

Speaking Notes

“Annual Steering Committee meeting” - METAC

We are proud to have hosted METAC for the past 18 years. Since 2004, METAC played an instrumental role in the region, supporting best practice macroeconomic management and building institutional capacity for sound public financial management in its member countries. More specifically, our close relationship with METAC has been fruitful on several levels:

Lebanon has provided valuable talent and expertise. In fact several former METAC regional advisors have come from Lebanese government institutions, and the current team of METAC experts has two outstanding experts from Lebanon, Ms. Fadia Sakr (revenue administration) and Ms. Nehmat Hantas (banking regulation and supervision).

At the same time and as David Recardo would have predicted, Lebanon has also benefited greatly from METAC’s capacity development assistance in support of strengthening the country’s institutions; **in fact, together with the other member countries Lebanon has enjoyed a deeper and more sustained engagement on macroeconomic policy and implementation issues with METAC,** namely in terms of Budget planning, strengthening surveillance of SOE’s, improving cash management practices, assessing fiscal risks, etc.

Today, in the midst of the severe crisis, **we are more than pleased with the IMF’s decision to keep METAC located in Lebanon despite the**

challenging circumstances, and in this context, we call on our peer METAC member countries to come forward for support and step up their financial contributions to the Center, at times when Lebanon is facing daunting financing issues, looking forward to resuming our support as soon as financial conditions allow.

This institution-building support is all the more important today in Lebanon's current economic crisis. **We count on the strategic guidance of METAC's expertise to build back sound public finance management and institutional capacities.** More recently, Lebanon has benefited from METAC's assistance in revenue restoration, a central policy dimension for macroeconomic stabilization today; in designing a strategy to tackle expenditure arrears, and in assessing IT function of the General Directorate of Finance with immediate action plan to prevent the collapse of the systems. Looking forward for next year we welcome METAC's support to further improve cash management practices and implement the TSA, support the management of fiscal risks related to SOEs, pursue strategies for strengthening customs and tax administrations, and improve the quality, timeliness, and publication of fiscal reports.

Today's steering committee meeting will discuss METAC's activities and achievements over the past year, and its plans for the coming twelve months. We look forward to a fruitful exchange of views and encourage you to share your experiences with the Center's work and your priorities for its future support to your macroeconomic institutions. I will close by thanking METAC's development partners Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, and the European Union for their longstanding and continuing support for the Center's work. **Your engagement in METAC is a critical and much appreciated contribution to developing stronger macroeconomic institutions in the Middle East and North Africa region.**

Thank you.