|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Arsal Coordination Meeting – UNHCR** | | | |
| **Date** | 13/06/2017 | **Time** | 13:00 am |
| **Location** | UNHCR Zahle | **Duration** | 1.30 hr |
| **Chair** | UNHCR |  |  |
| **Attendance** | UNHCR, UNICEF, ACF, QRC, SCI, DRC, TDH-Italy, DAF, WVI,Relief and Development, MSA, MoSA ,MC,Intersos, TDH. | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **ACTION** | **DUE DATE** |
| 1. **Returns From Arsal** |  |  |
| UNHCR updated the meeting about recent returns and our position in general regarding this development. State and non-state actors have been discussing the possibility of return of Syrians residing in Arsal to particular areas of the Qalamoun mountains in Syria, under particular conditions. The press reported the return of some 50 families from Arsaal to Assal al Ward in Syria on the 10th of June. The exact number of families remain unconfirmed. UNHCR continues to monitor the situation in the field – which is hampered by security conditions.  Because of the humanitarian situation including ongoing security concerns for civilian populations in Syria, the UN and UNHCR consider that conditions are not yet conducive for refugee returns to take place in safety and dignity, and in accordance with international standards. UNHCR is not in a position to facilitate returns at this stage. At the same time, provided returns do not occur under undue pressure we do not oppose voluntary/spontaneous returns. UNHCR will pursue every measure possible to ensure that any resulting civilian returns happen without undue coercion. UNHCR has not been participating in returns occurring from Arsaal recently. | Note | Note |
| According to the municipality, the refugees that returned reside inside the city of Arsal whilst only 2 or 3 HHs were from the outskirts. These families include those living in informal settlements as well as SSBs.  Abu Taha is the Syrian responsible to organize the returns. He accompanied the families that returned and claims that their situation in Syria is stable. This return was sort of a pilot for less than 200 individuals to pace its effects.  The municipality states that the names of the refugees that returned have not been disclosed in general. The lists were written months ago and were decided among the families and provided to the Syrian authorities for approval and it is confirmed that 420 HHs are cleared to return. The 420 HHs will return in batches and not all at once. Abu Taha’s son, who is in Arsal at the moment might accompany the return of some perhaps this week. There will also be another return planned after Eid.  Deputy mayor states that she is not aware of the agreement made and is not of knowledge if there is a condition set as to if the refugees can return back to Arsal if their return deemed unsuitable but believes that there would not be a problem for them to go back and forth if they pleased.  Municipality believes that Arsal was chosen due to its demographics of Syrian refugees, as it holds the largest number of refugees. As well, it is important to note that Arsal is the closest village to the respective villages of return.  They may also have security risks that might happen in Arsal due to the fact that there are still armed elements.  Some talks also involve the possibility that a deal for armed elements, specifically in Arsal, to Idlib and not Qalamoun might take place. |  |  |
| 1. **Sector Updates** |  |  |
| UNICEF’s partners, LOST and Mercy Corps tendering process will be finalized of this week. ACF’s new rendering process is still ongoing. ACF at the moment is covering the areas of Mercy Corps until the process is finalized.  Diarrhea cases were reported and UNICEF is responding with health partners with action plan to increase water promotion and water monitoring and testing.  Deputy mayor states that there should be a set price for the trucks in Arsal as this is posing a challenge among truck drivers and this would allow the participation of everyone. UNICEF states that they are open for proposals and everyone can apply with the same rate as the range of cost will somehow be the same among all.  Referrals were incoming regarding a gap in the distribution of water tanks onto Informal Settlements. | Note | Note |
| WVI acting as Basic assistance’s partner conducted household visits in Arsal as part of their HPQ target as well as the VASyR exercise for the first time.  DAF distribution of daily 1500 food parcels to around 500 tents is still ongoing. By next week they will coordinate with the municipality to provide them with 100 food parcels to distribute to vulnerable Lebanese. |  |  |
| Livelihood update we had the cost to do baseline for livelihood in particular employment.  UNHCR and UNDP are coordinating to implement a research market assessment in Arsal. The objective is to provide an understanding on the current state of the economy in Arsal, the skills and education level of both local community and refugees, duration and cases of unemployment and underemployment to explore the main barriers and most importantly explore and map the sectors with potential for growth and employment generation. The idea is to do a baseline for livelihood in particular employment aspect through a needs assessment. All sectors interested can apply to conduct the baseline needs assessment. The tender was launched and the deadline was extended till Tuesday. This was a commitment done to the municipaility following the visit of the minister and Lazarini  TOR’s were circulated in February.  It is important to note that those selected to conduct the baseline, will not necessarily be those implementing employment activities later.  UNDP is doing the tendering process and as soon as there is a contractor the assessment will be launched. | Note | Note |
| As for education, ALP pre-tests for the second round took place last Sunday. 1400 children were referred and as a sector managed to get 1300 children to sit in for the pre-test.  There will be a morning and second shift in high schools.  Preparations for 2017-2018 school year is ongoing and hope for assistance from all NGOs and municipality to increase the number of public high schools in Arsal since there are a limited number for an increase number of children.  Amel stated that it was heard that MEHE is to stop the Syrian curriculum to advocate with MEHE, already met with these schools in Arsal. | Note | Note |
| Input from Child protection: the effects of the security situation led Amel IRC, TDH and some NGOs to stop child protection intervention within Informal Settlements.  Intervention in Babeen village was also stopped. Early marriage is still a challenge in Arsal. It is important to note the importance of advocating refugees to register their marriages in the ministry and not only count on religious marriages. As this issue is affecting the release of birth certificates.  This is being promoted through legal services Intersos, LRC and IRC.  Overall there is an increase of child marriage as negative coping mechanism. SGBV taskforce as well as IRC with the support of UNICEF developing a response package through education to early marriage and early pregnancy to respond to their needs.  Municipality sheds the light on the importance of targeting children regarding substance abuse as it is increasing heavily in Arsal among both the refugee and host community. UNICEF states that they will look into this issue in particular and try to work on an intervention. | Note | Note |
| Shelter, NRC is working as emergency response inside informal settlements. In addition, NRC is conducting minor repair in SSBs and will conduct assessment in July for the cases.  Municipality raise the issue that many refugees are relocating from SSBs/apartments onto informal settlements due to numerous reasons biggest being the inability to afford rent, and then the fact that more assistance is being provided in Informal Settlements through NGOs especially water trucking services, and personal dispute with the owner leading to eviction at times (in very low percentage).  Municipality believes that it is best for refugees to be in organized Informal Settlements and advocates for NGOs to work towards organizing the randomly scattered Informal Settlements in Arsal. It is true that Lebanese might benefit from the rent paid; however, especially at this stage Syrians are establishing businesses in Arsal which is affecting the Lebanese market tremendously. By organizing the Informal Settlements they might be able to have their own market. | Note | Note |
| 1. **Dumping Site/Waste Management** |  |  |
| Solutions for the waste management in Arsal,  Action plan for waste water condition:  For the short term: a new site was agreed upon by municipality, ministry and technical actors as well as the LAF. This site is equipped and being used for dislodging of informal settlements. UNICEF is also coordinating with a consultant to assess waste water options. The assessment includes many aspects from which the technical, availability, photography, number of population, sites to be connected and lists of three treatments units as a first stage. The aim is to connect 10 informal settlements, with 3000 individuals. This will be finalized this week and presented to ministry of energy and power.  For midterm: Lost and mercy corps also worked on midterm treatment solutions and presented several technologies that were submitted to the ministry energy and water. The pilot of the bio rock technology in one informal settlement which is low in cost for waste management. They will conduct a feasibility study to check the replication in other areas. This is to be done in West Bekaa as well.  For long-term solution: There exists four options for waste water treatment. This study will be conducted and once finalized submitted to ministry of energy and water. Approval and finance for the implementation is still pending.  Municipality stresses the need to advocate for funding as they were promised by the Minister that this project would be implemented, and due to the promise the municipality cancelled a small plant project that could be implemented in three months.  Dislodgment site is still in place until ISF receives any complaints then they will have to find an alternative. Municipality believes that LAF’s suggesting of having two trucks each across the checkpoint is the best option and urges NGOs to try and find a solution to implement it. | Note | Note |
| **Action Points:** | **Partner/Actor** | **Date** |
| Municipality to share the claims/referrals with UNICEF for follow up regarding the gap in water tanks | Municipality | Asap |
| Allocate or identify the focal point to communicate regarding long term waste water treatment options with respective ministries. | UNICEF |  |
| Coordination between key agencies (in particular UNDP, UNICEF) is needed at Beirut level as regards the issue of waste water management in Arsal | UNICEF/ /UNDP with UNHCR support if necessary and requested |  |
| Interested NGOs to apply for the livelihood baseline | QRC/Municipality/ACF | 20/06/2017 |
| **Proposed date of next Arsal coordination meeting** |  | **11/07/2017** |