

Food Security Sector Working Group (SYRIA CRISIS)

DATE Tuesday 23 July 2013
TIME 12 PM
VENUE ESCWA, WFP Office, Beirut

Yasir Iftikhar	FAO	Yasi.iftikhar@fao.org
Simona Canova	GVC	simona.canova@gvc-italia.org
Valentina Stivanello	DRC	valentina.stivanello@drclibanon.dk
Lara Ghaoui	WVI	Lara_ghaoui@wvi.org
Shiva Kumar	AMURT	shivakumar@amurt.net
Farah Asfahani	IOCC	fasfahani@ioccc.org
John Varghese	WVI	John_varghese@wvi.org
Rawad El-Zir	OCHA	elzir@un.org
Miriam El-Fawal	Mercy USA	mfawal@mercyusa.org
Loreto Palmaera	Oxfam	lpalmaera@oxfam.org.uk
Rami Hussari	Oxfam	rhussari@oxfam.org.uk
Zanobi Tosi	Oxfam	Zanobi.tosi@oxfamitalia.org
Victoria La Venue	Premiere Urgence	grants@pu-ami.org
Isabelle Pelly	Save the Children	i.pelly@savethechildren.org.uk
Irene Fraser	Solidar Swiss	Irene.fraser@solidar.ch
Mohamad H. Mansour	Handicap International	hom.assistant@hi-emergency.org
Susanna Romeno Romero	WFP	Susana.moreno@wfp.org
Ekram El-Huni	WFP	Ekram.elhuni@wfp.org
Catherine Said	WFP	Catherine.said@wfp.org
Ronan Macnamara	WFP	Ronan.macnamara@wfp.org

AGENDA

1. Approval of the minutes from previous meeting
2. VASyR- Update
3. Minimum Food Expenditure Basket
4. Targeting-Update
5. 3W Mapping Update
6. Winterization
7. Nutrition Working group/Nutrition sub-working group-Update
8. AOB
 - Next meeting

1. Approval of the minutes from previous meeting

The meeting was opened by OXFAM's Emergency Food Security and Livelihood Advisor who welcomed the group and went through the minutes of the last meeting. The minutes from the 7th FSSWG meeting, which took place on 11 July 2013, were reviewed and endorsed.

2. Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR)- Criteria Update

WFP'S Food Security Expert presented the latest set of results from the assessment for the FSSWG.

The next step would essentially be to identify the most sensitive indicators and obtain a correlation with UNHCR ProGres database to see how the VASyR criteria can be combined with the database variables with the least error margin. This might require additional information but a tentative deadline was set for Tuesday, 30 July.

DRC reaffirmed that with the right mechanisms in place, these criteria could be re-evaluated with time.

OXFAM inquired whether newcomers would be excluded/included right upon registration, through for example the newcomers assessment already carried out by some NGOs.

WFP pointed out that, it could be considered if the newcomers questionnaire includes the variables identified as most sensitive to classify vulnerability.

DRC indicated that the newcomers' assessment was intended to be short and rapid. Potentially, a few questions specific to food security could be added but including input from all sectors would not be feasible. However if and when the concentration of refugees arriving in Lebanon decreases, new options could be considered.

3. Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)

WFP's Field Monitor Assistant/Nutritionist presented the latest WFP results in food consumption and food expenditure.

WFP is currently providing voucher assistance with value of USD 27 and a winterized value of USD 31. In light of current price monitoring, it would appear that to meet 100% energy and macronutrient requirements, the WFP voucher should have a value of USD 31 and a winterized value of USD 33. According to the VASyR, households spend a monthly average of about USD 63 on food.

Save the Children asked about the main difference between the USD 33 and USD 63.. It was pointed out by WFP's Food Security Expert that sugar, vegetables and cheese were consumed in very large quantities according to the VASyR.

World Vision International (WVI) requested a clarification on the precise MFB definition. It was clarified that the MFB is the minimum amount of money necessary to cover the nutrient needs, taking into account population food preferences to the extent possible. In the above case regarding sugar, 142 grams of sugar per day was deemed too high to be considered as a minimum requirement.

Save the Children asked whether WFP would be able to meet the 70%+ target stated by UNHCR. WFP insisted that the three target options were still under discussion but confirmed that once a decision was taken, WFP would commit to fully assist the targeted caseload if funding/resourcing needs were met.

4. Targeting

WFP's Head of Programme stated that a Task Force was established consisting of WFP, UNHCR, WVI, DRC and Makhzoumi.

A joint information note and a Q&A on the transition to the targeting were drafted and have been/are being circulated to different stakeholders. An Arabic version of the information note was also be made available. WFP staff received these documents last week and started sharing them with partners on the field. Posters are being placed on UNHCR and WFP distribution sites are in preparation. The broadcast of a TV spot was still under discussion.

Partners' main concerns revolved around the messaging itself and the timeline of the targeting. In order to address these concerns, WFP was meeting with the partners at Beirut level on the same day as the FSSWG and would be meeting partners at field level the upcoming week to discuss targeting.

WVI reiterated that it was essential for UNHCR and WFP to also take part in the various security forums and brief the different security focal points. WFP confirmed that it would work actively towards informing the relevant actors.

5. 3Ws Mapping

A new column for “progress” was added to evaluate the group’s achievements against planned targets.

ACTION POINT

Members who have not done so yet are required to fill in the 3Ws matrix; in addition, all organisations will be required to fill in the “progress” section (as a percentage). The results would be consolidated by OXFAM and WFP and presented to the group next week.

6. Winterization

WFP stated that in line with the fifth Regional Response Plan (RRP5) and its internal planning, it would increase the value of its voucher to USD 31 starting in November 2013 until March 2014.

ACTION POINT

Other organisations are invited to share their plans and capacity.

7. Nutrition Working Group-Update

WFP met with UNICEF and UNHCR last week. During the meeting, UNICEF reiterated its preference to keep the Nutrition sub-working group under the Health Sector. However, a commitment was made to dedicate 30 minutes at each Health Working Group meeting to Nutrition.

Additionally, UNICEF, WFP and other actors are starting preparations for the follow-up Nutrition Survey. If the results of the follow-up survey highlighted a need, the placement of the Nutrition sub- working would be reconsidered.

8. AOB

Cash Working Group-Market Monitoring

The Cash Working Group launched an initiative to gather information on market monitoring across all agencies and NGOs. The idea is to harmonize the Minimum Food Basket being monitored for all organisations doing cash assistance.

ACTION POINT

The FSSWG will discuss how it can fit into this framework through the monitoring of food commodities.

E-card

WFP’s Head of Programme provided an update on the e-voucher transition, stating that a mission from WFP’s Headquarters was in Lebanon to finalise the legal contract with the selected Bank and further develop the partnership with UNHCR. The pilot should start mid-August and the soft-launch should take place late August. The full roll-out of the e-card would first take place in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon in September and in North Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley in October. The transition would take place simultaneously with the targeting.

Save the Children pointed out that ECHO’s next round of funding, inclusive of proposals for cash transfer assistance, would be in September. ECHO had previously requested that all organizations use the guichet unique and WFP indicated that a discussion would be held with ECHO to consider phasing other organizations that wished to use the e-card.

Lessons Learnt

Solidar Swiss asked if WFP had any plans to write a “Lessons Learnt” report on the voucher programme. WFP said it will take the request into consideration and consult with management.

Announcements

WVI indicated that it was launching an electronic card pilot in South Lebanon for unregistered households. WVI will share the results of the pilot with the group.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on the **13 August 2013**.

FSSWG CONTACTS:

Sector Lead: Ekram El-Huni, Ekram.elhuni@wfp.org

Working Group Co-Chair: Loreto Palmaera, LPalmaera@oxfam.org.uk

Information Management Officer: Julia Hug, Julia.hug@wfp.org