

## Meeting Minutes

**Location:** Online MS. TEAMS Meeting, Damascus, Syria

**Date:** 22/04/2021

**Time:** 10:00 – 11:30

### Agenda:

1. Welcome remarks,
2. Key updates on the 2021 HPC Timeline - 10 mins,
3. Updates on the planning for convening the Agriculture Working Group (AWG) Syria-Hub – FAS Coordinator - 10 mins,
4. Key Takeaways from Brussels V Conference - FAS Coordinator – 10 mins,
5. Cluster Coordination Performance (CCPM) Update – FAS Coordinator - 5 mins,
6. Update on planning for 1st SHF Standard Allocations for 2021 – OCHA– 10 mins,
7. GBV FAS Action Plan – Ruba and GBV Consultant - 30 min,
8. Status of the recruitment of the FSS Lead Coordinator – 5 mins,
9. AOB and wrap-up – 5 mins,

### Participants:

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| i. ACF      | ix. PUI     |
| ii. COOPI   | x. SARC     |
| iii. FAO    | xi. SSSD    |
| iv. GOPA    | xii. UNFPA  |
| v. ICRC     | xiii. UNHCR |
| vi. IFRC    | xiv. UNICEF |
| vii. OCHA   | xv. WFP     |
| viii. Oxfam | xvi. ZOA    |

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

### **1. Key updates on the 2021 HPC Timeline [[Download the Presentation](#)]:**

- The update on the 2021 HPC timeline was made by the FAS Coordinator who highlighted that **the** deadline for uploading HRP 2021 projects on the HPC Projects Module was extended from 20<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April by OCHA. This will be followed by hub and WoS level sector project reviews from 28<sup>th</sup> April – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- ISG review of submitted and reviewed projects will then follow from the 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- Reopening of Projects Module will be done from 12<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and during the reopening, partners can change / modify their projects according to review feedback.

### **2. Planning for convening the Agriculture Working Group (AWG) Syria-Hub:**

- The FAS coordinator highlighted that the sector is planning on convening the AWG for Syria hub under the FAS with collaboration with the Global Agriculture Working Group (gAWG) and FAO in country.

- AWG's focus is to facilitate the "scaling up" of on-going responses and the "technical soundness" and "effectiveness" of agriculture interventions to ensure that there is technical soundness in various agriculture-related interventions implemented by sector partners, whether it is the provision of agriculture inputs based on seasonality, whether it is the provision of fertilizer, IGA grants, food processing and whether these interventions are related to improving access to water and even for solar powered irrigation systems. Furthermore, the AWG will also be a platform to discuss technical and strategic priorities that might come from AWG partners.
- AWG provides a platform for coordination, technical interaction and guidance on monitoring and evaluation of agriculture projects,
- The AWG will also facilitate cross-learning, cross-pollination of ideas and exchange of knowledge and technical information,
- The draft TOR have been developed and will be shared with partners for review and feedback. Once the final TOR is signed-off it will be shared with gAWG for endorsement. Then the sector team will ask interested partners, through email, to submit their email addresses for inclusion into the AWG that is planned to be formed by latest end of June-2021.
- The AWG will be chaired by FAO and the co-chaired by INGO/NGO and NGOs will be asked to self-organize and select a co-chair from their end,

### **3. Key Takeaways from Brussels V Conference:**

- The FAS coordinator highlighted that there was some positive outcome from the BV conference. The international community pledged EUR 3.6 billion / USD 4.4 billion in funding for humanitarian, resilience and development activities in 2021 for the Syria. The pledges will go towards HRP, including the regional refugee resilience plan and the ICRC response to the Syrian crises. The funding will include support to the multi donor mechanism.
- The coordinator highlighted that the pledges are USD 1 billion less than what was anticipated hence there will be a funding shortfall in 2021.
- Lama from OCHA mentioned that donor's commitment to Syria remains the same this year, just like in previous years, but it requires hard work from humanitarian actors to make sure these pledges will take place. In addition, Lama reminded partners about the importance of compiling evidence and data in advocacy with donors so that they may scale-up or continue with their support for Syria operations.
- Lama also mentioned that donors confirmed that Syria remains a protection crises so we should consider protection mainstreaming among all aspects and projects. Protection must be included in the 2021 HRP proposals in addition to Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) as this is a major requirement from the donors in 2021. Moreover, donors after 10 years of support are more vigilant to know how the fund is being used and how humanitarian response is going.
- Lama from OCHA encouraged partners to coordinate with the sector for better programming, prioritization and planning and make sure that we are all on the same page.

### **4. Cluster Coordination Performance (CCPM) Update:**

- The coordinator mentioned that the 2020 CCPM survey was done through the support of gFSC. Basically, the survey was looking at assessing the performance of Food Security Sector Syria-Hub; looking at the 7 core functions of the sector and particularly around supporting service delivery and informing strategic decisions right up issues around accountability to affected populations (AAP).
- Following the survey, a CCPM 2020 Feedback Workshop was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2021.
- Based on the feedback from partners there are some areas whereby the sector was doing very well and some weak areas that will need some significant improvement particularly on the last core function of the sector (i.e. AAP).

- The sector acknowledged that partners made an effort to incorporate AAP and other cross-cutting issues in proposal design. In the technical review of proposals, most partners adequately incorporated cross-cutting issues. However, more efforts need to be made by partners, especially when it comes to actual implementation.
- The CCPM 2020 Workshop Report was shared with partners on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2021. The sector appreciates if partners provide additional considerations on the feedback report so that it can be considered in the 2021 work plan.
- The work plan will zoom-in on the weak areas and try to address these as highlighted by partners in the CCPM 2020 survey.

## 5. Update on planning for 1st SHF Standard Allocations for 2021 Proposed Priorities:

- Based on the HRP 2021 submissions, for the planned and upcoming SHF 1<sup>st</sup> standard allocation for 2021, the sector will propose multiple or combined actions that will address:
  - The immediate food needs based on the food security assessment (FSA) for 2021, which was done in the end of 2020 and from HNO analysis done in January 2021 and the validation done. The evidence gathered and validation done all indicate a worsening food insecurity. The sector acknowledges that the immediate food needs should be met through emergency food assistance but combined with actions that supports self-reliance of affected households. This can be achieved through protecting and building productive assets and restoring or creating income generating opportunities (i.e. IGAs) and resilience-building actions.
  - The above will potentially improve communities' resilience and capacity to sustain households' livelihoods. The sector will also prioritize light rehabilitation of productive and economic infrastructure.
  - The coordinator also highlighted that interventions that support access to water are also central to Food Security and Nutrition.

### 5.1. **Proposed Eligible Activities**

The coordinator highlighted the below proposed eligible activities:

- 5.1.1. **Provision of food and cash/voucher assistance** to food insecure households in underserved and food insecure locations with the highest severity levels of food insecurity (phase 3 and above).
- 5.1.2. Supporting **quick impact livelihoods projects** with immediate consumption benefits to enhance food consumption and availability at household level (HH vegetable production, poultry production and cash for work). There was significant increase in agriculture inputs prices including livestock feed from the assessment done by FAO.
- 5.1.3. Supporting **animal production** targeting vulnerable small-scale breeders, in particular livestock feed / support to fodder production provision and vaccination and provision of veterinary kits (To protect productive assets and minimize distress selling of animals).
- 5.1.4. **Provision of agriculture inputs** to support the production of staple food crops in locations facing high levels of food insecurity such as cereals.
- 5.1.5. Scale-up support to **market-driven income-generating activities** (IGAs) including vocational training based on beneficiary preferences (Beekeeping, food/dairy processing, mushroom production, and vegetable production). That enhances the capacities and capabilities of food insecure population including returnees so they maybe able to make their living.
- 5.1.6. **Light rehabilitation of critical livelihoods infrastructure** with direct benefits for food production and distribution (irrigation canals, bakeries, wells and irrigation systems)

### 5.2. **Priority Locations:**

- The Sector will package a draft submission and before sending to OCHA by 6<sup>th</sup> of May, this will be circulated by email to partners to provide their inputs particularly on priority locations knowing that there could other emerging needs following the FSA in 2020,

- The Sector did an FSA in 2020 which informed the 2021 HNO and the severity of needs in each district were determined.
- The coordinator highlighted that the sector feels that the 1<sup>st</sup> SHF Standard Allocation should focus on underserved and under-funded locations, including newly accessible areas with highest levels of severity of needs (3. Severe and 4. Major), as determined by the FSA 2020. If partners feel that there are some specific locations that need to be prioritized at sub-national level, the sector is very open to receive such submissions.
- CLAs will also be consulted on this as we provide input to the 2021 1<sup>st</sup> Standard Allocation Strategy Paper.
- Sector partners were informed that sector inputs were required by OCHA by COB Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- OCHA highlighted that the 1<sup>st</sup> SHF standard allocation for 2021 is expected to be launched after the Eid holiday if everything goes well. OCHA reminded the sector partners that they must obtain approvals for their projects, even verbal approvals from local authorities to avoid any delay in the implementation. OCHA advised partners to also consider locations that they are already working in as it is much easier because sometimes it is taking a long time to get approvals from local authorities after getting OCHA's approvals. It was therefore recommended by OCHA to get preliminary approval before submitting the proposals.
- The allocation amount is expected to be in the range of 35 Million USD.

### 5.3. Q&As:

- Partners asked for methodology to determine which rehabilitation is considered light and how do we know if the proposed rehabilitation will be acceptable by the donors or OCHA, and not be considered as reconstruction. The sector partner highlighted that, knowing this, would avoid rejection of proposals by the technical and evaluation committee. The sector coordinator acknowledged that there is a need to engage with OCHA and CLAs in terms of agreeing on what common standards could be used to define light rehabilitation.
- Partners asked under which sector to submit multi-purpose cash (MPC) assistance. Lama (OCHA) highlighted that this year it is expected to have multi-purpose cash submissions under HRP. However the current system does not support submitting multisector projects separately so it is recommended to have multi-purpose cash under the main 3 sectors FAS, NFI and WASH, because the main objective of multi-purpose cash is to cover basic needs under those 3 sectors. OCHA stressed that multi-purpose cash is not applicable to be submitted as a stand-alone project in this SHF standard allocation, taking into consideration that the system is global and takes a long time to make changes to it. There will be guidance on how to submit multi-purpose cash from OCHA and it will be circulated to partners once finalized. It is still applicable to submit multi-purpose cash under one sector if it will meet basic needs of the PiN.
- Partners asked for criteria for cash for food assistance. Lama highlighted that CWG working on harmonization of transfer value and targeting criteria for cash programming started with multi-purpose cash because it was most challenging and most used among partners. Final agreement on methodology to identify multi-purpose cash transfer value has been set and it available to be shared with interested partners. In terms of sectorial activities, it is in 2021 strategic plan and there will be collaboration with the sector coordinator to issue a written guidance on specific sectorial activities that targeted by the modality of CVA and partners are encouraged to participate in this issue. The sector coordinator highlighted that within the Sector Objective I response package and guidance, there is information on the targeting criteria and how to set the transfer value for food vouchers, in collaboration with the CWG,
- Partners asked about when an activity would be considered a Livelihoods activity or considered to be a food security intervention. The coordinator highlighted that FAS sector has both food security and agriculture related activities and it is clear in the HRP; where we have SO1 focusing on food assistance and SO2/SO3 supporting agriculture related interventions and emergency agriculture-based livelihoods, which try to build on stabilizing food production and help food insecure families to generate some income. FAS SO2 agriculture-based livelihood activities focus on agriculture activities that help people generate income and secure a means of living. When SO1 focuses more in meeting the immediate food needs of food insecure and crisis-affected populations. SO3 focuses more on resilience oriented interventions including rehabilitation of critical infrastructure, including agriculture

infrastructure, water systems and bakeries. Furthermore, the HRP has FAS outcome indicators which includes food consumption score (FCS), reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) and also the food expenditure share (FES) and these are the outcome indicators we use to track our achievement of the various sector objectives, on to of the output indicators for each of the So1, So2 and SO activities. This is the general response framework that guides FAS interventions while ERL sometimes also covers both agriculture and non-agriculture-based livelihoods and the coordinator would have further discussion with the ERL coordinator. The FAS coordinator also highlighted that SO1 and SO2/SO3 packages also have details related to targeting criteria, kit composition recommendations, estimated costs for the kits, for all FAS activities and that have been shared with partners previously.

- Lama mentioned that it was agreed last year to consider all activities related to agriculture under FAS and other activities under ERL sector. However, the FAS coordinator needs to consult with ERL coordinators on how best to manage this situation.

## 6. GBV FAS Action Plan – Ruba (FAO-GFP) and Selina (UNFPA-GBV Consultant) [[Download the Presentation](#)]:

- The GBV consultant from UNFPA sub-sector started by introducing herself to the sector colleagues. Selina mentioned the GBV mainstreaming rollout process in Syria started in December 2020, which is targeting all sectors. An in-depth training took place in December 2020, where one person from each sector / cluster attended and the focal person from each sector received in-depth training and Ruba attended from the FAS. Ruba was assigned responsibility to follow-up on the GBV mainstreaming issues and refining and developing the draft GBV mainstreaming action plan for FAS. A general action plan was discussed during the GBV mainstreaming training. Selina highlighted that the plan is to capacitate another person from the sector during the summer.
- The second phase will be to open the action plan and discuss with all of FAS partners in order to hear from the partners what are the challenges and recommendations to increase the ownership of GBV mainstreaming and enhancing the partners' programming and not adding up GBV risks.
- Ruba started the presentation about GBV awareness and integration in FAS.
- **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.**
- **The World Health Organization (WHO) has found that on average one in three women globally will experience intimate partner violence or sexual violence in their lifetime. The same study found that in some crisis settings, GBV affects over 70 per cent of women (WHO, 2013).**
- **Contributing factors of GBV:** unequal power relations between men and women and discrimination against women in both the public and private spheres.
- **Factors that heighten the risk of GBV:**
  - Individual level: abuse within families, food insecurity, denial of access to productive and financial resources, dependence on another to meet basic survival needs, lack of awareness of rights.
  - Community level: breakdown in community protective mechanisms, lack of health, psychosocial and legal services, limited female staff presence, a culture of "blaming the victim".
  - Societal level: a weak state, state-sanctioned violence, discriminatory laws and the inability or unwillingness to punish perpetrators, war, and conflict.
- **Addressing GBV concerns throughout the project cycle:**
  - **Needs Assessment: 1-** Disaggregate data by sex and age and other demographic variables (e.g. disability, single head of household, indigenous or other minority groups. **2-** Identify main types of GBV in the context (e.g. denial of rightful access to or control over productive and financial resources, livelihood opportunities, information etc.

- **Project design: 1-** Formulate gender-sensitive indicators that can monitor impact of intervention on men and women, their empowerment and/or their safety and security. **2-** Allocate adequate financial resources for actions to reduce GBV risks affecting the targeted population.
- **Project implementation: 1-** Be principled and respectful in all interactions with beneficiaries, upholding best practice work standards for humanitarian and development workers. **2-** Use participatory approaches that engage both men and women in planning and monitoring of projects and establish mechanisms for them to raise complaints and receive feedback. **3-** Provide information to beneficiaries on project objectives and explain that all assistance is free. **4-** Work in partnership with GBV, health and/or protection clusters. **5-** Strive for equal ratios of men-to-women field staff and enumerators and adjust project if GBV risks are identified, and take the necessary actions for reporting sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by partner.

Suggested Action points	Relevant indicators
<b>Harmonize the safety monitoring tool and SOP across the sector</b>	# number of partners who conduct site monitoring and/or safety Audit to check the safety of beneficiaries and PWD using the harmonized tool
<b>Generate/ develop recommendations based on the results of the safety monitoring/audit</b>	# of recommendations that came out as the result of site monitoring/safety audits to enhance the safety and security of services
<b>Train staff on GBV risk mitigation (through the e-learning course)</b>	# of staff that are trained on GBV Risk mitigation e-learning course
<b>Develop guidance/SOP on implementing complaints mechanism</b>	# number of partners that have a complaint mechanism

- If the FAS partners agree/endorse on the action plan, then the GBV consultant will technically support for at least 5 - 6 months and then the partners will take over until the end of the year.
- Selina recommended FAS sector partners to harmonize the safety and security tool across the sector and encouraged partners to develop one or two recommendations for GBV evidence-based indicators to be incorporated into the GBV mainstreaming action plan.
- A 5-hour E-learning training module on GBV mainstreaming in Arabic with unlimited access is being prepared and will be launched soon and FAS members should monitor the number of partner staff who will complete the course. In terms of complaint mechanisms, it should be safe and accessible to all.
- Oxfam mentioned that they noticed from the field that if they provide equal cash entitlements or wages to men and women it will create GBV and other risks on women within families and communities. OXFAM highlighted that there was need to agree on the best approach that will factor in the social norms and traditions, informed by a clear analysis of these societal norms, so that we identify entry points to make the salary or wages equal to men, at the same time, avoiding GBV risks. The GBV consultant will explore the available real-life data to provide recommendations in this matter. The sector coordinator highlighted that the issue raised by OXFAM was quite important and must also be considered by the Cash Working Group (CWG), considering that they also spearhead some conditional cash programming (cash for work), this will also ensure that the GBV risks are also reduced in CVA.
- Partners are encouraged to incorporate GBV into their monitoring and evaluation tools,
- Ruba to circulate the FAS GBV action plan to partners for review and feedback, including indications of specific timeline.

#### **7. Status of the recruitment of the FSS Lead Coordinator:**

- The WFP FSS Coordinator was identified by WFP and the WFP HR is finalizing to make way for the onboarding process,

- WFP FSS Coordinator will most likely be in place by end of April or early May 2021,

**AOB:**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:30hrs and the date for the next meeting will be communicated in due course.