

Meeting Minutes

Location: Online Zoom Meeting, Damascus, Syria

Date: 17/02/2020

Time: 15:00 – 16:00

Agenda

1. Welcome remarks - 5 mins;
2. Operational Updates and Summary on Achievements for January - December 2020 - IMOs 10 mins,
3. Update on SHF Allocations for 2021 – FAS Coordinator and OCHA - 10 mins,
4. HPC (i.e. HNO 2021 submission and HRP 2021 process updates) – FAS Coordinator - 10mins,
5. FAO Agriculture Seasonal Update for 2020/21 Season - Jalal - 15 mins,
6. Progress on the Country Cluster Performance Monitoring (CCPM) – 5 min,
7. AOB and wrap-up – 5 mins,

Participants

- a) ACF
- b) ADRA
- c) AKD
- d) BHA
- e) COOPI
- f) FAO
- g) OCHA
- h) Tamayoz
- i) UNHCR
- j) UNRWA
- k) WFP

Name of coordinator chairing meeting: Jameson Zvizvai – FAS Coordinator (FAO)

1. Operational Updates and Achievements (Jan-Dec) [[Download](#)]:

- The update on sector achievements were made by the Information Management (IM) team and they highlighted that **6,009,499** beneficiaries were assisted from Jan to Dec 2020 (with **4,138,807** Beneficiaries through S01 and **1,870,692** through SO2 & SO3 activities).
- The results show the highest reach for S01 and this is mainly comprised of the food basket distribution activity, which reached **2,999,415** beneficiaries while the animal vaccination/treatment was the greatest reach for SO2&SO3 with **387,333** beneficiaries being reached for January – December 2020.
- The in-kind delivery modality was the most used modality in 2020 accounting for 87.4% of the sectors' total response.
- The Partners' presence map (i.e. Leading Agencies) shows that sector partners were highest in Rural Damascus and in Aleppo with 11 partners each.

- The FS Gap Analysis map for **SO1** showed that most of governorates were reached with at least 50% or above except for Tartous and Lattakia. However, there was some overlap observed in the sector response in Quneitra in 2020.
- FAS partners reached 218 Sub-districts out of 270 Sub-districts identified and prioritized due to the high acute and at-Risk PiN in HNO 2020.

2. Updates on 1st SHF Reserve and Standard Allocation 2021 [\[Download\]](#):

- The FAS coordinator highlighted that the 1st Reserve Allocation for 2021 was launched at the beginning of the year with a total envelope of 5 million USD. In the Strategy Paper, 2 million was allocated to the FAS with 1 million earmarked for Deir-Er-Zor and 1 million for Rural Damascus.
- The major FAS activity which was prioritized was providing food assistance, whether through parcels or sector specific cash assistance.
- The 1st reserve allocation technical review committee set end of January 2021 and the transparent evaluation was done and proposals selected based on the SHF criteria and score card.
- OCHA focal point participated in the planning for 2021 and there will be Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on the 18th of February 2021 as we plan for the Brussels donor meeting end of March 2021. There will not be much funding for SHF 2021 before these two (2) events. The donor engagement meetings will be useful as they will ensure that there is communication with donors and explain what is going on in Syria and the key issues and needs that need to be addressed. OCHA advised partners to work on their prioritizes until the announcement of the standard allocation.
- The FAS coordinator asked OCHA on a possible date for the launch of the 1st standard allocation for 2021. OCHA highlighted that the 1st standard allocation may be launched at the end of April 2021, tentatively.

3. HPC updates (HNO 2021 submission and HRP 2021 process):

- In terms of the Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2021 (HNO 2021), the coordinator indicated that the sector had submitted the HNO draft to OCHA on the 29th of January 2021.
- OCHA came back to the sector and requested a shorter version with the long version to be made available via an OCHA created link. The submitted HNO 2021 chapter has however NOT been approved by MAAR and MoFA but partners can make reference to them as preliminary HNO figures.
- The coordinator highlighted that the FS situation continues to deteriorate drastically. There are **14.2** million people in need (PiN) of some form of food and agriculture assistance, compared to **9.8** million in the previous year i.e. a **45%** increase in the sector PiN.
- An estimated **12.4** million people are estimated to be facing acute food insecurity and of these, **1.3** million people are considered to be severely food insecure in Syria. There is a critical need to mobilize resources to avoid avert the suffering and there will be need for sector partners to further enhance coordination to avoid duplication and overlap.
- **HRP update:** the sector has already started working on the HRP narrative for 2021. In order for HRP 2021 document to be ready for the Brussels conference by end of March 2021, OCHA has set the following deadlines:
 - **5th March:** Sectors submit respective narrative HRP chapters, including initial cost estimates.
 - **10th March:** OCHA circulates consolidated draft HRP to ISG for review.
 - **15th March:** Sectors share sector log frames (as per excel sheet) and activities (with preliminary targets)
 - **18th March:** OCHA circulates final HRP for strategic review/red-line comments.
- For the HNO 2021 submitted to OCHA, the coordinator again reminded the sector partners that the process of approval from line ministries and MoFA has not started yet. The translation of our sector chapter will be done in the coming weeks.

- The sector coordination team at WoS level is engaging with the ERL and Nutrition sectors to come up with Intersector Strategic Objectives (i.e. SPOs), which will be included in the Intersector HNO 2021.

4. **Agriculture Seasonal Update - 2020/21 by Jalal (Food Security Officer – FAO) [[Download](#)]**

- Jalal (FAO) provided some seasonal outlook for the current ongoing winter season. His update covered agro-climatic conditions and key observations, areas of cultivated crops, agricultural production input availability and he also proffered some conclusions and recommendations to the sector.
- **In terms of Precipitation**, In September and October 2020, there was no precipitation at all across all governorates. However, In November; heavy rainfall was recorded in the first dekad¹ of November 2020 in all governorates. In the second dekad, low rainfall amounts were recorded in some regions in NW, NE and Southern governorates, while it was quite acceptable in the rest of the remaining locations. In the third dekad of November 2020, rainfall was adequate in Aleppo, Raqqa and Southern governorates, while in the rest of the locations, very low amounts were received. Moreover, In December 2020; the rainfall received in the second dekad was generally good in most of Governorates, except in Raqqa, Deir-er-Zor, eastern part of the Al-Badia and the Southern region of Hasakeh. The first and third dekad of December was good compared to the second dekad. In January 2021, no rainfall was received across all governorates in the first dekad, while the second and third dekads recorded good precipitation across most governorates except for Deir-er-Zor and the Badia.
- **In terms of temperature**, it was generally higher than the long-term averages.
- **In terms of NDVI**: The development of vegetation in September and October 2020 was less than in 2019, especially in northeast, northwest and Hama regions. However, significant improvement in vegetation was observed in November 2020, especially in north and southern governorates, due to the favorable rainfall during the first dekad of November 2020. In contrast, the Vegetation declined in the northeastern governorates and the eastern regions of the Badia, while the rest of the governorates the vegetation cover was better especially in the central and southern areas in December 2020. There was improvement in Hama, Homs and Southern governorates with some slight improvement being observed in North East, while the development of vegetation declined in southern regions of Aleppo, Idlib and the eastern part of the Badia.
- **In terms of the crop situation for barley and wheat**, Jalal highlighted that the planted area of wheat for the current season is more than the actual planted area for the previous season by almost 11%.
- **As for winter vegetables**, it is more than the area of the previous season by almost 7 %.
- **In terms of availability of agriculture inputs**, Jalal highlighted that there is general limited availability of fertilizers (especially Urea) and fuels (particularly Diesel) across most governorates. The shortage of seed, livestock feed, veterinary services and agro-chemicals such as pesticides (pesticides, herbicides and fungicides) is quite varied across Governorates. Partners were also advised to refer to the FAO Market Bulletin of January 2021 and the following months. The bulletin provides more specific information on the availability and prevailing prices of agriculture inputs and commodities,
- **In terms of prices**, just a few agricultural inputs remained constant and with a very inputs recording some reduced prices. However, the majority of agriculture input prices continued to increase, especially fodder, nitrate fertilizers, herbicides and diesel. This can be attributed to the devaluation of the local currency, since most of these inputs are imported.
- In conclusion, FAS partners and farmers involved in agricultural activities were encouraged to closely monitor the weather conditions (Rainfall, Temperature and Humidity). There was also need to scale-up support to crisis-

¹ Dekad – This represents 10 consecutive days in a month and one month is comprised of 3 dekads i.e. first, second and third dekad.

affected farmers through providing agricultural production inputs, especially top dressing fertilizer, during the current winter agricultural season to enhance access to inputs due to the frequent market price increases observed.

- The coordinator also indicated from the results of the presentation that it is too early to make any conclusions on whether the cropping season was good or not. FAO continues to monitor the crop and livestock situation across all governorates and the sector partners will be updated accordingly. Although there was delay in rainfall onset, this did not translate into a drought.
 - More information will be shared about the production levels and food availability at national level after the harvest season
 - Jalal also highlighted that there was a lack of top dressing fertilizer in the market and when fertilizer is available, the quality is generally low. This has resulted in farmers applying very limited fertilizer rates. Jameson (FAS sector coordinator) encouraged partners to promote practices such as crop rotation systems that promote the rotation of wheat or barley with leguminous crops so that the cereals benefit from nitrogen fixation.
 - There is a partner who wanted to know how the sector could mitigate the impact of increased inputs prices on vulnerable farmers as this will affect the quantity and quality of their agriculture production. The coordinator mentioned that the sector plan is there to try and address this challenge and many others. Firstly, the sector clearly expressed the challenge around access to quality agriculture inputs within HNO 2021 chapter so there is some advocacy and messaging that is being relayed to the donors at national level and this key message, among others, will be delivered at the Brussels Pledging Conference end of March 2021.
- 5. Progress on the Country Cluster Performance Monitoring (CCPM):**
- The coordinator indicated the importance of participating in the CCPM survey as it will enable sector partners and the Cluster Lead Agencies (CLAs) to assess to what extent the sector is achieving its IASC core functions at country level.
 - Partners who have not yet done so, were advised to complete the survey by the **19th of February 2021**; Please do submit using the link below https://survey.sic1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bOgOvGSnBh9UWQm

AOB:

1. **Capacity building of partner IM staff** - IMOs asked partners to submit their capacity building needs to the IMOs so that these can be assessed and possible capacity building can be planned.
2. **Update on Recruitment Process of Sector Coordinator (Replacing Kenneth)** – WFP advertised for the coordinator’s position and the deadline is 22nd Feb 2021. Those interested could apply through the link: <https://www.unjobnet.org/jobs/detail/22678477>
3. The FAS coordinator will be out on RnR from 21st of February to 5th March 2021,
4. Engagement of ERL and Nutrition Sectors is ongoing as we develop and coordinate on coming up with the Intersector Strategic Objectives (SPO) **for HRP 2021**,
5. **Developing draft TOR for the establishment and convening of the Agriculture Working Group (AWG)** – The coordinator indicated that the sector was working on establishing the AWG for Damascus hub, which will be chaired by FAO and co-chaired by an NGO nominated by the NGOs themselves. The AWG will be a platform for partners to develop and agree technical guidelines and standards so that we improve on the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of our interventions. An email will be sent to partners to nominate or select an **NNGO or INGO** to co-chair the AWG together with FAO.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 16:00hrs and the date for the next meeting will be communicated in due course.