Meeting Minutes

Location: CISCO Webex Online Meeting
Date: 05/04/2020

Agenda

1. Humanitarian Situation Updates
2. Operational updates
3. COVID-19 Updates.
5. Update on HRP partner projects.
6. AOB

Participants
WFP, AKF, DORCAS, TDH, ADRA, RESCATA, UNRWA, UNHCR, FAO, OCHA, IFRC

Chair:
Kenneth Anyanzo; WoS Sector Coordinator
Ahmad Omar; Damascus Hub IMO

1. Humanitarian Situation Updates:

North West Syria

➢ The humanitarian situation remains dire across northwest Syria. Further scale up is required for preparedness for COVID-19 and to meet the needs of the current displacement crisis.

➢ Humanitarian response remains high, with March on pace to be the month with the most UN shipments since the beginning of the cross-border operation.

➢ Around 4 M People in northwest Syria comprising Idlib area and northern Aleppo governorate, with around 1 M People of those displaced since 1 December remain in displacement.

➢ FAS provides Emergency food assistance for displaced people is needed during the first 2 to 4 weeks of displacement, through cooked meals and Ready-To-Eat rations (RTEs).

➢ Around 560,800 people reached with FB, and 73,500 with RTEs and 56,000 with MPCGs.
2. **Operational updates:**

**Partners Update:**

- **World Food Programme (WFP):**
  - Around 3.9 M people reached with regular food basket.
  - CBT interventions reached 124,900 with a total value of USD 2.4 M
  - 990,200 children under the School Feeding activity reached.
  - 63,500 reached with livelihood.

- **Danish Refugee Council (DRC):**
  - Vocational trainings and Asset distribution related planned activities were finalized by the end of March.
  - Business support consultation through phone/ In stead of face to face follow up on Micro Business owners
○ *Action Against Hunger (AAH)*:
  - In March, a 1,200 food parcels were distributed in Homs governorate. Training on vegetables processing in Dar’a, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, and Al-Hassakeh for 160 women Headed Households.
  - Training on dairy production in Dar’a, Rural Damascus, and Al-Hassakeh for 60 women Headed Households.
  - Action Against Hunger field activities have been put on hold due to the COVID 19 pandemic in April. Activities will resume when the end of the lockdown has been announced.

○ *Terre des hommes (TDH)*:
  - Postpone all the activities in the field level and ask the staff to work from their home and handle the needed tasks remotely.
  - Food Voucher Distribution suspended in Jabal Saman, Shahba, and Jaraman targeting around 1,600 Ben.

○ *Cooperazione Internazionale è una organizzazione umanitaria (COOPI)*:
  - Distribution of agricultural inputs - activity temporarily suspended due to COVID 19 in Izr’a targeting 1,180 HH.
  - Distribution of 425 agricultural kits in Nashabiyyeh villages has been planned for April.

○ *Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)*:
  - Small Business Projects ongoing in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Dar’a, and DZ targeting 250 beneficiary.
  - Professional tool kits projects ongoing in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Dar’a, and DZ targeting 414 beneficiary.

○ *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*:
  - UNHCR is planning on the rehabilitation of Harasta bakery in Rural Damascus.

*Syria Hub Achievements*:

- **164** Sub-districts reached under SO1 out of 270 through Damascus hub partners.
- **110** Sub-districts reached under SO2&3 out of 270 through Damascus hub partners.
- **4.1 M** Beneficiaries reached under SO1 through Damascus hub partners.
- **178 K** Beneficiaries reached under SO2&3 through Damascus hub partners.
3. **COVID-19 Updates:**

- Number of people confirmed by the Ministry of Health to have COVID-19: 16 (including two fatalities)
- Areas of concern: Densely populated areas, notably Damascus/Rural Damascus and those living in camps, collective shelters and informal settlements in northeast Syria (NES), as well as areas where hostilities may be ongoing making sample collection more challenging.
- Syrian government initiated a night curfew on Wednesday 25th March 2020 from (6:00 PM – 6:00 AM) to combat the spread of the coronavirus. Additionally, all schools, universities, and institutes (private/public) are closed until 16th of April 2020.
- A second decision was applied from 29th of March 2020 until further notice, preventing transportation between countryside and city centers in each governorate.
- Most land borders into Syria are now closed, with some limited exemptions (from Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon) for commercial and relief shipments, and movement of humanitarian and international organization.
- As Humanitarian impact, price increases and some shortages in basic goods (around 10-15 %) and personal sterilization items was reported across Syria. The exchange rate has also further weakened in past days to the lowest point on record, closing at an unofficial rate on SYP 1,325 to US $1; the official rate remains at around SYP 438.

4. **COVID – 19 Preparedness:**

- To date 4.8 million people within Syria have been assessed to be food insecure and in need of assistance. Amidst high levels of food insecurity in Syria, the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus threatens to worsen an already precarious situation in the country.
- Food basket price increased by 57% since October 2019 and by 67% since February 2020.
- At least 5 food security partners have reportedly suspended all or part of their programmes in particular food vouchers, vocational trainings, poultry distribution activities, life skills training, and distribution of seeds and household vegetable production kits.
- Beyond the direct additional requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, food and nutrition support are critical during this period where access to food is already disrupted due to the on-going crisis and the additional impact of a steep economic downturn.
- WFP requires an additional USD 550 million in 2020 to sustain its assistance and reach 4.5 million people until the end of the year with General Food Assistance, and nutritional support.
- COVID-19 additional resources are estimated at about 11 million.
- The funding pipeline for NGOs partners is also constrained with the suspension of life saving food assistance owing to limited or no funding commitments from donors. NGOs are facing a funding shortfall of at least $5 million for the COVID-19 response.
- Additional $2 million is required by FAO and other partners for the provision of agriculture inputs.
- The priority of the Food Security Sector is to sustain access to immediate life-saving needs in order to prevent further deterioration of the population into destitution. The Food Security Sector has undertaken training of partners and developed guidelines and posters against COVID-19 to reach at least 4.5 M people.
- The food security sector will plan for agriculture activities including advance procurement and stocking of seeds, animal feed and vaccination of livestock.
5. **Update on HRP partner projects:**

- All submitted partner projects have been approved.
- Sector defense was successfully undertaken and sector budget consequently approved.
- Partners can check on the system to confirm the state of their projects.