

FSAC Monthly Meeting

Virtual meeting, 18 January, 2023

Minutes of Meeting

Type of meeting	FSAC monthly meeting
Date and location	Wednesday, 18 January 2022, Kabul, 10:00AM – 12:00 AM
Chairperson	FSAC
Note taker	FSAC
Attendees	120

Meeting Agenda

Min	Action Item	Responsible Party
1	Update on climate outlook	FAO
2	Results of rapid assessment on stocktaking of humanitarian food and cash assistance	JPF/HPRO
3	Discussion on the female staff ban/ feedback from partners	Open discussion
4	AoB; - IPC update - Next meeting Date	FSAC

Minutes No	Agenda	Facilitator
1	Update on climate outlook	FAO
<p>Below-average precipitation conditions will likely continue in Afghanistan until January 2023. The longer-range forecasts (February to April 2023), still show that the below-normal precipitation (with some uncertainties) will likely continue until the end of winter before near-normal conditions at the beginning of spring. The soil moisture levels anomaly compared to December 2021 vs 2022 shows significant positive impact of winter precipitation on soil moisture in the North and North-east parts of the country, and the rest of the country shows a situation better than in 2021.</p> <p>The cold wave has affected livestock across the country. There are reported deaths for sheep, goats, and cattle due to freezing weather and lack of pasture.</p> <p>Action point:</p> <p>1. FAO will keep FSAC partners updated on the climate outlook.</p>		

Minutes No	Agenda	Facilitator
2	Results of Rapid Assessment on Stocktaking of Humanitarian Food and Cash Assistance.	JPF/HPRO
<p>Health Protection & Research Organization (HPRO) representative presented the findings of the rapid assessment report stocktaking of humanitarian food and cash assistance in Afghanistan. The objective of the study was to better inform the formulation of prospective JPF projects planned by the member NGOs for Afghan internally displaced</p>		

persons, returnees, and cross-border populations, and to take a snapshot of both operational and thematic issues of food security assistance in the ongoing Afghan humanitarian emergency. The study was a qualitative method using Key Informant Interview (KII) and a literature review. KIIs Interviews over the phone have been conducted with 13 NGOs in Afghanistan, then translated, and transcripts and data were analysed based on themes and sub-themes. The research focused on the following topics; types of assistance (food, cash, agricultural inputs, and non-food item) beneficiaries' selection, verification and finalization, monitoring, complaint and risk management, coordination, and technology & gender. The findings related to beneficiaries selection in the research stated that varied sources are used by NGOs for generating lists of vulnerable households such as local government lists.

Based on the study findings FSAC expressed its concerns about the involvement of the government or a third-party entities in the beneficiary's selection. FSAC requested further elaboration to find out how these NGO beneficiaries lists are being prepared by DFA and how third-party entities are being used in beneficiary selection.

JPF/HPRO representative explained that around 5 NGOs stated that the beneficiaries list was shared by the government and the third-party entity was only engaged in beneficiaries verification stage. Verification is usually conducted either physically or virtually.

The meeting participants had some follow-up questions related to JPF/HPRO findings. The first question was how to measure and assess an NGO's performance for accountable distribution. Secondly, how did the security measures be addressed, did NGOs take support from CDCs. DFA, or managed by themselves?

JPF/HPRO representative responded that the benchmarks for the success and failures of the projects were defined diversely across respondents. NGOs performance was measured either by quantifying changes between before and after interventions, or by simply collecting positive feedback via a survey. https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/fsac_presentation_for_monthly_meeting_jan_2023.pdf.

Action Points:

	Agenda	Facilitator
3	Discussion on the female staff ban/feedback from partners	Open Discussion

FSAC encouraged partners to provide their feedback regarding the female ban and its effects on female employees and female beneficiaries. The objective of the open discussion was to better monitor the change in the operational environment and feed this information into the FSAC gaps analysis.

Meeting participants expressed their concerns and shared some field-level practices adopted for the implementation of their projects. FSAC Partners shared some concerns related to the female staff ban. They highlighted that the ban on female staff negatively affected the project activities (female beneficiaries selection, distribution, and post-distribution monitoring). Interference of DFA in the beneficiaries selection process and distribution site remained as the main challenge in the field. The partners also stated that the local authority does not allow to recruit social mobilizers working as one male and one female in a team, which makes it difficult to properly gather beneficiaries information. In some areas, there is no phone coverage. In order to fulfil the task to create a comprehensive beneficiaries database, each beneficiary HH should provide a contact number for third-party entities to carry out a verification process through phone interviews.

Some partners posed a few questions about the UN approach: Is there any chance to reopen the ban on female staff? If so, then when? Will the degree regarding joining female staff at NGOs be reissued? In addition, in some areas, the DFA requests partners to share the list of female employees affected by the ban. Some partners also

shared concerns related to employee contract termination by some organizations. Some of the partners emphasised the need for a continuation of humanitarian assistance.

Some of the practices implemented by FSAC partners in the field were described in the meeting. In the eastern region, male staff have been trained to deliver gabion-waving project training to female beneficiaries. In the northern region, two separate distribution days are allocated: one for male and the other day for female beneficiaries. Male staff conducted the distribution, and no female staff was allowed in the distribution site. In addition, female local volunteers have been used in the distribution process in the eastern region of the country. The partners highlighted that DFA authorities are flexible at the provincial and district level and available to support in finding temporary solutions.

Some partners pointed out that they delivered assistance to the closest household male member of female beneficiaries. Females' contact numbers are registered, and either the NGO or the female could call each other to confirm that the help has been delivered.

Action Points: FSAC will share a survey to collect partner’s feedbacks about the female ban and affects in the operation environment. <https://forms.office.com/r/6xF2pvJ29L>

4	AOB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on IPC 	FSAC

FSAC updated the partners about the upcoming IPC-AFI analysis workshop. The IPC analysis will be conducted from 11-19 March 2023. FSAC is currently working on the modality of data collection and will reach out to partners to seek their support to monitor the data collection, and will request partners to nominate the IPC analysts for the upcoming IPC analysis workshop