Meeting Minutes

Location: Online Zoom Meeting, Damascus, Syria

Date: 13/09/2020

Time: 10am – 11:30am

Agenda

1. 2020 SHF 1st Standard Allocation Updates,
2. FAO Seed Security Assessment (SSA) Findings and Key Recommendations,
3. “Covid-19, More than a Health Crisis”- OXFAM,
4. Sector Achievements,
5. Covid-19 Updates,
6. AOB and wrap-up.

Participants

i. Dorcas Syria,
ii. St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee (EPDC)
iii. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
iv. ONG Rescate Internacional – Syria
v. OXFAM (Damascus)
vi. Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)
vii. European Union Delegation to Syria
viii. AVSI Foundation
ix. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
x. United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)
xi. Action Contre la Faim (ACF)
 xii. Danish refugee council (DRC)
xiii. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO-UN)

Chair: Jameson Zvizvai Sector Coordinator

1. **SHF 1st Standard Allocation Updates**

- Concerning the 2020 1st SHF Standard Allocation, OCHA is winding off the approval process for **65 proposals** through the Advisory Committee,
- A total of **7 proposals** were approved from the Food and Agriculture Sector (FAS),
- Final communication to successful organizations will be sent to individual agencies and this currently in progress,
2. **FAO Seed Security Assessment (SSA) Findings and Key Recommendations**

- The assessments aim was to identify immediate challenges for capacity on production, quality, and delivery in addition to Strategic choices for restoring seed systems,
- The SSA also seeks to explore possibilities for both short-term and more strategic responses,
- The recommendations focused on three main areas, namely Supply, Access and Markets, and using New varieties.
- The major recommendations emphasized the need for strengthening capacity, increase Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) to improve access to inputs, Improve management of seed quality, training, storage and inputs in addition to developing links with seed producers to diversify outlets for marketing and dissemination,
- The assessment also recommended strengthening breeding capacity through developing new genetic material and management packages.
- In conclusion, it was noted that in absolute terms, seed is generally available but quality is the main issue particularly in the local market sources,
- Access to seed is a bigger challenge,
- Local markets were also seen to be a major and important source since at least of 2/3 of purchases are from the local market,
- The SSA also noted that there was low exposure to new varieties in the past 10 years,
- The SSA also noted that COVID-19 could add new constraints on seed security and other operations, Coordinator highlighted that FAO would share the final report once it is finalized.

You can download the full presentation through the link

3. **“Covid-19, More than a Health Crisis”- OXFAM**

- Oxfam presented on their study entitled Covid-19 - More than a health crisis, which sought to assess the non-health effects of COVID-19 in southern rural Aleppo,
- The study also focused on understanding the different policy implications of the short-term and medium-term impact of COVID-19,
- In terms of the impact of Covid-19 on food security and livelihoods, the main areas of focus were the following;
  - The impact of the pandemic and economic downturn on female-headed households,
  - The different coping mechanism adopted by households in rural Aleppo,
  - The gaps in access to services and markets in rural communities of Aleppo,
  - Understanding the intervention gaps in southern rural Aleppo,
  - The analysis of the overall humanitarian response in rural Aleppo since the outbreak of the pandemic,

- The major findings of the report were presented as below
  - Female-headed households were among the most affected in southern rural Aleppo,
  - COVID-19 and the public health measures had limited impact on farming activities in southern rural Aleppo,
  - Easing of movement restrictions and lockdowns had a positive effect on households’ livelihoods and food access,
Recommendations:

- Oxfam’s study highlighted that INGOs should design interventions focusing on the increased access to livelihood opportunities for female-headed households in rural and remote communities,
- Humanitarian actors in Syria should consider designing interventions in rural communities, specifically in support of sustainable solutions, including but not limited to:
  - Enhancing access to basic services,
  - Adopting a bottom-up approach in programming interventions to support small-scale farmers, particularly in addressing their immediate needs such as the access to irrigation water and agricultural inputs,
  - Supporting the supply side of local markets,
- INGOs and UN agencies should seek to inform the development of state social protection initiatives in Syria, to ensure that they can effectively support the most vulnerable in responding to shocks; while through coordination, increase cash and voucher assistance (CVA) as part of the humanitarian response,
- The Protection sector in Syria should collaborate with other sectors, including food security and livelihoods, for a multisector response. Gender and protection should be mainstreamed in all sector responses,
- NGOs operating in Syria should collaborate and coordinate more with local NGOs who have access and are closer to rural communities,
- International donors should support humanitarian actors by being more flexible in their funding.

You can download the full presentation through the link.

4. Sector Achievements:

- 5,671,519 Beneficiaries Assisted during July 2020
OCHA ask for more coordination regarding Cash working group and the food sector.

5. **AOB:**

- **On the HPC** and in particular the HRP FAS Chapter, this was submitted to Government, FAS received comments from MAAR and coordinators will update sector colleagues regarding further instructions from MoFA regarding the final round of consultations.
- Official 2020 Wheat and Barkley Production figures will be presented in the next meeting after further verification with MAAR,
- The Chairperson announced that Kenneth (FAS Coordinator) was currently on RnR and out of the country and could not attend the meeting.