

Inter-Agency Working Group on Food Assistance

Terms of Reference

October 2017

Context

The progressive refugee policy and political stability has made Uganda a refuge of choice for refugees and asylum seekers in the region. The country currently hosts about 1,300,000 refugees (August 17, 2017), the largest number in Africa. Refugees from Republic of South Sudan make up 75% of refugee population in Uganda. Others are from Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Somalia and Burundi.

Refugees live in urban areas and rural settlements established by Government and UNHCR in the South-West, West Nile and Northern regions. Refugees living in the rural settlements are provided with plots of land, which gives them a livelihood option, but climatic, economic and technical factors limit reliability and scale of food production. Thus, food security of refugees is fragile.

Based on findings from the Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (FSNA) conducted in December 2016 indicate that 80% or more of the population in the old refugee settlements have an acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS). However, this is not the case in the new refugee settlements (recent South Sudanese refugee influx) where the concentration of new arrivals is high. The nutrition situation in refugee settlements in Uganda reflects two different levels of malnutrition between South West and West Nile settlements, where the newly arrived refugees from South Sudan are located. While the global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates in South West settlements have stabilized at acceptable levels (<5%), the West Nile settlements have GAM prevalence classified either as serious (10%-15%) or critical (>15%). Moreover, high levels of anaemia among children were reported (26%-72%) across all the refugee settlement.

Various international and national humanitarian organizations are currently implementing and/or funding food assistance programmes to improve accessibility to food. To coordinate all programmes implemented and to ensure efficiency and adequate coverage, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and partners agreed to launch this inter-agency working group on food assistance to refugees (FAWG) effective November, 2016. Membership to FAWG is opened to all agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) implementing and/or funding food assistance programmes and activities in the current refugee settlements, reception and transit centres and any other that will, in future, be established by OPM and UNHCR.

Programmes Covered by FAWG

Programmes and activities covered under the FAWG include all food-based interventions currently implemented in refugee settlements, transit and reception centres that aims at improving and/or maintaining food and nutrition security of refugees in the above-mentioned locations.

- General food assistance through in-kind (including hot meals) and cash-based transfers
- Blanket supplementary feeding programme (BSFP)
- Maternal and child health and nutrition programmes (MCHN)
- Targeted supplementary feeding programme (TSFP)
- Out-patients therapeutic care programme (OTC)
- In-patients therapeutic care programme (ITC)

Other food assistance interventions that aim at addressing food and nutrition security of refugees in the settlements.

Objective

The major objective of FAWG is coordination and oversight of food assistance programmes implementation in refugee settlements in Uganda to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and maximum coverage.

Roles and Responsibilities of FAWG

- Coordinate and guide food assistance programmes and activity implementation
- Map food assistance programmes in refugee settlements to avoid duplication and ensure adequate coverage
- Provide technical oversight of food assistance programmes and activities
- Provide monthly/cycle programme updates
- Review emerging operational and technical challenges and propose corrective action
- Participate in assessments related to food assistance through reviewing assessment tools, methodologies and reports
- Monitor food and nutrition security situation in the settlements
- Recommend response strategies based on food and nutrition security situation on ground
- A forum for experience sharing and lesson learning
- Advocacy for food assistance

Structure

Composition

- Membership to the FAWG is opened to all agencies of the United Nations, donor agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGO) and NGOs implementing and/or funding food assistance programmes and activities in refugee settlements.

Coordination

- The CBT WG will be coordinated by WFP.
- The working group will be led and coordinated by OPM and co-chaired by UNHCR and WFP.
- UNHCR and WFP will be the secretariat and responsible for managing invitation, minutes and documentations of FAWG meetings and other activities.
- FAWG group will report to a committee of senior management of OPM, UNHCR and WFP.

Meeting Schedules

- FAWG will meet once a month or as necessary and as agreed by members.
- Meetings will be held every second Monday of the month in the afternoons.
- Every quarter a specific meeting with Nutrition partners will take place as part of the FAWG

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