

Electoral law

commission sows Lebanon's future

BEIRUT: The Commission for Electoral Law Reform said Tuesday its efforts to draft a new electoral law would provide the foundation for Lebanon's future.

The group's president, former Minister Fouad Butros, said the 12-member committee received 121 proposals for electoral reform in the month after it was to prepare a new law based on a "broad-based consultation mechanism."

Since then, the committee has held 22 hearings to hear the opinions of various parties and political forces. The committee has now split into eight sub-committees to "examine the electoral reform file."

Butros said the commission was preparing for "comprehensive dialogue" with the many

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groups behind the initial proposals. These sessions are expected to tackle a wide range of issues, including an appropriate electoral body, women's representation, the voting age, expatriate ballots and techniques aspects of the electoral process.

Asked whether Lebanese living abroad would be given the right to vote, Butros said: "All possibilities could have advantages and disadvantages ... this is one of the techniques that require international experience."

The commission has received "purely technical assistance" regarding the logistics of elections from the United Nations Development Program.

It has until January to submit its draft electoral law to the Cabinet before it is sent to Parliament for a vote. — *The Daily Star*