

NFI MEETING – 10 June 2013, Beirut – minutes

Meeting			
Name	NFI Sector Coordination Meeting	Meeting Date	10/06/2013
Meeting Location	UNHCR Conference Room (8 th Floor)	Meeting Time	09:30 am
Chair person	Mr. Charles Higgins	Meeting Duration	2 hrs
Minutes Prepared by	Ms. Hiba Jardali		
Purpose of Meeting	NFI Coordination Meeting		

Summary of discussions and action points

1.	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global launch of RRP5 took place in Geneva on 7 June 2012. - Breakdown for Lebanon chapter is USD 168 m. for protection, USD 267 m. for shelter, USD 288 m for food security and agriculture, USD 368 m. for public health, USD 189 m. for education, USD 155 m. for WASH, USD 201 m. for NFIs, USD 31 m. for social cohesion and livelihood. GoL is requesting USD 344 of this. - Technical donor briefing takes place on 12 June; Prime Minister and UN High Commissioner for Refugees will give a press conference on 18 June. - Figures this week: total refugees 509,152 of which 434,079 registered and 75,073 await registration. - Registration process was accelerated significantly; waiting period now less than 30 days in all areas.
2.	<p>Newcomer Assistance Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As of March 2013 NFI kits were standardized as in terms of the items but work is still ongoing to standardize the specifications each item in the kits. It has been proposed that UNHCR undertakes the procurement process on behalf of other agencies in order to meet recognized global specifications and achieve the lowest purchase and shipping costs, but this has not been agreed or implemented as yet. - The usual timeframe between first arrival of the refugees until receipt of the first assistance ranges from just 1 day in vulnerable cases, to 4 days in normal cases, with a maximum of 10 days. DRC's objective is to provide the necessary assistance to the newcomer family, within 3 days of assessing their needs. - UNHCR has already received significant assistance from Kuwait which will cover its requirement under RRP5-NFI Output #1 (Winterization) and more than half under Output #2 (Newcomer Assistance). UNHCR's strategy presented in RRP5 includes the provision of vouchers to a proportion of registered families, although the mechanism for targeting this assistance is not worked out yet. <p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is there any merit in change in the NFI strategy for newcomers as the interval between first arrival and registration gets shorter ? This should be kept under consideration but the sector agrees that at this stage it would be premature to stop giving assistance to newcomers before registration. ✓ The sector has no methodology or plan on which to transition to a targeted approach for newcomers as yet – this would have to follow a similar approach to that set by UNHCR for its regular monthly assistance to registered refugees (the hygiene/baby kits provided under the WASH Sector).

3.	Contingency Plan for Syrian Refugee response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Contingency Plan (CP) for Syrian Refugees covers two scenarios; a mass influx of refugees much bigger or quicker than that posited in RRP5, and/or a situation where Syrian refugees and Lebanese citizens are displaced by violence occurring within Lebanon, for one reason or another. - includes 2 basic big situations: refugee influx with the larger number than in RRP5 or much faster - This CP has been harmonized with the UNCT CP, which covers earthquake, epidemic, complex emergency (either a widespread internal conflict or a 'regional entanglement'... involving Lebanon's neighbours). - At a certain threshold of the internal conflict scenario, when the existing capacity to respond is exceeded, we will switch from the current coordination arrangement (the lead agency approach) to a more elaborate approach involving all UN agencies in Lebanon – basically an evolution of the existing sectors into the cluster system, but the threshold has not yet been clearly defined, nor has the transition process. - In this CP, the Preparedness & Response Strategy are organized on a sectoral basis, and also distinguished between the national and field levels, and they have been made generic for each area rather than specific, although there are slight differences between areas based on their circumstances. <p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Next step: Area Offices are working through area level group of tasks for preparedness and response action through their monthly inter-agency different and sector working group meeting processes. ✓ At national level, sector leads should now review the contingency actions for their sector, and oversee implementation of/compliance with the preparedness actions at national and area level. ✓ Meeting with GoL to brief on progress so far, and coordinate action with LAF and line ministries.
4.	NFI Sector Working Group TOR
	<p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Proposal to expand the TOR to include Logistics Cluster type issues in the NFI WG, although the existing WG will need more capacity to take this on – we should involve WFP with its logistics specialists. ✓ Should come up with likely scenarios then plan the necessary logistics, including warehousing and transportation, including monitoring market costs of each. ✓ The purpose is not to implement actual logistic response, which remains individual agency responsibility.
5.	Mass Communication (led by Claudia Liute, UNCR Communications Specialist)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNHCR is currently leading a cross-sectoral exercise to determine what the refugees want/need to know. - In order to have a mass communication strategy, we need to see what is being offered, how and where, to understand from sectors how are they delivering, and if they are targeting beneficiaries, how. - Info will be transmitted to the refugees through various information products – leaflets, posters, TV ads, information desk (e.g. Caritas's communication point at the border) but audience must be identified first. - The introduction of targeted assistance will have a huge impact on the refugees, so this will be the emphasis of the first messages. The worry is that the current profiling exercise (VASyr) will not give us the means to target using the existing data we have on the population (i.e. what is in the ProGres Database). - Messages should be conveyed to the entire population – not just newcomers or newly registered – the first contact is very important, as it will help them determine where to settle and how to settle in, and

	<p>the message should be conveyed in a simple fashion (even for the illiterate), based on these needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is not possible to convey so much information at the registration interview, so some information should be given right at arrival and then supplemented by more after they settle in. - Sectors should determine what messages they want to convey to the refugees, bearing in mind that they should not create expectations which cannot be realized. - On the protection side one of the most common concerns is that refugees’ details will be passed back to Syria – this needs to be dispelled. - In UNHCR Tripoli registration center, after getting registered refugees pass by the MoSA office and receive a package of information, as well as being registered again. These process need to be clarified and rationalized, in all areas. <p>DRC feedback on this issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Although their newcomer assistance is not available to absolutely everyone, DRC will continue its assistance to 100% of needy refugees within 3 weeks of their arrival. - The current system is that once a refugees contacts the municipality and provides their information, then an IP visits them and give them the registration info leaflet and informs them what they are entitled to receive, then the protection information desk at the registration center provides them with relevant info, then there is more info from the distribution desk. So strategy is there but it needs to be consistent. - Based on current capacity of all agencies for new comers, it is better to keep the communications through DRC’s community focal points for the time being and not to formalize it too much. <p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gaps should be identified in the information provided to refugees, in order to fill the gaps. ✓ Gaps and weaknesses exist in the current mass communication strategy and the refugees are best placed highlight on the gaps. Therefore, focus groups of the new arrivals and newly registered should be formed, and then sectors need to decide what is feasible to be communicated to refugees. ✓ Establish focal points to ask refugees what they know and what they don’t during distributions.
6.	<p>Information Management Update</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NFI Distribution Tracking Template has been simplified, mainly by removing the requirement to report data down to ‘place’ level – now it is required only down to caza / district level. - In addition to the NFI Distribution (to newcomers), we also want agencies to report on the number of newcomers in the areas they cover, as in the ‘Rapid Estimate of Unregistered Syrian Refugees’ exercise back in March. This would tell us how many newcomers and unregistered there are in the country. - We have shifted the focus of collecting the data on NFIs distributed and on newcomer numbers from national to area level, since Area Offices also need this data for their work, in the hope that agencies will be better at returning completed report forms at this level. <p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The simplified NFI Distribution Tracking Template (V.1.3) will be disseminated with these minutes. ✓ Each Area Office has a focal point, and the details need to be communicated to each partner agency.
7.	<p>AOB</p>

	<p>- Regarding the Newcomer Assistance SOP and the two levels of needs assessment forms (annexed to it):</p> <p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The UNHCR Registration Information Note is very out of date – update it and disseminate it to partners. ✓ Revise the whole SOP and all annexes one more time, translate it into Arabic and disseminate it again. ✓ Conduct training with partners on the use of the household level and rapid assessment (group) forms ✓ Form a small sub-working group to look at how to collect, consolidated and utilize the data collected by agencies using the forms (Yannick from OCHA and Ziad from DRC volunteered). ✓ Agree on how agencies should implement the approach described in the SOP at field level, by first ‘selling it’ to the field officers in the 5 UNHCR Area Offices, and then getting them to promote its use. ✓ Take the SOP and link it with fundraising under RRP5, so that donors know how much the kits will cost and what quantity are needed, and then make their funding decisions in accordance with the policy. ✓ Confirm with WFP that the NFI Sector WG is the main forum for work on the newcomer issue.
8.	Next Meeting
	<p>- The next NFI Sector Coordination Meeting will take place at 0930 on Monday 8 July, at UNHCR, and in future at the same time and place on every second Monday of each month.</p>