FSAC Monthly Meeting
Virtual meeting, 24 August 2022
Minutes of Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of meeting</th>
<th>FSAC monthly meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date and location</td>
<td>Wednesday, 24 August 2022, Kabul, 10:00AM – 12:00 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>FSAC</td>
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<td>Note taker</td>
<td>FSAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendees</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Meeting Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>FAO Agriculture Prospect Report</td>
<td>FAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Update on climate outlook</td>
<td>FAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>FSAC CFW approach</td>
<td>FSAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Update on FSAC nutrition sensitization messages</td>
<td>FSAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Update on the revised transfer value/cost of food basket</td>
<td>FSAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Update on AHF 3RA</td>
<td>FSAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>AoB;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Update on SFSA and IPC (AFI &amp; AMN)</td>
<td>FSAC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Date of next meeting</td>
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Minutes No | Agenda                                      | Facilitator |
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1           | FAO Agriculture Prospect Report             | FAO         |

FAO updated the FSAC partners on the Agriculture Prospect Report (APR) for 2022.

APR Overview:

1. The APR scope is to inform and guide humanitarian response programming and, wherever possible, investments in sustaining the domestic wheat production sector to meet Afghanistan’s internal demand.
2. This year, FAO Afghanistan conducted the APR assessment to estimate the 2022 country’s wheat balance.

Methodology:

For the development of the APR, data and information about wheat crops were gathered in the following manner:

- Calculating the country’s wheat production using historical data of wheat cultivated area and yield, qualitative data from assessed farmers, and country-wide precipitation data.
- Conducting an on-the-ground assessment to collect qualitative data on the agricultural production situation across the country.
A “mixed-methods approach” was adopted to achieve the desired results, using a combination of satellite imagery and in-person KII, along with on-field observations by experts and historic analysis comparison.

The sample design was based on AEZ, cultivation types (Irrigated & rainfed), wheat cultivation/land-use types. This approach allowed us to identify 23,060 sampling plot representatives of wheat production systems (irrigated and rainfed), out of which a sampling of around 2,500 farmers across 160 districts was interviewed, encompassing 838 villages in 34 provinces.

Timeline:
- APR preparations March-April 2022,
- Tool testing pilot April 2022,
- Data collection April-May/June 2022,
- Data entry, cleaning & follow-up data collection June 2022,
- Data analysis, verification & report formulation July-August 2022,
- Report publication September 2022.

Key findings:

Wheat Area:
The total cultivated area of wheat is estimated to be between 1.9 and 2.3 million hectares in 2021/22 i.e. with irrigated areas of between 1.1 and 1.4 million hectares of wheat and with rainfed areas estimated to be between 0.8 and 0.9 million hectares of wheat cultivated.

Wheat Production:
Wheat production is estimated to range between 3.4 and 4.4 million metric tons. The lower production is considered the pessimistic scenario, while the higher end is the optimistic scenario. The wheat balance sheet (import/export excluded) indicated that the wheat requirement to meet domestic demand is approximately 6.7 million metric tons, whereas the wheat production is expected for 2022 to be between 3.6 and 4.4 million metric tons. The wheat gap (estimated domestic wheat production vs estimated domestic requirements) is between 2.3 – 3.1 million metric tons.

The population base used is based on NSIA population estimates, and the pre-harvest assessment findings for 2022 indicate that the irrigated and rainfed wheat production is projected to be 10-15% lower than last year.

Way Forward and Key Message
The findings indicate prolonged challenges for domestic wheat and fodder production; the impact of the challenges on agriculture-based livelihoods and food nutrition security should necessitate a continued humanitarian assistance going into 2023.

Action point:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minutes No</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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FAO updated the FSAC partners on climate outlook and what the evolution of the La Niña telling. As of August 2022, key global and regional climate prediction centers indicate that the La Niña is likely to
continue through the end of the year. According to the early-August CPC ENSO forecast, the La Niña is likely to persist until winter 2022-23, which would be the first triple-dip event of the 21st century. The long-term forecast predicts chances for a La Niña gradually decreasing from 86% in the coming season to 60% during December-February 2022-23.

The ongoing La Niña event has resulted in a back-to-back drought in 2022 and the 3rd drought in 5 years (2018, 2021, and 2022) with adverse impacts on crop production, livestock health, local ecosystems, and agricultural and landless rural households’ coping capacities. Various climate forecast models indicate that the below average precipitation conditions will likely continue in Afghanistan until November 2022, with slightly above normal conditions in the south/southeastern part of the country. Longer range forecasts (Dec 22 – Jan 23) still show that below-normal precipitation could impact the entire country again. In addition, reduced snow fall will impact water reserves/water availability and higher temperatures in winter can increase likelihood of plant disease. Precipitation anomaly experienced at the start of the season, still exists across most parts of the country and also impacting areas with better situation at the beginning of the year. The situation in the southern/south-eastern part of the country is better compared to last year in terms of accumulated precipitation, even though this has been due to recent heavy rain that caused severe floods and flash floods.

Soil Moisture levels remain worrying and for most of the country, June 2022 observations show significantly below average conditions at the start of the 2nd crop season, with a slight to moderate below average in June in the north and northeast part of the country. In addition, the soil moisture levels anomaly comparing July 2022 vs. July 2021, show significantly the positive impact of recent rainfall on soil moisture in the eastern part of the country, even if this has come with a negative outcome of flood and flash flood occurrences. Northern part of the country still shows soil moisture stress.

Heavy rainfall has triggered flash flood in the in several provinces across the eastern, southern, south-eastern and central regions, resulting in loss of lives and livelihoods. Seasonal rainfall performance has been wetter than normal in eastern Afghanistan after an active Indian monsoon. Seasonal surpluses in the east is estimated at between 50mm to 200mm which have predisposed ground conditions for flooding.

Due to prolonged dryness during the spring and above-average temperatures in June/July across much of the north, northeastern, western, and central highlands regions, pasture conditions are expected to be worse than normal across most of the country, with northern areas worst affected. Limited recovery is expected from autumn/winter season.

**Action Points:** FAO will keep FSAC partners updated on the climate outlook.

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<th>Agenda</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>FSAC CFW approach</td>
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FSAC updated the partners about the cash for work guideline developed by FSAC with the support of the Cash and Voucher Working Group and other partners. In addition, FSAC highlighted that cash for work activities are crucial in the country especially due to the impact of the earthquake and recent flash floods which damaged irrigation canals, roads and agricultural land. FSAC encourages partners and donors to consider cash for work activities as key activities to address the humanitarian concern and protect the main productive assets of the community.
Objective of Cash For Work(CFW):
Provide income support to poor, vulnerable households through short-term, intensive and unskilled labor to people who are vulnerable and/or food insecure or to crisis-affected communities and to build or rehabilitate community productive assets (e.g. irrigation canals, water harvesting systems, etc.) and restore agricultural activities (e.g. reforestation, land rehabilitation, etc.)

Cash for Work Intervention Advantages:
- CFW/A programs build and rehabilitate community productive assets and provide income to cover food needs.
- The activities can be designed to encourage the integration and participation of women and other marginalized groups in the area and benefit the Community, not just the individual.
- The CFW/A programming enable many individuals who would otherwise be forced into migration by emergency or conflict to remain in their homes and preserve their communities, families, and neighborhoods.
- Cash earned through CFW/an activities can assist in addressing basic needs, preventing the adoption of negative coping mechanism and stimulate local economies.

Implementation CFW/ CFAC Programs steps:
The steps are arranged chronologically, and while the approach to the program may differ according to the individual context and the CFW/A has 12 implementation steps starting from overall development of objectives to post work monitoring of cash usage and work quality.

Set Cash for Work Wage Rates:
CFW/CFA is commonly used in Afghanistan to cover food and income gap for the basic food baskets and to rehabilitate basic livelihood infrastructure. The FSAC recommended daily rates 350 AFs to 400 Afs for unskilled and 700 AFS for skilled labor. FSAC recommended 22-day work per month; the rates should be adjusted as per local rates to avoid attracting a large pool of labor from the formal labor market.

Implementation period:
FSAC CFW/A interventions should be implemented during slack labor period timing, peak lean season, rainy and lean seasons or periods where there is not much demand for labor. FSAC is recommending CFW interventions to be implemented from March to September in Afghanistan.

Beneficiaries’ selection process:
- The beneficiary selection process should be based on household and community-based targeting.
- The selection should be conducted based on vulnerability section criteria, and weighting agreed with the community members and local leaders.
- The selection criteria should become consistent, clear, transparent not supporting military operation and replacing government.
- For HHs that are vulnerable but do not have able bodied members, the communities should consider distribution unconditional cash to those HHs (at least 5% or according to grant agreement
FSAC CFW/A Activities in Afghanistan:
Cleaning and rehabilitation of irrigation canals, water channels, Kariz upgrade of irrigation canals, re/ afforestation of barren or degraded land, restoration of degraded land, reforestation, rehabilitating water resources for livestock (spring, ponds/Kanda) Restoration of land drainage (cleaning or replacing culverts and, watersheds), construction and/or rehabilitation of floods protection walls and rehabilitation of tertiary roads/ clearing of rubble/ debris.

Activities for women and vulnerable groups:
- Light work on construction projects e.g. (watering of concrete, collecting waste and cleaning the workspace, cooking in site etc.), gabion weaving, cash for attending training, producing face masks and PPE during COVID-19 pandemic, administrative tasks such as managing the attendance sheet, being part of selection and monitoring process of CFW/ CFA work and beneficiaries, as they are part of the community structure (shura members), and so on.

To have greater impact on the household’s income status, cash for work support should be provided to a single household over several months. The FSAC recommends that the duration of assistance to a targeted household should be between 3 to 6 months.

Payments for Cash for Work:
- Cash for Work payments to beneficiaries should be paid quickly because the aim of the intervention is to assist people to access cash to improve their ability to purchase basic needs for their families.
- Any payment system should be beneficiary centered, efficient, secure and mitigate risks both to the agency and the beneficiaries
- Communicating the correct amount of cash – in local money and not in USD – ensure that it may not change just before the payment,
- Distribute small quantities of money.

Cross-cutting strategic priorities/ considerations
- FSAC and its partners should mainstream accountability to affected people by partners substantively engaging beneficiaries in all project phases and it should be strengthened through enhanced efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse at CFW/A sites.

Monitoring and Evaluation, and validation
- The monitoring system is based on the triangulation of information obtained from different sources: remote sensing, information from partner call centers – field missions, NGO reports, comparison of GPS-tagged photographs and external monitors’ reports (third party monitors).
- Implementing partners should share GPS-tagged photographs taken before, during and after the rehabilitation work, to give proof of job completion.

Health and Security:
- Preventive health and security precautions should be considered at all times. The IPs should – depending on the CFW/A interventions to provide uniforms, hand gloves, and
protecting boots to all workers. First aid training and a first aid kit should be made available on-site. Precautions regarding heat shocks and working in adverse weather conditions should be considered, while the minimum work age according to the law should be considered for when selecting beneficiaries to participate in CFW/A

**Action Points:** The inter cluster aid agency guideline for cash for work not yet finalized. The partners will be updated in the coming few weeks once the packages finalized.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Minutes No</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Update on FSAC nutrition sensitization messages</td>
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FSAC developed nutrition sensitization messages in close technical collaboration with nutrition clusters and UNICEF to address the partner’s requests to include them in response packages.

**The objective of the materials is** to improve the nutrition awareness of the beneficiaries by using nutrition sensitization materials in FSAC cash/in-kind support activities and three types of materials developed

**Approaches- Key Nutrition Sessions**
- Key Nutrition Sessions
- Key Nutrition Messages
- Nutrition In Quran

**Nutrition Sensitization Sessions during FSAC Cash/ in-kind food assistance has six key messages:**

**Session-1 Cash/ in kind food support for family nutrition:**
- Use cash transfer money and income from livelihood activities to buy nutrient rich foods
- Family members need to discuss cash transfer money and other households’ income and agree on how to use some of the cash to buy nutritious foods
- Participate in livelihood improvement activities for available nutritious foods
- Saving some money in case of emergencies.

**Session-2 (Healthy Diet and health family)**
- Reduce sugar intake and avoid sweet, carbonated beverages
- Use less iodized salt (5 gm or 1 teaspoon per day per person) and eat fewer fatty foods and highly processed foods
- Use ripe fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds for snacks instead of sugary snacks
- Eat local fruits and vegetables when in season

**Session-3 (Support Pregnant and lactating women)**
- Use the cash to purchase and prepare foods from different food groups like vegetables, fruits, legumes, cereals, and animal source foods to make it more nutritious
- A pregnant woman who consumes a variety of foods at least five food groups in the three main family meals a day and gets two additional meal a day will maintain her strength and health and will have a higher chance of delivering a healthy, strong, and smart baby
- A lactating mother should eat three main family meals and two snacks daily, and she should drink a lot of fluids to maintain her health and the health of her baby.
Session-4 (Complementary foods and Child health):
- After a baby is six months old, breast milk alone cannot supply all the nutrients for growth therefore, semi-solid and solid foods (complementary foods) should be introduced to meet the baby’s increasing nutritional and developmental needs.
- The complementary food should not be watery but should be semi-solid like halwa or ferni.
- Ready to Use Therapeutic Feeding (RUTF) and Ready to Use Supplementary Feeding (RUSF) are meant for treating malnourished children and should not be sold or shared with other family members.

Session-5 (Food Handling and safety)
- Wash fruits and vegetables, especially if eating raw.
- Store food in clean covered container and protect from insect, rodents, and other animals.
- Use fresh food, don’t use food that is old or rotten.
- Reheat cooked leftover food thoroughly, until it is boiling hot throughout.

Session-6 (Nutrition-WASH)
- Hand washing with soap or ash at critical times will protect the family from illness and reduce the spread of diseases such as diarrhea.
- Environmental hygiene always starts from our home cleaning all the materials we use. Keep our homes clean (washing sheets and blankets and drying them in the sunlight) and keep livestock in a separate house.
- Clear bushes and remove stagnant water around the household to remove breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Islamic based Nutrition Key messages - Nutrition in Qur’an (developed by Welthungerhilfe)
Feed first breast milk (colostrum) to your child, mothers may breastfeed their children two complete years. Exclusive breastfeeding, family support for pregnant and lactating women, child feeding and nutrition, 1000 days and cultivation of a variety of crops for HH consumption Sanitation and Hygiene.

Action point: Key nutrition sensitization messages will be shared through FSAC website.

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<tr>
<th>Minutes No</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>FSAC</td>
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Based on the received feedback from partners and donors on the revision of the in-kind and cash basket. FSAC relooked the transfer value and baskets after several discussions with partners and ALWG.

Partners inquired why there are two different baskets (in-kind and cash baskets), their alignment and the issue of adding or removing rice items in the baskets.

Based on the discussion some basic rules considered for designing the current baskets;
- Kcaloric requirements: Minimum 2100 Kcal/person/day
- Family size which is 7-member average
- Nutritional balance - Cultural food habits and practices
- Overall needs vs funding availability
- Logistic constraints
FSAC in-Kind food basket includes 100 Kg wheat flour, 8 Kg Pulse, 8 kg Oil and 1 kg salt to provide 2100 Kcal/person/day. This package provides enough amount of protein, micronutrients and fat for a household of 7 members for a month.

FSAC cash basket includes 89 Kg wheat flour, 21 rice kg, 9 Kg pulses, 7 letter vegetable oil and 1 kg salt to provide 2100 Kcal/person/day. This package provides enough amount of protein, micronutrients and fat for a household of 7 members for a month.

The reasons for the difference in in-kind food baskets and cash basket is cultural food habits and practices and the reason for not including rice items in in-kind baskets is logistical constraints. For this reason, the domestic rice item has only been added to the cash basket.

**ALWG Suggestions:**
- in-kind and cash baskets are different, and this is mainly because of people's preference/habit and logistical constraints
- ALWG suggested to keep rice in the cash basket
- Use low price rice instead of high prices; difference is $15 in the package; down to $96 from $111, using June average prices.
- Using June monthly prices, high price (imported) rice is 119AFN/kg while low price rice is 57AFN/kg
- There is no difference between both types of rice in terms of nutritional value.

**Action point:** FSAC will share updated the transfer value, reach out the donor to explain the changes has been made, and regional level to inform community about the changes.

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<th>Minutes No</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Update on AHF 3RA</td>
<td>FSAC</td>
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FSAC is in discussion with AHF on the next allocation and papering some inputs to be shared with OCHA. FSAC is compiling inputs for the upcoming 3rd Reserve Allocation. The allocated amount to each cluster will be confirmed later. In addition, FSAC will target the high priority districts identified under the winter prioritization plan. The activities will include food (cash/in-kind) and livelihood support (animal feed, poultry and agriculture inputs). Furthermore, FSAC will select partners based on their engagement in the cluster activities, level of participation in FSAC meetings, frequency of reporting and operational presence/capacity. lastly, the projects implementation experience with FSAC and other clusters is highly considered in the selection process.

**Action point:** The high priority districts will be shared with FSAC partners.

**AoB**

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<th>Minutes No</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Action points</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>7</td>
<td>-Update on SFSA and IPC (AFI &amp; AMN):</td>
<td>1) FSAC is looking to receive feedback from partners on monitoring the SFSA assessment.</td>
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<td>- FSAC is in the process of preparation for conducting the SFSA. The assessment tools (community, trader &amp; households) have already been finalized including training guideline, the ToT has been conducted and the</td>
<td>2) Half day virtual training on how to monitor the SFSA assessment will be conducted for the partners.</td>
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selection of company to conduct the assessment at field level is at the last stage for contracting and FSAC partners to monitor the SFSA assessment on the ground.
- FSAC is planning to conduct the IPC Acute Malnutrition analysis (AMN) and acute food insecurity (AFI) analysis simultaneously with an integrated report. In addition, level one training for both AMN and AFI will be conducted tentatively on 19 – 22 September and the IPC workshop will be on 24 Sep – 2 Oct 2022.

**Date of next meeting.**

3rd week of September