

Food Security Sector Working Group (SYRIA CRISIS)

DATE Tuesday 5 November 2013
TIME 12 PM Beirut Time
VENUE WFP Offices, Azariah Building Downtown, Block E,
 6th Floor (Next to Markaziah Hotel), Beirut

Members Present

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AGENDA

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1. Approval of the minutes from previous meeting

Discussion Items

2. Revised FSSWG TORs- review and endorsement

3. Improvements to the FSSWG for sector members

- Solicitation for additional/new agenda items in upcoming meetings

4. Harmonization and standardization of sector-wide tools, systems *etc.*

5. FSSWG reporting under RRP5 – lessons learnt.

6. Local/sub-regional FSSWGs or sub-sector working groups

Updates

7. Targeting

8. RRP6 Process

9. E-Card Update

10. AOB

1. Approval of the minutes from previous meeting

The minutes from the last working group meeting held on 22 October 2013, were approved.

2. Revised FSSWG TORs- review and endorsement

The ToRs for the FSSWG were reviewed and approved by the group.

3. Improvements to the FSSWG for sector members

The Food Security Sector Coordinator asked each organization at the table what they were expecting from the FSSWG and how to improve it.

The Lebanese Red Cross was attending for the first time.

The IFRC showed an interest in improving the dialogue between the Lebanese Red Cross and the rest of the partners on the field.

Mercy-USA envisions the WG as a platform to discuss field level activities, gaps and challenges. Mercy-USA sees it as the only platform where such dialogue can take place.

FAO mentioned being very satisfied with the current level of coordination but suggested that the visibility of the working group might be improved.

ACTED is attending the meetings to have an understanding of the remaining gaps for them to engage in food security activities.

UNHCR highlighted the need for improvement of links between the Cash and Transfer Programme (CTP) Working Group and the FSSWG since food programming was increasingly involving plastic money/cash.

It is therefore important for the CTP Working Group to understand what the food needs of affected populations are.

OCHA encouraged a stronger presence of the Government of Lebanon within the WG. The FSS Coordinator explained that the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) had recently obtained and assigned someone to co-lead of the WG.

WVI expressed interest in a “Lessons Learnt” workshop on what has been learnt since the beginning of the food assistance intervention in May 2012. WVI also expressed the need for a joint monitoring system between members of the group to better report on RRP6 but also to better communicate results to donors. Areas of particular interest for WVI are the joint market monitoring and exchange visits at field level.

OXFAM also suggested sharing on “Lessons Learnt” on the coordination since the beginning of the crisis as well as sharing of information on challenges encountered at the field level. The strategies used to solve some of these challenges needed to be widely shared, and the working group should also brainstorm on new or novel ways to address recurring challenges. OXFAM also advocated for improved accountability mechanism to both donors and beneficiaries, and that this should easily feed into programming. A “Lessons Learnt” on the e-card might be useful since more working group members are transitioning to ATM/e-cards. OXFAM also suggested that it would be informative for the working group to also map the current food security interventions as detailed as possible. This would also help with identifying the remaining gaps.

WFP acknowledged that it might be an appropriate time to think of a “Lessons Learnt” on the e-card. WFP added that it would be a good idea to engage the government and local NGOs in any workshops on lessons learnt about food intervention so far.

4. Harmonization and standardization of sector-wide tools, systems etc.

WFP mentioned that it was working towards outsourcing some of its monitoring activities to its partners as a way to strengthen partnerships and capacity. This could also be seen as a step forward in joint monitoring for the FSSWG. WFP also mentioned that, some operational modules would remain organization specific although core indicators and particularly, Food Security indicators, would always have to be harmonized.

UNHCR mentioned that the CTP Working Group was working towards harmonizing monitoring for organizations doing cash interventions to better understand the needs and vulnerability status of refugees and other affected populations.

In terms of joint market monitoring, WFP remains in charge of the food component. WFP offered to perform the analysis for the FSSWG. UNHCR is currently looking at ways to integrate the analysis of the food component with the analysis of the NFI component of the Minimum Expenditure Basket using the same methodology.

ACTION POINTS

Members of the group who have performed data collection using the WFP tool should share data with WFP for analysis before 15 November.

WFP will re-share with members of the group the common market monitoring tool.

5. FSSWG reporting under RRP5 – lessons learnt.

No reporting format on RRP5 has been defined so far by UNHCR. OXFAM suggested getting in contact with the Tripoli Distribution WG as they have been circulating a good template for end-of-the-year RRP5 reporting.

ACTION POINT

WFP and UNHCR need to follow-up on RRP5 reporting format.

6. Local/sub-regional FSSWGs or sub-sector working groups

The WG still did not see the need for sub-national WGs for the time being. MERCY-USA suggested that the national FSSWG be improved first. If this is not enough, MERCY-USA suggested then looking at sub-national WGs. It was noted however, that a sub-working group exists in the South. Currently, the only platforms available in the Bekaa and the North to discuss food assistance are the Distribution Working Groups.

Updates

7. Targeting

WVI expects to finish targeted distribution on 20 November in Central Bekaa.

WVI has been facing many challenges during the verification process. There were many outstanding software challenges on the roll out to the use of the platform thus data collection and data entry had to

be performed manually. This inevitably resulted in the incurrence of additional costs. Some beneficiaries had moved/migrated from one locality to another and such movements had not been recorded so it proving difficult to verify them. In addition, due in part to these movements, many phone numbers had changed making the process even more difficult. Some beneficiaries were also unwilling to answer some of the questions. WVI added that there was still some confusion about the safety net programme and that some clarification should be given for November and December distributions. WVI has created a separate desk at distribution sites to identify this special caseload.

AMURT mentioned having the same issues as WVI. WFP confirmed that the above challenges were similar across partners.

OCHA asked how many refugees were wrongfully included/ excluded. WV replied that we do not have the figure on wrongfully included/excluded now as the verification analysis/exercise is yet to complete.

OXFAM added that refugees seemed increasingly unwilling to register, particularly if they know someone who had been excluded. OXFAM feared that protection issues might increase as it will become harder to identify unregistered refugees.

8. RRP6 Process

WFP updated the group on the RRP6 process. There has been many back and forth with UNHCR for the completion of the final draft. Following the advice of UNHCR, all interventions targeting "unregistered" refugees will be classified as "Preventing deterioration of vulnerabilities" since according to UNHCR's scenario planning, all refugees will be registered by the end of 2014. This was in line with the other sectors' submissions. The Food Security sector requirement under RRP6 as at 5 November was \$585,744,806. This increased as WFP decided to scale up its assistance for 2014 from \$27 dollars to \$30 per person per month.

Members of the working group asked about WFP's winterization plans. WFP replied that the organization will not winterize. WVI asked that an official note needed to be sent to partners to inform them of this decision as it appeared not everyone was aware of this decision.

9. E-Card Update

WFP e-cards distributions had been completed in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon, assisting close to 30,000 families. The roll out in North Lebanon should take place in December. The e-card distributions in the Bekaa were set to start in the week beginning 11 November 2013. There will be two card distributions on-going at the same time: the WFP e-card and the UNHCR CSC ATM card. To avoid any confusion, WFP, UNHCR and their cooperating partners have been working very closely on joint messaging.

WVI will perform the first joint distribution on 11 November for about 106 000 individuals.

10. AOB

The next meeting will take place on **19 November**.

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