

Early Recovery Approach and Action Plan for Gaza

United Nations Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team In the Occupied Palestinian Territory

I. Abstract

This paper presents a joint, cross-pillar approach and action plan to scale up early recovery interventions in Gaza by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, fitting under the humanitarian planning cycle and the overall tripartite framework of the World Bank, European Union, and United Nations on recovery assessment and planning. This paper articulates early recovery interventions that the United Nations and its humanitarian partners can scale up, if conditions on the ground change and the parties to the conflict create an enabling environment. The paper introduces the underlying rationale, the main conceptual features, and key requirements and considerations for early recovery implementation. These include full support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in its own planning and implementation, core guiding principles, and tentative objectives, priorities, and activities. Other elements include minimum conditions for scaling up operations and internal coordination mechanisms. Finally, the paper situates early recovery planning and implementation with respect to other planning and implementation processes underway, including the ongoing humanitarian response, future humanitarian planning, and the joint work for a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment and Conflict Recovery Framework with the World Bank and European Union, which together provide the umbrella for the UNCT and HCT's contributions toward early recovery.

Contents

I.	Abstract	1
II.	Political Framework for Scaling Up Early Recovery	3
III.	Humanitarian and Development Context	3
IV.	Early Recovery Approach in Occupied Palestinian Territory	5
V.	Planning Processes in OPT.....	6
1)	Humanitarian Planning	6
2)	UNCT and HCT Early Recovery Planning	7
3)	Planning for a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment and Conflict Recovery Framework.....	7
4)	The Palestinian Authority’s Planning	7
VI.	Guiding Principles.....	8
VII.	Minimum Conditions for Scaling Up Early Recovery.....	9
VIII.	Early Recovery Objectives and Priorities.....	10
IX.	Cross-Cutting Priorities.....	18
X.	Internal Coordination Mechanisms.....	18
XI.	Way Forward	18

II. Political Framework for Scaling Up a Durable Early Recovery

Prior to 7 October 2023, the unresolved conflict, continued occupation, and stalled peace process were intensifying conflict drivers across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, damaging humanitarian and development conditions. The ongoing catastrophic situation in Gaza and the deteriorating situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem,¹ requires an urgent and collective response by the parties, partners and international community, including re-establishing a political horizon.

In Gaza, any viable early recovery must be firmly rooted in a broader political and security framework that can address the effects of the humanitarian catastrophe and generate momentum to rebuild Gaza as an integral part of a fully independent, contiguous, viable, and sovereign Palestinian State. Critically, the Palestinian Authority (PA) must be at the center of planning for and then implementing Gaza's recovery and reconstruction.

The key political principles that guide our efforts are:

1. There should be no long-term Israeli military presence in Gaza.
2. Gaza is and must remain an integral part of a future Palestinian State – with no reductions in its territory.
3. Gaza and the occupied West Bank must be unified politically, economically, and administratively.
4. There can be no long-term solution in Gaza that is not fundamentally political.

Central to achieving these objectives is strengthening the institutions of the Palestinian Authority (PA), while rejecting any actions that systematically undermine its viability. International support is urgently needed to strengthen the capacities of the Palestinian Government and prepare it to reassume its full responsibilities in Gaza. Political, institutional, and economic reforms will be needed as well, but they must be achievable and properly financed.

Finally, the early recovery must be designed and implemented with the objective of contributing to a political process. Any lasting progress cannot be divorced from unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ongoing Israeli occupation. Progress towards peace must address the legitimate right of Palestinians to self-determination and sovereignty, while also addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. The international community must make collective efforts towards establishing a political framework that outlines tangible, irreversible steps towards ending the occupation and establishing a two-State solution – Israel and Palestine, of which Gaza is an integral part, living side-by-side in peace and security, on the basis of United Nations resolutions and international law, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States. The United Nations will continue to support all efforts towards that goal.

III. Humanitarian and Development Context

Since 7 October 2023, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) have been devastated by the attacks perpetrated by Hamas and other Palestinian militants in Israel, Israeli military operations in Gaza, and increased military activity and hostilities in the West Bank. The conflict has generated widespread suffering on an unimaginable scale.

¹ The most up-to-date information on political, human rights, and protection issues can be found in the monthly briefings to the UN Security Council (<https://unsco.unmissions.org/resources>)

Gaza remains an active conflict zone with humanitarian needs continuing to grow. Every Palestinian in Gaza has been affected, with over two million people uprooted from their homes and facing acute shortages of all basic necessities. The scale of destruction and loss in the Gaza Strip is immense. According to the Gaza Interim Damage Assessment conducted by the World Bank and United Nations, with the support of the EU, as of end January the physical damage alone was already catastrophic: 62% of homes, 84% of health and WASH facilities, 63% of educational campuses, 63% of cultural heritage sites, and 80% of private sector establishments were all damaged or destroyed.² Basic services in Gaza have been devastated. For example, over 625,000 children and youth have lost more than a full year of education. Health services have been left barely functioning and on the verge of collapse due to a lack of access to medicines, ambulances, basic lifesaving treatments, electricity, and water. More than 540,000 women and girls in Gaza are of reproductive age and need access to appropriate items to support hygiene, health, dignity, and well-being.³ All Palestinians in Gaza are now considered poor, and formal employment is largely limited to those working on the humanitarian response. Electricity, water, sewage and solid waste, and telecommunications services are severely degraded and inadequate to the needs of the population.

At the same time, conflict in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has intensified to levels not seen since the end of the Second Intifada. Increasing violence, settlement expansion, strict access and movement restrictions on Palestinians, demolitions, and displacement have caused human suffering, stifled economic activity, curtailed access to basic services, and severely damaged the fiscal situation of PA, and therefore its ability to govern. These trends undermine the ability of the PA to lead a future recovery and reconstruction process in Gaza.

Acknowledging that the immediate focus remains on the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance at scale, and acknowledging the many unknowns around future political, governance, and security arrangements, it is nonetheless critical and urgent to significantly scale up early recovery interventions wherever, and as soon as, conditions on the ground permit. Many such interventions enable the provision of more efficient and cost-effective humanitarian assistance, thus reducing humanitarian suffering and contributing to sustainable peace and security in the region.

Early recovery is already embedded within the humanitarian response in Gaza. Many early recovery interventions are being implemented, including the provision of mental health and psychosocial support and recreational activities for children, as well as basic psychosocial support and legal aid to women. For health, emphasis has been on working through or bolstering existing systems and structures and, where possible, damaged hospitals and clinics have been rehabilitated. The UN and partners are addressing solid waste, debris management, road repair, and water and sanitation service delivery, to the extent possible given the very challenging circumstances.

Strengthening the capacity of Palestinian institutions for recovery and reconstruction, reconnecting Gaza and the West Bank, empowering civil society groups, supporting MSMEs, mobilizing international and private sector sources of recovery financing, and building on existing self-help networks will all be

² A damage assessment conducted by the Education Cluster in July 2024 indicates that 92.9% of schools in Gaza sustained some level of damage to their buildings.

³ Analysis of the Impact of the War in Gaza on Vital Services Essential to Women's and Girls' Health, Safety, and Dignity - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

crucial enablers for recovery. UNRWA, which provided basic services and social protection to around 70% of the population in Gaza before the current hostilities, will be indispensable.

Sectoral and cross-sectoral needs assessments that are well-coordinated among relevant UNCT and HCT members and partners are crucial to ensure early recovery interventions are evidence-based, area-based, relevant, and responsive to the needs of Palestinians in Gaza. The UNCT and HCT's early recovery planning and implementation must be equally comprehensive and well-coordinated to ensure a coherent, integrated response that prioritizes the needs, dignity, and rights of the affected population in Gaza—cognizant of various degrees of vulnerability and risks of violence and exploitation across population groups and in close collaboration with all service providers, including government, civil society, private sector, and international partners. To ensure national ownership, support to the PA will be particularly critical to these efforts.

The UNCT and HCT recognize that there remain many challenges that would prevent scaling up early recovery activities, including the ongoing fighting; lack of safety and security; ongoing and large-scale displacement; a lack of clarity on the future governance and security arrangements for Gaza; absence of the rule of law; and severe Israeli restrictions on the access of materials, goods, people, and capital that are required for humanitarian and early recovery efforts in Gaza. As such, the UNCT and HCT's planning assumptions, programmatic approaches, and interventions will adapt and evolve with the situation on the ground, including the access and security required for assessments, planning, and implementation. Importantly, early recovery efforts will be coordinated with and complement the ongoing humanitarian response, with Palestinians in Gaza being at the center of coordination efforts. These efforts will help prevent secondary disasters, such as disease outbreaks, and ensure effective linkages and continuity between humanitarian and early recovery planning, as well as to pave the way for longer-term recovery and reconstruction when conditions allow.

Humanitarian and development partners will face formidable challenges to demonstrate results on the ground that will restore and protect dignity, rights, and livelihoods to Palestinians in Gaza. The international community must continue to advocate for the enablers and conditions required for scaling up early recovery interventions.

IV. Early Recovery Approach in Occupied Palestinian Territory

Early recovery approaches integrate development principles into the relief stage, helping to expand beyond life-saving measures to life-sustaining actions. In early recovery programming, national and international actors focus primarily on rapidly meeting immediate, life-saving needs, but do so in a manner that supports the foundations for sustainable recovery. Many early recovery interventions, in fact, enable a more efficient and cost-effective humanitarian response and, thus, are a critical priority at its earliest stages. As such, early recovery is an approach that supports both the response to immediate humanitarian needs and longer-term recovery requirements, helping to gradually reduce full dependence on humanitarian relief.

In current practice, adopting an early recovery approach also emphasizes engaging with national actors and civil society, local ownership, strengthening/building capacities and national mechanisms to address both immediate needs and underlying vulnerabilities, reducing risk, promoting equality, inclusion, and human rights, preventing discrimination, exploitation and abuse, and generating self-sustaining, nationally owned, and resilient processes for post crisis recovery and future development opportunities.

Rather than being a well-defined 'phase' of the response with a definite timeline, early recovery is a complex, multi-dimensional process of recovery that may begin in the early days of a humanitarian response and generally continues beyond it. Planning for early recovery ideally starts concurrently with the humanitarian response, with certain activities also adopting an early recovery approach taking place from the initial stages of the response. Early recovery interventions should then continue beyond the acute emergency phase, serving as a bridge to recovery and reconstruction efforts towards reformative recovery and sustainable development. The diagram below shows a simplified interpretation of where early recovery approach and process stand in the complex path from emergency response to reformative recovery.

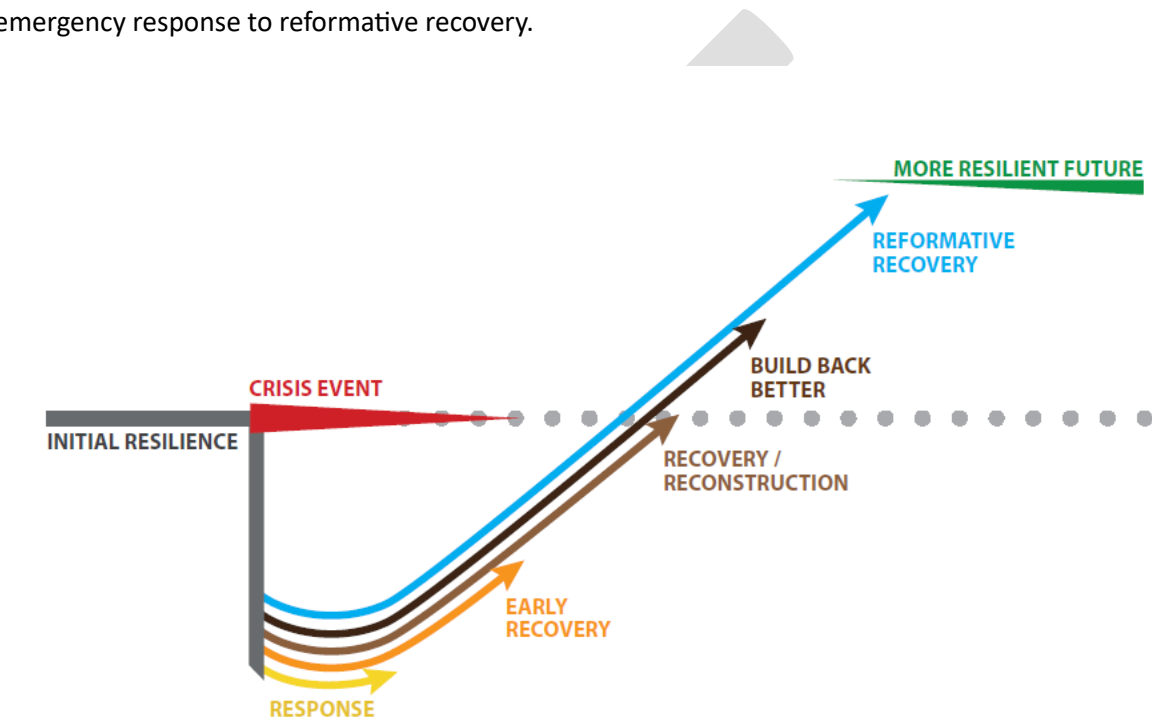


Figure 1 – Where early recovery fits

V. Planning Processes in OPT

Since 7 October 2023, the core of the UNCT and HCT's collective efforts have been the humanitarian response. In parallel, the UNCT and HCT have collaborated to plan for early- and medium-term recovery, under the leadership of the DSC/RC/HC and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. These planning processes included establishing a close partnership with the World Bank and European Union on assessments and recovery, described below, and continuous engagement with the PA, Member States, civil society, and others. The United Nations and its partners have ensured that these planning processes have been well coordinated and fed into each other.

1) Humanitarian Planning

Following 7 October 2023, the Humanitarian Country Team transitioned from a Humanitarian Response Plan to a Flash Appeal approach. The first Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory was originally published on 12 October 2023; it was revised in early November 2023 and extended through March 2024. The current Flash Appeal was issued in April 2024 and runs through December 2024. The document is a resource mobilization document, not a plan, as the dynamic nature of the

situation does not allow for long term planning. Instead, shorter-term operational plans are produced periodically as the situation evolves. These currently include a Winterization Plan and Ceasefire Plan. The Flash Appeal outlines the estimated resource requirements to reduce human suffering and prevent further loss of life in Gaza and the West Bank based on the best available information. The \$2.822 billion requested represents the part of the overall humanitarian needs that can be met, less than the \$4.089 billion that the UN and partners estimate is required to assist fully the 3.3 million people in need. It reflects what the Humanitarian Country Team deemed as most likely to be implementable, if critical enabling factors are met.

2) UNCT and HCT Early Recovery Planning

Under the overall leadership of the DSC/RC/HC, the UNCT Programme Management Team and HCT Inter-Cluster Coordination Group have been the technical leads for early recovery planning. The early recovery planning process seeks to align principles, approaches and actions across the UN and humanitarian actors in Palestine; and ensure coherence between the humanitarian response and the Conflict Recovery Framework. This planning exercise bridges programmatic responses to the war in Gaza that fall under the current Humanitarian Flash Appeal, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, or both.

3) Planning for a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment and Conflict Recovery Framework

In the weeks after 7 October 2023, the World Bank, European Union, and UN activated the global tripartite agreement to conduct a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA) and to formulate a Conflict Recovery Framework (CRF), to be implemented when conditions on the ground permit. Preparations for the RDNA and CRF have been ongoing since late 2023. A key milestone was the Gaza Interim Damage Assessment published in April 2024. Planning and preparation continue, in close coordination with the PA, Member States, humanitarians, and other partners. As agreed with the Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, the RDNA and CRF will be the primary, critical inputs from the international community to the PA's own Gaza Recovery, Reconstruction, and Development Plan. This effort will be coordinated closely with the PA, Member States, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

4) The Palestinian Authority's Planning

The UN and its partners are committed to supporting the Palestinian Authority as it undertakes its own recovery planning and to ensuring coherence with those national efforts. This alignment supports a Palestinian-owned and led approach and reflects the PA's legal obligations under international human rights law. This alignment and partnership with the PA have been confirmed at several recent meetings with the Prime Minister, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Minister of Relief, and other relevant line ministries.

The PA's early recovery planning focuses on life saving measures and response to basic needs, while laying the foundations for longer-term recovery across four main sectors, namely social, infrastructure, economic, and governance. The activities planned include temporary shelters, debris, rubble, and hazardous waste management, reactivation/establishment of health, educational, recreational, and municipal services, psychosocial support, social protection, reparation of accessible water systems, relief to energy infrastructures, emergency employment through cash-for-work across all sectors of intervention, private sector revitalization, and restoration of government capacities and infrastructures.

The UNCT and HCT Early Recovery Approach and Action Plan for Gaza is aligned to and complements the PA's own planning on early recovery. In particular, the UNCT and HCT's planning aligns to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework that was signed with the Palestinian Authority in late 2022. Furthermore, the approach, guiding principles, minimum conditions for operations, implementation assumptions, early recovery priorities, and activities all reiterate and complement the PA's recovery planning. By closely coordinating and engaging with the PA, the UN will continue to ensure coherence and alignment with current and possible future adjustments of the national plans and changing conditions on the ground.

VI. Guiding Principles

1) Palestinian-owned: UNCT and HCT early recovery efforts will support national and local efforts and systems, where appropriate. The recovery will be Palestinian-owned and led, and UNCT and HCT processes will support, be aligned with, and be complementary to the PA's recovery efforts. These processes will evolve in consultation with counterparts across Palestinian governmental and non-governmental entities, including civil society organizations, labor unions, and the private sector. Recovery processes must include the meaningful participation of communities in design and implementation, building capacities of national and local institutions, and leveraging spontaneous recovery initiatives.

2) All-of-Palestine Approach: UNCT and HCT early recovery efforts in Gaza will contribute to bridging the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to reinforcing connectivity across Palestinian communities and geographies. This can be done, for example, by sourcing materials and equipment from the West Bank and utilizing technical experts from the West Bank, if conditions permit. While this Early Recovery Action Plan focuses on the immediate response in Gaza, the comprehensive recovery efforts embodied in the RDNA/CRF will programmatically address both Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

3) Inclusive with a Focus on the Most Vulnerable: While the war has generated large-scale and widespread vulnerabilities, and exacerbated gender and age disparities, including widespread psychological and physical traumas. Priority interventions will be tailored to and focus on intersectional and compounded vulnerabilities. A comprehensive vulnerability assessment will need to be conducted. At the same time, inclusiveness of key segments of society, who are often left behind, will be critical in the early recovery planning and implementation process.

4) Gender-responsive: Gender mainstreaming in early recovery efforts will ensure that interventions consider and respond to the different gendered needs of women and men, girls and boys, the power dynamics, their access to resources, the constraints, and engage and support their empowerment in the process.

5) Conflict-Sensitivity, Community Engagement, and Social Cohesion: Context and conflict-sensitive analysis will ensure risk mitigation measures are incorporated, and social cohesion is promoted through the early recovery interventions.

6) International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights: Respect for international humanitarian and human rights law by all duty bearers will be important for a meaningful recovery. A Human Rights-Based Approach will also be applied throughout the recovery process, including mobilizing and aligning the key national and international actors to safeguard that human rights are up front and center,

including supporting the legal obligations and responsibilities of the Palestinian Government and the Israeli Government.

7) Environmental Sustainability: Early recovery efforts in Gaza will integrate homegrown innovative solutions, water-energy-food nexus, renewable energy water resource management, and greening and circular economy interventions as well as other sustainability measures, promoting greater energy autonomy and reduced dependency on neighboring countries while contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation. While recovery interventions will support transitioning towards achieving social and economic advancements, it is imperative to ensure that every demographic can derive a social as well as an economic benefit from the transition to a greener economy.

8) Integrated, Cross-Pillar Approach: Early recovery will be integrated across all relevant sectors to enable an efficient approach to addressing people's holistic needs, including for their return to their homes and communities. Strong coordination mechanisms will be established to ensure coherence between the efforts of early recovery actors, including UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and national authorities.

9) Building Back and Forward Better (BBB): Strengthen community resilience and reduce vulnerability to future disasters and crises addressing physical, social, environmental and economic vulnerabilities and shocks.

10) Non-linear, Flexible, Area-Based Approaches: As it is not possible to identify a linear timeline vis-a-vis early recovery interventions, efforts must be flexible and adaptive, to effectively address the varying needs identified across different areas. Different areas of Gaza continue to experience differing humanitarian needs, physical damages, and losses. An area-based approach will facilitate complementarity of multi-sectoral interventions across different geographic areas. Early recovery programming should have tailored interventions that consider specific local conditions, all while contributing in the longer run to supporting unified governance across the OPT.

VII. Minimum Conditions for Scaling Up Early Recovery

A range of factors will determine the speed, scale, and scope of the interventions. The UNCT and HCT believe that the following elements are minimum necessary conditions for significantly scaling up early recovery activities across Gaza and then transitioning into a medium-term recovery phase:

1. Security, freedom of movement, and the ability to access the population in Gaza.
2. A transitional political-security framework, that promotes Palestinian ownership and management of recovery, with the PA at its center.
3. Minimum levels of essential services, particularly water, electricity, sanitation, banking and financial services, and telecommunications, within a coherent governance framework.
4. At-scale and predictable entry of humanitarian, commercial, and reconstruction goods, materials, and equipment, including from the West Bank.
5. The ability for the UN, NGOs, and their partners to obtain Israeli visas, identify and deploy experts, import protective equipment, and other practical, operational issues.
6. Sufficient donor funding, preferably in consistent, multi-year, and flexible modalities.

Assuming these conditions are met, the UN and its humanitarian partners would be able to take forward and deliver the programmatic priorities and activities articulated below.

VIII. Early Recovery Objectives and Priorities

The early recovery objectives and programmatic priorities are and will continue to be informed by various assessments, including those conducted by the Clusters, UN, and non-UN entities. These include the WB-EU-UN Gaza IDA, the future WB-EU-UN RDNA as well as other complementary and in-depth quantitative and qualitative assessments. Importantly, priorities will continue to be further identified, defined, and adjusted in close collaboration with Palestinian institutions, including the Government, social partners, local communities, and civil society organizations.

The following are indicative areas of initial programmatic priorities, responding to identified objectives and structured in alignment with the UNSDCF 2023-2025 strategic outcomes and reflective of the Programme Criticality framework, the priorities in the IDA report, and the early recovery approaches followed by the Humanitarian Clusters. These priorities may be modified based on the evolution of the situation and the availability of updated information in Gaza. As the needs of people and communities in Gaza are further clarified, based on engagement with national and local stakeholders and informed by forthcoming assessments, additional priorities may be identified in the further development and implementation of the medium-term CRF.

UNSDCF Outcome 1: Palestinians have greater access to economic opportunities that are inclusive, resilient, and sustainable, including decent employment and livelihoods opportunities in an empowered private sector

ER Objective 1: Early restoration of jobs and revitalization of access to livelihoods, employment opportunities, and markets for goods and services, along with a functioning private sector and value chains.

Programmatic Priorities:

a. Jobs, Livelihoods and Economy

Generating short-term, emergency jobs and livelihood opportunities will be critical to provide household income and restore dignity to Palestinians in Gaza, and to reduce and prevent negative coping mechanisms such as child labor practices and early marriage. Opportunities include rubble and debris removal efforts and recycling, restoration of services like solid waste management, rehabilitation of buildings, health facilities, schools, roads, and other community infrastructure and services. The strategy will integrate labor-intensive methods and decent work principles, aiming to promote greater understanding of these principles in the design and delivery of early recovery interventions through national mechanisms. Accessible and quality care services, including childcare, elder care, disability care, will incentivize equal employment opportunities. Moreover, the role of reskilling and upskilling, including through technical and vocational training, will also be essential for supporting improved access to livelihood opportunities and employment. Enterprises in priority sectors, which have been severely impacted and are struggling with significant liquidity issues, require substantial support to retain their workforce. The agricultural and food processing sectors need to be prioritized to address food shortages and enhance local food availability. MSMEs – which are the backbone of the Palestinian economy and make up over 98 % of local private sector enterprises – will need both technical and financial support, including repair of shops/stores and replacement of damaged equipment and assets, as well as facilitation of digital payment systems. The role of the private sector in the overall early recovery of Gaza will be essential; ensuring the private sector is ready to re-engage and scale up in Gaza requires identifying and addressing challenges such as regulatory framework, financing, inputs, and capacity, while also providing an opportunity to address gender discrimination in employment practices. The banking sector will be supported to be re-established to promote liquidity across Gaza as an essential pre-condition for the economy to function.

Alignment with PA's "Gaza Relief and Early Recovery Plan":

The programmatic priorities under Outcome 1/Early Recovery Objective 1 support and align with PA efforts to implement relief and early recovery interventions to revitalize Gaza's economic sector, specifically agriculture activities and the private sector. Table 1 in Annex 1 provides a detailed overview of how UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes' planned ER activities align with the PA plan's sector/sub-sectors of intervention.

UNSDCF Outcome 2: Palestinians, including the most vulnerable, have equal access to sustainable, inclusive, gender-responsive and quality social services, social protection, and affordable utilities

ER Objective 2: Early restoration and rehabilitation of access to basic socioeconomic services and social protection mechanisms, enabled by risk managed and progressive debris removal and disposal/recycling, as well as explosive ordnance disposal/clearance.

Programmatic Priorities:

b. Rehabilitation of Infrastructure for Essential Services

Significant efforts will be required to clear the unprecedented amounts of rubble away from roads and critical infrastructure to permit humanitarian assistance to be provided to scale, access for detailed damage and needs assessments, and infrastructure rehabilitation and repair. EO Disposal (EOD) operations, including assessment and clearance of EO and unexploded ordnance (UXO), must be integrated into the planning and implementation phases of rubble and debris removal/disposal, as EO will be found as the rubble is removed. Sites will also be risk assessed prior to removal works commencing. These operations will be backed by critical EO risk education for workers, humanitarian partners, as well as the local population to mitigate EO threats and ensure safety. Moreover, both debris management and EOD operations will need to consider the sizable volumes of solid waste and human excreta. On the other hand, recycling and reuse of debris and rubble will be implemented to the extent possible to contribute to the reconstruction efforts.

Infrastructure for essential services will be prioritized, especially health and education facilities; municipal buildings; water, wastewater and sanitation facilities and networks; energy; communication; and transportation infrastructure. For the energy sector, deployment of decentralized energy supply, restoring the electricity network, resuming operations and fuel deliveries to the Gaza Power Plant, restoring the electricity imports from Israel, and the rehabilitation and provision of solar power installations will need to be prioritized in the immediate phase.

With regards to the water sector, continuing or maximizing water imports through the three existing connection points with Israel, rehabilitation and reconstruction of storage, groundwater well production and treatment, water distribution networks, wastewater and desalination facilities, providing powerful energy solutions, as well as the deployment of portable water-energy nexus solutions, will be prioritized. For sanitation, the coordinated rehabilitation of the sewage pumps/networks and the wastewater treatment plants will be necessary. Long rehabilitation times will likely require temporary alternative solutions. Furthermore, restoring solid waste management services is critical, including waste collection, transfer and restoration and management of transfer stations, recovery of landfill sites, temporary and permanent dumping sites. Similarly, special attention to the proper management of medical waste will be essential. For the telecom sector, extensive repair and rehabilitation of the damaged network will need to be done in the early phase of the recovery process. Identifying and respectfully handling the bodies of those buried under the rubble is crucial for honoring Palestinian dignity and allowing families to conduct proper burials. The timing and sequencing for rubble removal related to issues such as the rehabilitation of cultural heritage will be determined as part of the overall sequencing. For this extensive and critical work to be undertaken, access for required materials and equipment will be critical.

c. Shelter and Housing

At least 500,000 people will have no home to return to and many more will be unable to return immediately due to the level of damage to their neighborhoods.⁴ As a result, early recovery interventions must include transitional shelter and durable housing solutions to bring communities back to their neighborhoods, while accounting for and striving to address the likely widespread housing, land, and property (HLP) challenges arising from the major loss of documentation, apartment blocks, and registry buildings, EO/UXO contamination and enormous quantities of debris, among other factors. Early solutions will be needed to move people out of schools, hospitals and primary health care centers so these facilities can be repaired to resume service delivery. A range of shelter and housing solutions will be needed, ranging from repairs of existing damaged housing, to increasing host families' hosting capacities, enhancing rental spaces through grants/temporary rent subsidies, converting unfinished and unused buildings into residential units, and establishing transitional housing sites as a last resort measure and with clear phase out strategies. These sites will require all inhabitants' participation, independently from their gender, in the management, including governance and maintenance, and in implementing phasing out plans. The use of cash and market approaches to shelter provision, wherever possible, will be essential to support the recovery of the local economy. Furthermore, given the scale of damage to housing and essential public and social infrastructure, a phased and area-based integrated recovery approach will be critical to ensure that shelter interventions are coupled with the restoration of basic services, including household level utilities restoration. Areas characterized by widespread damage will require and provide opportunities for large-scale spatial and urban planning based on community needs and priorities. Nonetheless, while services are gradually being restored, energy, nutritional, and other seasonal needs will have to be considered and addressed.

d. Social Services and Social Protection

The immediate restoration of social services, such as health and social welfare, education, and WASH would entail the repair of relevant facilities, provision of supplies and equipment, skilled human resources, as well as provision of essential services lines, facilitated by case management and referral pathways. They include mental health and psycho-social support, community-based Child Protection, Gender Based Violence, and disability services, as well as establishing safe space for vulnerable groups, providing learning materials and support to teachers to enable them to return to teaching, and training/supporting women-led and women rights organizations to contribute to social service and protection assistance. Establishing additional medical points, including for reproductive health services in and around currently designated displacement sites, as well as in other areas where transitional shelter and durable housing solutions would be deployed, will be key to improve and expand access to healthcare and nutrition services. Furthermore, ensuring shelters for women and girls at risk and/or survivors of violence will also be essential. Multi-purpose cash transfers, as well as provision of food and non-food items are also an integral part of social protection. Early recovery interventions will build on existing work to link humanitarian cash and in-kind assistance with national social protection systems, acknowledging the crucial role that rights-based social protection plays in building social cohesion and solidarity across society.

⁴ OCHA. Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #95. Available at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-95>

Alignment with PA's "Gaza Relief and Early Recovery Plan":

The programmatic priorities under Outcome 2/Early Recovery Objective 2 support and align with PA efforts to implement relief and ER interventions to revitalize Gaza's economic, infrastructure, and social sectors. In this regard, PA's planned activities will focus on debris, rubble, and hazardous waste removal, support to education, energy, health and psychosocial support, social protection, housing, telecommunications, roads and transportation, water, sanitation, and hygiene. Table 2 in Annex 1 provides a detailed overview of how UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes' planned ER activities relate to PA's plan's sector/sub-sectors of intervention.

DRAFT

UNSDCF Outcome 3: Palestinian governance institutions, processes, and mechanisms at all levels are more democratic, rights-based, inclusive, and accountable

Early Recovery Objective 3: Scale-up access to protection services, preserve social cohesion, and promote early restoration of human-rights-based governance, justice, and rule of law systems.

e. Governance

A political settlement will be essential for defining future human-rights based governance arrangements in Gaza; however, such a settlement does not yet have a clear timeline. In the interim, early recovery efforts should mobilize technical capacities to strengthen existing Palestinian institutions on the ground and at the central policy level. Technicians from the relevant water, electricity, telecommunications, and public works agencies will need to be involved. Efforts to strengthen inclusive recovery planning, preparedness, and implementation at the municipal and neighborhood levels will be key to ensuring communities have access to critical basic services. At the same time, these efforts will need to be aligned with the Government of Palestine's national recovery planning processes and human rights treaty obligations, including recommendations from UN treaty bodies to the Government of Palestine, as well as the work of a future Palestinian recovery authority. During the process to restore human-rights-based governance arrangements in Gaza, it will be critical to preserve and promote the rebuilding of social cohesion within and between communities that faced multiple displacements, repeated traumas, and protracted dire living conditions. Tensions resulting from the prioritization of certain areas over others for early recovery assistance, from disputes over properties and land, as well as from uncoordinated population movements, and long-lasting traumas may spark intra/inter-communal tensions. Early recovery interventions will be universal and accessible for all, and they will be communicated in a transparent, accountable, gender- and culturally-sensitive manner. Inclusive community-led and owned early recovery processes, continuous two-way communication between service providers and communities, and early detection of possible tensions will be critical to prevent further destabilization.

f. Protection, Justice and Rule of Law

Rule of law and access to protection and justice services will be critical in the current context, with insecurity, widespread human rights violations, including civil, HLP, and labor rights, concerns about the exploitation of children, gender-based violence, family separations, and detention conditions intensifying. Advocacy and resources in support of national protection service providers and civil society organizations, including women-led and women rights organizations will be fundamental in early recovery efforts, including restoration and adaptation of referral pathways, legal assistance, re-establishment of service points and operational capacity, staff capacity building and care for caregivers. Civic space will need to be preserved and restored, and civic engagement through community-led initiatives will be critical in early recovery design and planning, implementation, and monitoring. Protecting freedom of expression and the independence of the media and journalists will be necessary to mitigate mis/dis-information and to ensure an essential accountability mechanism. Furthermore, as highlighted under UNSDCF Outcome 2/ER Objective 2, programmatic priorities addressing early restoration and rehabilitation of access to basic socio-economic services and social protection mechanisms will be enabled by widespread mine action interventions. Early recovery efforts should also initiate the necessary processes to restore and rebuild the security and justice sectors, including through training of law enforcement officials, security forces, the judiciary, and the public prosecution,

developing codes and guidelines, as well as through the rehabilitation of courts and other facilities. The human rights treaties framework and existing recommendations from UN treaty bodies will constitute the key tools to provide clear legal obligations to the Government of Palestine through a range of legal commitments on human rights.

Alignment with PA's "Gaza Relief and Early Recovery Plan":

The programmatic priorities under Outcome 3/Early Recovery Objective 3 support and align with PA to restore a just and effective governance system in Gaza. PA's efforts will focus on the operational capacity of government institutions and the restoration of the rule of law. Table 3 in Annex 1 provides a detailed overview of how UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes' planned ER activities relate to PA's plan's sector/sub-sectors of intervention.

DRAFT

UNSDCF Outcome 4: Palestinians have better access to and management of natural and cultural resources, higher resilience and adaptation to climate change and more sustainable food systems

Early Recovery Objective 4: Remedy war's impact on the environment and cultural capital through early interventions to protect and restore food systems, land, and water resources, as well as cultural resources and capacities.

g. Environment and Natural Resources

Specific efforts will be required to address environmental impact of the Gaza war, including contamination of the land and aquifer that have a long-lasting and detrimental effects on water supplies, food production, and the health of Palestinians in Gaza. Incorporating the water-energy-food nexus into these early recovery efforts is crucial, as is the introduction of homegrown innovative cleantech solutions. Considerations of environmental sustainability in will also need to inform early recovery urban planning and interventions focused on transitional shelter solutions, housing rehabilitation and reconstruction, and on the rehabilitation of other infrastructures. Among others, planning from the beginning for groundwater recharge through channels in urban areas and ponds for irrigation water in agricultural areas will be critical alongside other major infrastructure works (e.g. roads/drains). Furthermore, the role of women as a driver of households' energy-habits towards greener power solutions will be central.

h. Cultural resources

The wide scope of destruction of culture and cultural heritage is leading to the erasure of local national history, memory and identity of the people and the place, which amplifies the need to have it preserved and considered under the early recovery framework. Interventions to protect cultural resources should include the stabilization, consolidation, and rehabilitation of impacted sites of significant heritage or cultural value, considering the specific requirements during the rubble removal process. To do so, access for required materials and equipment will be critical, as well as building the capacities of local workers with knowledge on handling cultural heritage sites. Furthermore, cultural sites at risk of looting, particularly museums, artifacts storage, collections, and archives, should be urgently protected according to international conventions. The role of cultural institutions, including universities and places of worship, creative industries and independent cultural practitioners, should be reinforced as a key vector for social and economic resilience, whilst the protection of cultural heritage as a whole should be applied as a broader cross-cutting principle throughout overall recovery efforts.

Alignment with PA's "Gaza Relief and Early Recovery Plan":

The programmatic priorities under Outcome 4/Early Recovery Objective 4 support and align with PA efforts to implement relief and ER interventions to revitalize Gaza's economic, infrastructure, and social sectors, particularly in relation to food systems, energy, debris, and water management. Table 4 in Annex 1 provides a detailed overview of how UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes' planned ER activities relate to PA's plan's sector/sub-sectors of intervention.

IX. Cross-Cutting Priorities

All the identified programmatic priorities will seek to promote, advance, and ensure gender equality and women's leadership, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, youth participation and empowerment, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, active community involvement and accountability to affected populations, and overall economic recovery. To ensure early recovery programming consider such cross-cutting priorities, specific attention should be given to inclusive assessments analyzing the needs of the different identified groups, participation in all steps of programme design, implementation, and monitoring, design services to meet the identified needs across groups, and target these with tailored interventions.

X. Internal Coordination Mechanisms

The early recovery planning effort undertaken by the UNCT and HCT so far contributes to both the Humanitarian Planning Cycle (HPC) and the tripartite work of the World Bank, European Union, and United Nations for a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment and Conflict Recovery Framework (RDNA/CRF). Under the overall supervision of the DSC/RC/HC, OCHA and the RCO will continue coordinating the humanitarian and development pillars in their internal planning exercises. Within the UNCT and HCT, technical work will continue through the Programme Management Team (PMT) and National Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (NICCG), in coordination with the Gaza ICCG. The data focal points in the humanitarian pillar (AIMS working group) and development pillar (MEL Group) will also work collaboratively in identifying and quantifying needs, damages, and losses. These combined efforts will contribute to both the next HPC and the upcoming RDNA/CRF.

Externally, the UNCT and HCT will engage with and support the Palestinian Authority on early recovery interventions through the partnership established with the World Bank and European Union with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the inter-ministerial coordination bodies that the Ministry has established.

XI. Way Forward

Considering the scale of programming interventions required to address the unprecedented needs and destruction, it will be critical to ensure coordinated and integrated early recovery planning and implementation, complementing the humanitarian programming cycles, which may include future iterations of Flash Appeals, Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Response Plans (HNRPs), as well as working as a bridge to the RDNA/CRF process. This approach and action plan will be refined as the humanitarian planning cycle and RDNA/CRF processes unfold.

This Early Recovery Approach and Action Plan will evolve according to the assessments conducted, including the RDNA and possible HNOs. Future assessments will allow to further refine the scope of the priorities, the activities, the indicative funding required, as well as the key implementation assumptions here outlined, including the timeline for early recovery prioritized interventions. Furthermore, the Recovery Approach and Action Plan will serve as a key input for relevant aspects of the future CRF. Its continuous adjustments will ensure the CRF builds on the most updated information according to the evolving conditions on the ground.