

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
 - Vulnerability assessment form
 - Feedback from the field
3. Market Monitoring- Food Commodities
4. Contingency Planning
5. E-card Update
6. RRP6 Process

7. 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 10th Food Security Sector Working Group (FSSWG) meeting, which took place on 27 August 2013, were reviewed and the following action points still require attention: send feedback to WFP's Food Security Expert on the Vulnerability Assessment Form and circulate WFP's price monitoring tool to the group. The minutes were endorsed by the group.

2. Targeting Information Campaign

Update

DRC reported to the group the feedback from North Bekaa where the information started the previous week. The feedback was positive thanks to good coordination between WFP and UNHCR. The reaction of beneficiaries was fairly good and no incidents were reported. The presence of military outside distribution sites was welcomed although presence was unequal between sites and might have alarmed refugees in some instances. After struggling to direct beneficiaries to the right location to submit appeal forms, it was agreed that only community centres and health dispensaries would be used. DRC indicated that the second distribution would most likely be more challenging as excluded refugees might come to request assistance. Other distributions proceeded as usual in the rest of the country.

WFP's Head of Programme reported that a training for the Mass Information Campaign took place in the past two weeks in all regions. T-shirts, leaflets and posters were delivered and used as per planned. WFP and UNHCR are also currently developing a first draft of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for targeted assistance.

Vulnerability Assessment Form

WFP's Food Security Expert updated the group on the Vulnerability Assessment form. The form was agreed upon by UNHCR and WFP, and was circulated to partners and sectors for feedback. The questions included were limited to the most sensitive questions necessary to evaluate the vulnerability of households. WFP has been working with its Headquarters in Rome to perform data collection through smartphones so as to avoid the burden of data entry. The data will be uploaded onto the WFP server (GRASP) and analysed in-house. The database will be shared daily to avoid duplication in household's visits. The form should be finalised Thursday for field testing.

Handicap International asked whether the criteria used for targeting could be shared with the group. WFP's Food Security Expert explained that it is a combination of variables. However, a simple presentation for partners will be shared. Solidarites International also asked how the criteria were being communicated to beneficiaries and if any questions had been raised. WFP's Head of Programme reiterated that the explanation was very general so as to not overcomplicate the information given to refugees. So far, WFP and UNHCR received no specific requests on this. DRC added that most beneficiaries' queries related to education in Akkar and T-5.

Save the Children inquired whether targeting would also affect NFI assistance. WFP's Head of Programme confirmed that baby kits and hygiene kits distribution will be affected as well. Save the Children also asked if the vulnerability assessment would be conducted in all refugee households. WFP's Food Security Expert explained that this would be the objective in the longer term.

ACTION POINT

All feedback on the Vulnerability Assessment form should be sent to WFP's Food Security expert by Thursday 12 September noon.

3. Market Monitoring

It was agreed that all partners would use WFP's new price monitoring form which includes the Minimum Food Expenditure Basket requirements. The shop selection methodology will have to be discussed at a later stage.

ACTION POINT

WFP will share the price monitoring form and the shop selection criteria.

4. Contingency Planning

DRC stated that it was closely monitoring Early Warning indicators and prepositioning with UNHCR a contingency stock. DRC is also liaising with the Lebanese Red Cross in Tripoli about the possibility of cooperating in case of emergency and is planning to meet with LRC at the Beirut level to further discuss and formalize this cooperation.

WFP's Head of Programme gave an update on cross-sectoral discussions. The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) had invited a variety of relevant actors to a meeting to evaluate options for preparedness planning and contingency stock as well as proposing that a reception center be created at the Masnaa border. MoSA agreed to create the center only to help the most vulnerable refugees with very basic medical support. Food assistance was not deemed as a priority requirement in the center.

In terms of contingency stock and planning, WFP confirmed that it has 8,000 food parcels in partners' warehouses and another 8,000 parcels in the process of delivery. WFP also contracted a second supplier that would be able to provide another 6,000 food parcels at short notice. Overall, this could be considered contingency stock sufficient to assist 120,000 refugees for a period of one month. WFP's outpost in Syria Logistics Office performed a bread survey during early 2013 and is now updating this list in case it would be needed. The Logistics Office is also assessing transport and storage facilities options a potential influx require a response scale-up. WFP's plan will be finalized by the end of the week.

Discussions on-going at the Cross-Sectoral level were also focused on the threshold, which would trigger such a scaled-up response. It was agreed that should an influx of 30,000 people over a few days or 150,000 people over a month take place, the contingency measures would be activated.

Mercy USA added that the organization planned on distributing 1,000 bread bags a day. IOCC confirmed that it is planning on distributing food vouchers and would be ready to fill gaps wherever needed.

It was confirmed in the meeting that OCHA was seeking to exceptionally open the CERF and ERF applications up for preparedness and early warning proposals.

5. E-Card

The contract was signed by the selected Bank and WFP's Procurement Division in Headquarters. A soft launch of the e-card will take place later this week in Nabatiyeh. The roll-out will then take place in Mount Lebanon. The Bank has the capacity of producing 2,000 cards a day, therefore the roll-out would be phased in line with the production capacity. It was also clarified that WFP was discussing with relevant partners various final technicalities of the roll-out such as the revision of the monitoring toolkit.

6. RRP6

The RRP6 process was kicked-off last week. The focus will be more regional and coordinators from all countries are therefore expected to attend a briefing meeting in Amman on 11 and 12 September to discuss requirements for the January-December 2014 period.

A steering committee was established in Lebanon comprising of UN agencies and government counterparts. One donor and one NGO are expected to be part of the committee as well.

According to the committee, feedback pointed to the fact that RRP6 would be informed by the good practices from Lebanon in the RRP5 process. The scenario currently under consideration for Lebanon is

the one from the World Bank/UNDP assessment, which foresees 1.6 to 2.3 million people in need of assistance by the end of 2014. Further, nutrition interventions in Lebanon will be re-evaluated in light of the upcoming Follow-up Nutrition Survey. Prioritization of RRP6 activities would be based on needs and particular attention would be paid to Host communities' needs. .

7. AOB

Food Assistance

WFP had no further information on food parcels distributed on behalf of the Qatari government. Mercy USA suggested to get in contact with the Health Working Group where the Qatari Red Crescent is represented on a regular basis and might have some additional information.

Muslim Aid reported that a United Arab Emirates NGO, Al-Nahyan, was distributing vouchers with a value of \$150 to 3,000 refugee households in Chouf (Mount Lebanon).

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.

Announcement

UNFAO – Food and Agriculture Organization's "DAIRY PROGRAM" has established 40 Milk Collection and Cooling Centers in Lebanon, Akkar (14), Bekaa (22) and North (4), that provide daily source of livelihood/income to about 2500 dairy farmers. It further improves domestic food security as milk production has increased from 50 tonnes before this program started, to 200 tonnes daily today. It raises the nutrition value of dairy products as the level of bacteria in the milk is now only one-tenth of what its previous value. FAO recently published a "Dairy Production Manual" used by dairy farmers. It was shared with the WG.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on **24 September 2013**.

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