

Meeting Minutes: Food and Agriculture Sector (FAS) Monthly Meeting (Jul 2023)

Location: In-Person, WFP Office, Damascus, and Online MS. TEAMS Meeting.

Date: 18/07/2023

Time: 11:30 AM – 12:30 Noon.

Agenda:

- ❖ [\(15 min\) WFP - Presentation on Strategic Planning.](#)
- ❖ [\(15 min\) FAO Presentation on Risk Mitigation for irrigation interventions - \[FAO\]](#)
- ❖ [\(10 min\) Information Management update \[Activity Info training and rollout\] - Moteb](#)
- ❖ [\(5 min\) An overview of JIAF 2.0 the new methodology of calculating PiN and Severity - Moteb/Mohie/Farshad](#)
- ❖ [\(10 min\) Earthquake Response update and SHF coordination - Mohie](#)
- ❖ [\(5\) AoB](#)

Organizations of Participants:

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|-------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|
| i. | AAH (ACF) – INGO. | xiv. | IFRC – INGO. |
| ii. | ADRA – INGO. | xv. | MISSION EAST – INGO. |
| iii. | CARITAS – INGO. | xvi. | NRC – INGO. |
| iv. | COOPI – INGO. | xvii. | OXFAM – INGO. |
| v. | DORCAS – INGO. | xviii. | PUI – INGO. |
| vi. | EPDC – NGO. | xix. | SARC – INGO. |
| vii. | ECHO – DONOR. | xx. | Sheild – INGO. |
| viii. | FAO – UN Agency. | xxi. | TAMAYOZ – NGO. |
| ix. | GOPA – NGO. | xxii. | UNHCR – UN Agency. |
| x. | GVC – INGO. | xxiii. | UNRWA – UN Agency. |
| xi. | HEKS-EPER – INGO. | xxiv. | WFP – UN Agency. |
| xii. | ICRC – INGO. | xxv. | ZOA – INGO. |
| xiii. | ICU – INGO. | | |

Name of coordinators chairing meeting:

1. Mohie Alwahsh – FAS Coordinator.
2. Farshad – FAS Co-Coordinator.
3. Moteb Marei – FAS IMO.
4. Dima Najjar – FAS Comms and Reports Officer.

- The Food and Agriculture Sector coordinator started the meeting with an introduction of the recently joined FAS Co-Coordinator, Farshad from FAO, to the participants. This is followed by introductions to all meeting participants.

WFP - Presentation on Strategic Planning:

- WFP team was invited to present the organization's planned reduction in order for the sector partners to have a better understanding of the operational level and how can they support the decrease in assistance.
- WFP expects to receive less funding by 25% globally and Syria is facing 40% less funding in 2023 despite the higher needs.
- WFP is making challenging decisions globally, implementing significant reductions in ration sizes, and, in some cases, discontinuing assistance, impacting nearly all operations.
- Over the past few years, WFP has encountered funding limitations in Syria, leading to increasing challenges in sustaining the same level of monthly assistance for 5.8 million vulnerable individuals throughout the country.
- In recent years, WFP has gradually reduced the food basket size for its General Food Assistance (GFA) in-kind program while still providing support to beneficiaries experiencing food insecurity.
- WFP will give priority to providing assistance in accordance with the established categories/targeting approach and available modalities. This enables adjustments to be made in the assistance packages while ensuring the utmost support goes to severely vulnerable and food-insecure households.
- As of July 2023, fewer food baskets will be available and distributed each month affecting 2.5 million people - out of the total 5.8 million in all governorates in Syria.
- People in the severe category will continue to receive monthly food basket/voucher and gradual transition to unrestricted cash (300,000 SYP), People in the high category will start receiving food basket every two months instead of every month. People in medium-high category will start receiving

food basket every three months instead of every two months and people who are in the medium will start receiving food basket every six months instead of every three months.

- Prioritization of assistance in Northeast and Northwest is affected equally with 40% reduction in funding.
- The prioritization of assistance is adapted to the context, targeting approaches and modalities of assistance to maintain the highest level of assistance to the most vulnerable households.
- In terms of communication with beneficiaries WFP has developed a communication strategy for the dissemination of information with beneficiaries (Q&A, posters, visibility materials, guidance for partners).
- The partners have started communicating the changes to the beneficiaries through various channels including Social Media announcements, SMS messages, information sharing through face-to-face communications and WhatsApp groups, and distribution points.
- In terms of the appeal mechanism, it will be opened from the 1st until the 31st of August 2023 allowing a period of four weeks for the submission of appeals regarding changes in assistance.
- Households currently receiving assistance from WFP and who are affected by the modifications in the assistance packages will be provided with an opportunity to submit their appeals by calling the WFP helpline or by utilizing a designated Weblink for self-appealing.
- Following the closure of the appeals collection period, the WFP team will review all the appeals received, and the decisions resulting from the review process will be communicated to the concerned households in October 2023.

FAO Presentation on Risk Mitigation for irrigation interventions:

- FAO colleagues presented at the AWG meeting on the 7th August.

Information Management update [Activity Info training and rollout]:

- This Agenda item has been postponed to the next meeting due to time constraints.

An overview of JIAF 2.0 the new methodology of calculating PiN and Severity:

- This Agenda item has been postponed to the next meeting due to time constraints.

Earthquake Response update and SHF coordination:

- The discussion started on how sector partners will prioritize the activities to support the population affected by the earthquake, is there a need to continue with the emergency response or there is a need to go back to regular programming with more resilience projects.
- This opened the discussion to touch base on the SHF standard allocation which is planned to kick off tentatively on the last week of August 2023.
- The concentration will be on the multi-sectoral programs where sector partners needs to prioritize the underserved low response areas.
- Partners asked for clarification on the multi-sectoral review process, and sector will check with SHF team on that.
- Partners also shared some challenges in terms of coordination when submitting multi-sectoral projects with other sector partners before the lunch of SHF , and the sector should step in for better coordination.
- A proposal from the sector on the coordination, might be sharing multi-sectoral underserved areas with DINGOs to be shared with other INGOs and find a way with other local NGOs.
- In addition, all partners and sector should consider the subnational coordination platform and also the area-based approach.
- Moreover, Partners shared some concerns around the other vulnerable areas that were not affected by the earthquake, as there a lot of focus on the EQ-affected areas. Does SHF taking this into consideration?. This will be channeled to SHF and other sectors at the next ISC meeting.
- All sector partners are encouraged to engage with the sector team at national and subnational levels in bilateral discussion ahead of the proposal submission whether is it Food Assistance, Agriculture-Based Livelihoods in urban or rural underserved areas.

AOB:

- ❖ HNO/HPC 2024: So far there is no approval from GoS to conduct the MSNA, OCHA is still following with MoFA in order to obtain the approval. The alternative methodology would be applying Delphi Intersectoral Method by conducting interviews with assessment experts that will be identified later on. The Food Security Sector won't be impacted by this as the FSA/FSLA already approved by GoS as usual as every year.

- ❖ The timeline of HPC will be pushed because of the MSNA, discussion is going with global HPC to determine the timeline.
- ❖ The sector is planning for ad-hoc meeting to brainstorm with FAS partners the cut in WFP funding on the 15th.
- ❖ The Next FAS coordination meeting will be communicated in due course.