life insurance plan

Staff members are eligible to join if they have a letter of appointment for six months or more. Details are available in the relevant Information Circulars.

Dress code

There is no written dress code, but appropriate office attire should be worn. Men wear suits for meetings and usually a shirt

and tie in the office. Casual clothes are not worn in the office.

Security and Safety Section

The Security and Safety Section responds to calls for assistance from staff members on a 24-hour basis. Staff may call the Security Emergency line on 01 961 000 or extension 1000 at any time during day or night.

Staff are advised to report all incidents of a security-related nature, such as petty crime, house break-in and street robberies, to the Security Control Room for assistance and advice.

Upon arrival, staff members are to ensure they make arrangements with the ESCWA Security and Safety Section for a briefing.

INSURANCE HEALTH BENEFITS
BENEFIT THINGS INSURER PRIVATE
VACATION AMONG FUNDING
WORKER INCLUDE PERKS CENTRAL
HOUSING MONTHLY PACKAGING INCLUDES
DISABILITY SALARY SOCIAL EXPENSE
GIVEN
EMPLOYEE PERQS
RISK
EXPENSES
MEDICAL WAGES EXIST FIRST
OFTEN ORGANIZATION
EMPLOYER-PAD AVAILABLE COVERAGE EXAMPLES
SHARING
PROFIT
PROTECTION
ACCIDENTAL
AND/OR
PERQUISITES
P
DENTAL
DEFINED
SCHEDULING
RETIREMENT
STATIONERY
LEAVE
SYSTEM
CALLED
COMPENSATIONS
TUITION
WORK
INCOME
REFRESHMENTS
INSTANCES
VACANCIES
COLLOQUIALLY
TERM
ENGLISH
STAFF
ECONOMIC
LEISURE
JOB
GROUP
SALARIES
SENIORITY
INCURRING
ADDITION
TAX
CASH
DEGREE
RETENTION

IV. Salaries and related allowances/benefits

The following section contains information on the various benefits and entitlements of ESCWA staff. This list is created for general guidance only. For all specific queries, please consult your HR focal point.

Salary

Your gross base salary will be subject to United Nations staff assessment, which is much like an income tax. The staff assessment is computed at single or dependency rate as appropriate. Deduction is made at the dependency rate for a staff member with a dependent spouse or a dependent child, and at the single rate for a staff member without dependants. Whether or not your spouse or child is accorded dependent status will be determined by the United Nations definition of dependency. It should be noted that the entire staff assessment is withheld at source.

United States citizens and permanent residents (even if your official United Nations nationality is different) who have signed the waiver of privileges and immunities are subject to United States income tax and the United Nations will refund such income tax actually due on your United Nations emoluments. For more information, please refer to ST/IC/2004/31; also consult the Tax Unit at UNHQ at 212-963-2949.

Post adjustment

Post adjustment is a non-pensionable amount that is added to the base salary in order to maintain equity in standards of living

at different locations. It is paid at single or dependency rate, and is not subject to staff assessment. As the amount can vary from month to month, the post adjustment mentioned is the one applicable during the month in which the offer is made.

Rental subsidy

The purpose of the rental subsidy scheme is to ensure a greater degree of equity and to alleviate hardships for staff members whose rented accommodations are of reasonable standard but cost significantly more than the average for the duty station. The United Nations Development Programme has determined reasonable maximum rent levels based on family size as below.

Family size	Maximum rent level*
Staff member without dependents	US\$ 4,000
Staff members with dependents	US\$ 5,000

*Under the scheme, ESCWA will reimburse 80 per cent of the rent in excess of your threshold amount. (The threshold amount is calculated as a percentage of the net salary. It will, therefore vary according to the level of the staff). The portion of rent which exceeds the reasonable maximum level is the staff member's own responsibility.

The rental subsidy is not payable during the first 30 days after arrival as the staff member will be receiving a daily subsistence allowance.

Rental deductions

If you receive housing assistance, including housing provided by the United Nations, by a Government or by a related institution, either

free of charge or at rents substantially lower than the average residential rents, you may be subject to payroll deductions from your salary. The deduction will be calculated at 80 per cent of the difference between your actual rent and 64 per cent of the individual threshold which would be applicable for rental subsidy purposes.

Following your arrival in Beirut, you will be required to report whether you receive housing assistance. Failure to comply with this reporting requirement will result in automatic rental deductions through payroll as if you had obtained accommodation free of charge from the Organization, a Government or a related institution. For more detailed information, please refer to sections III and IV of ST/AI/275/Rev.2.

Dependency allowance

The United Nations determines dependency status based on its own internal guidelines. A staff member with a dependent spouse or child receives a base salary and post adjustment at the dependent rate. A dependent child is under 18 years old or, if he/she is in full-time attendance at a school or university, she/he must be under the age of 21 years and receive main and continuing support from the staff member. A dependent spouse is one whose occupational earnings, if any, do not exceed the current lowest entry level of the General Service gross salary scales in New York. (\$40,809 gross per annum as of 1 March 2011).

For other recognized dependants, dependency allowances are paid at the following rates:

- For each dependent child other than the first dependent child of a staff member without a dependent spouse *: \$2,929 net per annum
- Where there is no dependent spouse; for one secondary dependant, i.e., dependent parent, brother or sister: \$1,025 net per annum

* No allowance is payable for the first dependent child of a staff member without a dependent spouse, as such staff member is entitled to receive base salary and post adjustment at the dependent rate.

Dependency allowance in the case of a disabled child may be double the amount of the regular allowance for a dependent child. A disabled child is one who is determined to be physically or mentally disabled either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration. Please refer to document ST/AI/2000/8, ST/AI/2000/8/Amend.1 and ST/AI/2000/8/Amend.2. If the staff member or his or her spouse receives similar benefits under national laws, the dependency allowances for children are reduced proportionally in order to avoid duplication of benefits and to achieve equality among staff members.

Education grant

If your duty station is outside your home country, an education grant may be paid under certain conditions for each child in full-time attendance at a school, university or similar educational institution. The amount of the grant per scholastic year for each child will be 75 per cent of the cost of attendance and board in respect of actual expenses up to a maximum amount per year. If board is not provided by the educational institution, a grant of up to \$3,823 is payable for board; the total grant for attendance and board, however, cannot exceed a maximum amount per year. If your child attends an educational institution within commuting distance from the duty station, the cost of board is excluded in computing the amount of the grant.

The grant is not payable if your child attends a free school. For post-secondary education, the grant is payable up to the fourth year of studies or the award of the first degree, whichever is earlier, but it will not normally be payable beyond the school year in which the

child reaches the age of twenty-five. You may refer to the relevant Administrative Instruction for further details on the education grant and related travel provisions.

A special education grant for disabled children is available to all categories of staff who have an appointment for one year or longer. The amount of this grant shall be the equivalent of the educational expenses actually incurred up to a maximum amount per year.

Assignment grant

If your travel to the duty station was authorized by the United Nations for an appointment expected to last one year or more, you are entitled to an assignment grant. The purpose of an assignment grant is to compensate for the initial extraordinary costs incurred on moving to a new location, as well as the pre-departure expenses associated with relocation. In most cases of assignment or reassignment, the grant consists of a Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) portion and a lump sum portion, both payable upon arrival at the duty station. However, on an initial appointment of two years or more to a category H duty station, of which New York is, instead of the lump sum portion you may be entitled to reimbursement of the costs of removal of personal effects and household goods as detailed in the paragraphs below.

The DSA portion of the assignment grant consists of 30 days DSA for the staff member, at the rate established for the duty station, and 30-day DSA at half rate for each eligible family member. Payment in respect of family members is contingent on their travelling to the duty station at least six months before the staff member's service there is expected to end. If removal costs are not paid, a lump sum equivalent to one month's net base salary and post adjustment is payable, whether or not the dependants travel to

the duty station, and in addition, the non-removal element of the mobility and hardship allowance at the applicable rate.

Repatriation grant

On separation from the Organization, a repatriation grant is payable to staff members who have completed one year or more of service outside their home country, subject to the submission of evidence of relocation away from the country of the last duty station, and subject to the fulfillment of the other relevant conditions of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. The amount of the grant is based on net salary. For the first year of service, the grant is equivalent to four weeks of separation payments for staff with a spouse or dependent children and three weeks for staff without a spouse or dependent children. Thereafter, it accrues at rates proportionate to the length of service, up to a maximum of 28 weeks for staff with a spouse or dependent children and 16 weeks for those without. A detailed schedule is contained in Annex IV to the Staff Regulations (ST/SBG/2014/1).

Non-removal allowance

The non-removal element grant is for staff members who have contracts of one year or more who have opted not to avail of their entitlement to full removal of household effects. Payment of the non-removal allowance on a monthly basis shall be limited to a period of five years at one duty station.

Hardship allowance

The hardship allowance is payable as long as the duty station remains classified as hardship duty station (B to E), with no time limitation.

Mobility allowance

The mobility element is an incentive to encourage staff to move to other duty stations and to retain staff in service. It is payable after five years of consecutive service and from the second assignment of one year or longer in the assigned duty stations classified A through D. Payment of the mobility element is discontinued after five years at the same location.

Medical insurance subsidy

All staff members holding appointments of three months or longer may enroll themselves and eligible family members in the United Nations Vanbreda plan. The United Nations provides subsidy towards the payment of the premium which is calculated as a percentage of the net salary.

“Eligible family members” for insurance purposes refers to a spouse and one or more eligible children. A spouse is always eligible. A child is eligible to be covered under this scheme until the end of the calendar year in which he or she attains the age of 25, provided that he or she is not married and not in full-time employment. Disabled children may be eligible for continued coverage after age 25. Enrolment in the Vanbreda plan at the time of initial appointment must be accomplished within 31 days of the date of entry on duty. The Vanbreda yearly circular describes in detail the provisions of the health insurance coverage.

For enrolment purposes, applicants will be required to present proof of eligibility from their respective personnel or administrative officers attesting to their current contractual status. The enrolment of eligible family members requires the provision of evidence of the status of such family members. In most instances, the necessary proof of eligibility will be contained in the personnel action form.

Pension fund

Staff members holding appointments for six months or longer become participants in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund on appointment. Service prior to the commencement of participation performed with the United Nations or with any other member organization of the Pension Fund may be made pensionable under certain conditions, within the time limit of one year after commencement of participation. Contributions to the Pension Fund are deducted from the pay cheques of participants at the rate of 7.90 per cent of their pensionable remuneration. The Organization contributes at twice the rate applicable to participants. Pensionable remuneration is defined in the Regulations of the Funds (www.unjspf.org).

The Fund provides disability, retirement and survivors benefits as well as lump sum withdrawal settlements. The conditions for entitlement to a benefit, as well as the determination of the amount of the benefit, are governed by the Regulations of the Fund (www.unjspf.org). Elements for such determination are the length of contributory service, the amount of the final average remuneration (based on the best 36 months of pensionable remuneration during the last five years of contributory service), the applicable rate of benefit accumulation per year of contributory service and the age on separation. Survivors benefits are paid to spouses and children who fall within the definitions outlined in the Regulations (www.unjspf.org). All benefits paid periodically are adjusted for cost-of-living changes in accordance with the provisions of the Fund’s Pension Adjustment System.

Participants who leave the Organization after service of less than five years are reimbursed their contributions to the Fund plus the annual interest earned up to the date of separation, unless they are eligible for a disability benefit. Staff members may elect to

maintain continuity of their pension rights if they come from, enter or return to the service of any of the international organizations or Governments with which the Fund has concluded a transfer agreement. There is no reimbursement of taxes paid on periodic benefits. Staff members appointed after 1979 are not entitled to reimbursement of income tax paid on lump sums received from the Pension Fund.

The Secretary of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee should be contacted directly for further information regarding any matter affecting participation in the Pension Fund and the obligations and entitlements deriving therefrom during such participation and upon separation.

Leave

Annual leave: annual leave under a fixed-term, continuing or permanent appointment accrues at the rate of two and one-half days per month, or 30 working days per cycle (April-March). Annual leave under a temporary appointment accrues at the rate of one and one-half days per month, or 18 working days per cycle (April-March). Annual leave may be taken only when authorized.

Home leave: if you serve the United Nations outside your home country and are otherwise eligible under the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, you will be entitled once in every two years of

qualifying service to take home leave in the country of your nationality. The place of home leave within your country is, for purposes of travel and transportation entitlements, the location with which you have had the closest residential ties during the period of your most recent residence in your home country preceding appointment. Transportation costs for yourself, your spouse and dependent children are paid by the United Nations.

Sick leave: a staff member holding an appointment for one year or longer may be granted sick leave up to three months on full salary and three months on half salary in any twelve consecutive months. A staff member who holds a permanent appointment, a fixed-term appointment for three years or who has completed three years of continuous service will be granted sick leave of up to nine months. For more details on the sick leave entitlement, please refer to the relevant Administrative Instruction.

The sick leave taken by a staff member can be “uncertified sick leave” of not more than three consecutive working days at a time, for up to seven working days in an annual cycle starting 1 April of each year, when incapacitated for the performance of his or her duties by illness or injury. Part or all of this entitlement may be used to attend to family-related emergencies, in which case the limitation of three consecutive working days shall not apply.

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