

Food Security Sector Working Group (SYRIA CRISIS)

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VENUE ESCWA, WFP Office, Beirut

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AGENDA

1. Approval of the minutes from previous meeting
2. Targeting Information Campaign
 - Update and Feedback from the field
 - Vulnerability assessment form
3. RRP6 Process
4. E-Card Update
5. Next Cycle Co-Chair
6. AOB
 - Next meeting

1. Approval of the minutes from previous meeting

The meeting was opened by WFP's Head of Programme who went through the minutes of the last meeting. The minutes from the 11th Food Security Sector Working Group (FSSWG) meeting, which took place on 10 September 2013, were endorsed by the group.

2. Targeting Information Campaign

Update

The WFP Head of Programme stated that there were no reported security incidents thus far during the mass information campaign for the upcoming targeting of food voucher assistance. There were WFP/UNHCR-manned information desks at every distribution throughout the Bekaa Valley, Mount Lebanon, Beirut and South Lebanon.

Mercy USA enquired into how detailed the campaign was and whether or not beneficiaries were individually informed that they would no longer be targeted. WFP confirmed that lists were published staff at all sites and through the information desks, the excluded refugees were explicitly informed if they were that they would no longer be receiving assistance. They were also provided with appeal forms and the process for requesting an appeal to the decision was explained to them.

DRC confirmed that the campaign had gone smoothly in all of their areas (the northern part of the Bekaa Valley). However, they pointed out that there may still be incidents next month when expectant beneficiaries may proceed to distribution sites only to find that they will not receive any assistance.

ACF also confirmed that the campaign has thus far progressed without incident in their areas. ACF pointed out that the information desks staffed by UNHCR and WFP were instrumental in ensuring that beneficiaries were well informed about both targeting and the appeals process. The desks became more efficient at conveying information as they gained experience during the cycle. ACF also requested to know if the information desks would be maintained during the October distributions. WFP tentatively confirmed that the information desks would continue at all distribution sites throughout the October cycle.

WVI also confirmed that while there were no security incidents resulting from the information campaign, a large percentage of those who will not be targeted immediately set about appealing the decisions.

Vulnerability Assessment Appeal Form

Many of the FSSWG members then sought information on how long the appeals process would take. Upon being informed that the process could take as long as three months, there was a unanimous concern expressed that this is too long and needs to be streamlined.

ICRC and Handicap international also asked for clarification as to the criteria by which beneficiaries were included or excluded from targeting. Many members of the FSSWG indicated that they were not cooperating partners with WFP but in some capacity interact with common beneficiaries. Many organizations received complaints and inquiries from beneficiaries who are to be excluded. ICRC specifically stated that they were unfamiliar with the criteria for targeting or the appeal system, and therefore, ICRC staff was unable to offer guidance.

ICRC and ECHO also raised concerns about plans to provide assistance to the rigid figure of 70%. As more refugee continually arrive, most of whom are likely to be more vulnerable than those who have been in Lebanon for longer, WFP may need to re-increase its targeting percentage to make room for new arrivals. WFP indicated that it will examine the question in more detail at a programmatic level.

Once the appeals forms were finalized, WFP's Food Security Analyst would provide WFP and UNHCR partners with a training on the completion of the forms. Various attendees confirmed their interest in a training.

ACTION POINT

WFP will raise the issue of the appeals process duration to the UNHCR and WFP targeting areas for further follow-up.

WFP will share the VASyR appeal form with FSSWG members for feedback as soon as it is completed, as well as information on the targeting criteria.

3. RRP6 Process

WFP Head of Programme gave a comprehensive overview of the upcoming RRP6 process, complete with powerPoint presentation (attached). There was still considerable debate and further clarifications requested regarding the process. The RRP6 process will be led by the sector leads with inputs and feedback very much welcome and encouraged. WFP, as the FSSWG sector lead, will be responsible for drafting the Food Security Sector inputs to the plan.

ACF sought clarification on the role of cash assistance in the RRP6 planning process. WFP reported it had raised this issue at the cross-sectoral meeting on behalf of the FSSWG membership with a confirmation that any cash project designed to improve food security would fall under the competency of the FSSWG. In terms of clarifications on the livelihoods inputs, no input had yet been provided cross-sectorally and agricultural livelihoods inputs could still be channelled through the FSSWG.

Several members of the group also raised concerns that the RRP6 process might follow the example of the RRP5, which was considered bureaucratic and provided limited room for inputs from the NGO community. They appealed for a needs-based approach along with a clear, unified strategy and overall objectives in the RRP6 so that adequate inputs could be clearly provided.

FAO also asked that guidance be provided on the boundaries between humanitarian assistance and development.

ACTION POINT

WFP will keep all members of the FSSWG informed as new information on the RRP6 process is forthcoming.

4. E-Card

WFP also provided the membership with a short update on the e-cards, which were distributed by one of the voucher partners (ACF) last week for the pilot soft launch in Nabatiyeh (South Lebanon). The first day that the cards could be used was 24 September and no problems were reported although beneficiaries appeared to be spending the entire value of the cards in one go. WFP and ACF will continue to closely monitor the e-card system for lessons learned in South Lebanon and will report back to the group with all relevant information. The e-card roll-out for the WFP caseload in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon will begin in October. The cards were already been ordered and will be distributed in the next distribution cycle. Cards will be distributed in the Bekaa Valley in November and in North Lebanon in December.

5. Next Cycle Co-Chair of FSSWG

WVI agreed to take over the co-chair of the FSSWG from DRC.

6. Any other business (AOB)

Nothing Special to Report (NSTR)

Food Security Sector (FSS) Coordinators

Two FSS Coordinators will be deployed to Lebanon at the end of September/beginning of October. They are both standby partners from WFP's pool of resources: one standby partner from RedR will be coordinating the FSSWG at the national level while the other one from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) will be in charge of field coordination.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on **8 October 2013**.

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