

Meeting Minutes

Date: 15th October 2021

Location: Online via Microsoft Teams at 11:00–13:00

Meeting Presentation: [link](#)

Agenda

1. Notes and comments on previous MoM
2. FSLC Partners achievements in September 2021
3. Early warning systems and anticipatory actions: Community of Practice forum (MSD/FAO)
4. Seasonal rainfall forecast (MSD)
5. Food Security Outlook for Nov 2021-Jan 2022 (FEWSNET)
6. Update on food security beneficiaries joint targeting (MPSLSW)
7. Resident Coordinator Office Disaster Risk Management and Resilience Coordinator - introduction
8. Contingency Planning Focal Points Updates
9. Partners' Corner

Participants 39 registered, 49 attendees

List of organisations:

ACF, ActionAid International, ADRA Zimbabwe, Amalima Loko CNFA, AWET, Catholic Relief Services, CBM, Christian Aid, Christian Blind Mission, COSV, DanChurchAid, FAO, REOSA, FEWS NET, GOAL, ICRISAT, IOM, Jairos Jiri Association, LEAD, MeDRA, Nutrition Action Zimbabwe, Plan International Zimbabwe, Practical Action, Resident Coordinator's Office, Save the Children, Tearfund, Trocaire, USAID, WFP, ZRBF-UNDP

Discussion

1. Notes and comments on the previous Minutes of Meeting

No feedback on the previous minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2021. Minutes approved without any further changes.

2. FSLC Partners achievements in September 2021

FSL Cluster partners reported having reached 336,000 people with either in-kind food distribution, cash, or vouchers modality in both rural and urban areas. Among them, 315,824 received cash-based support in urban areas, 4,682 cash-based support in rural areas while the remaining 15,448 beneficiaries received in-kind food assistance.

Agriculture and livelihood assistance reported a total of 161,000 beneficiaries in September. This includes 53,330 people benefiting from the provision of crop and small livestock inputs, 103,335 extension officers and farmers received training, extension, and advisory services focusing on good agriculture practices with an emphasis on climate-smart agriculture, on and inputs for agro-ecology interventions such as soil conservation practices, soil reclamation techniques, and restoration of degraded landscapes. Lastly 4,813, beneficiaries received assistance in the rehabilitation of critical assets for animal survival and agriculture (dip tanks and animal drinking troughs) through other modalities (e.g., contracting a company).

Questions/answers:

USAID: Are the figures presented from various partners, including government or is purely from development partners?

A: The assistance presented today is only from humanitarian assistance. The government used to report but have not been sending their data since the lean season assistance ended. The figure presented is part of a work in progress, so we will be sharing the links for the dashboard that will be available as well from FSLC website.

USAID: I'd like to understand the context of the targets both for the food and for the livelihood reached figures. What are our targets in terms of figures?

A: When it comes to targets, the only reference we can use is the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2021, which is derived from the Humanitarian Response Plan process and valid for the lean season for food assistance. The reporting does not present any comparison with the target because food assistance is a monthly process and we have presented the gap compared to the target when the lean season finished. This month and previous months, the major activity going on is urban support, which is very well detailed through the dynamic dashboard.

We do not have any projection for the month of October and time of targeting and this is why item six of the agenda will be the introduction of the joint identification of the benefit for the food assistance that the colleague from the Ministry will present. We also do not have IPC, meaning no projection.

The only national reference is the ZimVAC Urban and Rural assessments reports released in 2021, for which we have an indication of the number of people defined as cereal insecure, which is a specific Zimbabwe and customized indicator within the domain of the food insecurity. We didn't have an IPC following that assessment, which is normally an analytical process, whereas numbers from different assessments and expert knowledge are then consolidated amongst key stakeholders.

In addition, there are two other processes for planning response for the lean season to come. One is led by FNC for which all agencies involved have supported this process and it is still in a production phase, consolidation and verification phase. And also, there is UN and NGOs response plan for which FSLC Partners have been consulted through email asking what it is their

plan for covering areas and beneficiaries for the lean season to come. This is still under construction and consolidation. These are the overview of all the tools that we have when it comes to targeting and response planning.

CMB: Is the 2022 HRP available now at country level.",

A: As you noticed, there was no process of consultation that normally starts not later than August, sometimes before, to produce an HRP. Reason is that it was decided at the county level from the humanitarian county team not to have a humanitarian response plan as usual, like in other countries. For Zimbabwe for 2022 instead, as already mentioned, there are these other two planning tools, the FNC lead response plan for the season to come or for longer period, still to be checked with them. And the Lean Season Response Plan from the UN and NGOs. In a nutshell in Zimbabwe, there is not going to be an HRP 2022, but seasonal or different kind of response planning.

3. Early warning systems and anticipatory actions: Community of Practice forum (MSD/FAO)

Presenting in the capacity as part of the Community of Practice in Zimbabwe, on behalf of a wider community of practice, and will be speaking about what's currently happening within the community of practice and the rationale and background around anticipated reaction so that they might come up to speed as well, especially with the upcoming season.

Presentation [link](#)

Questions:

Q: How can partners take part or be involved the Community of Practice forum or common interest?

A: The forum meets every last Thursday with FAO represented by Ms. Tsitsi as well as the Meteorological Services Department represented by Mr. Benjamin who are the current cochairs of that community of practice. So, anyone who wants to join, or that is either interested in the concept or has an initiative aligned to early warning, anticipatory action, focus based action, can reach them out and make sure that they are able to join the mailing list and participate in subsequent meetings as well. Emails have been shared with the minutes.

Q: Do you have local NGOs/civil society in the CoP?

A: The representation is through local partners who are in partnership with either INGOs or other UN agencies. So far, there's really a dominance of UN agencies, Red Cross and INGOs under the network and their local NGO partners as well as those who are not affiliated under the Start Network and their local NGO partners. But it's totally open. It is a very informal coalition of agencies which is just there to collaborate, and so it's open to anyone who wants to join it.

Q: Does the community of practice has local NGOs or civic societies attending?

A: Yes. The anticipatory action or focus based action Community of Practice meets every last Thursday of the month. FAO represented by Tsitsi, and the Meteorological Services Department

represented by Mr. Benjamin. These are the current co-chairs of that community of practice. So, anyone who wants to join that is either interested in the concept or has an initiative aligned to early warning, anticipatory action focus based action can reach out and make sure that they are able to join the mailing list and participate in subsequent meetings as well. Email contacts shared with the minutes.

LEAD: Looks fantastic on paper, but in practice we seem to be reacting after the disaster is occurred. From your own perspective, what has been the problem was if you look at the kind of disasters that have been following on Zimbabwe in most of the cases, we then tend to follow the disaster rather than going ahead of it?

A: There are multi reasons for this. A lot of organizations do not have access to reactive funds, flexible financing that is available pre-disaster. A lot of agencies only are able to access funding after a disaster happens, and in some cases only if there's a presidential declaration. Now, as you might appreciate, by the time we get to a disaster occurring, by the time we get to a presidential declaration, the situation has significantly deteriorated, and the aim of anticipatory action is to arrest deterioration or to do some of these small initiatives at local, district or provincial level that are able to arrest that. Second, there's still a lot of scepticism, especially when you talk about forecasting. One question that has come up is; if you are predicting a cyclone, for example, and then it changes trajectory, what then do you do? And the answer to that is as simple as within your standard operating procedures. Such diversions or decisions need already be factored in for some organizations. They say if a cyclone changes its trajectory less than 24 hours before it makes landfall, then go ahead and implement anticipatory actions on the understanding that any action done will be for the purpose of reducing the impact anyway. For some, it's now a matter of advocacy. We have a system that is so geared towards response right now that changing the mindset to factor in anticipated reaction is a bit challenging. One question that has come up is - "Why do something if I'm still going to do something after the hazard happens?" But I think multiple cost benefit analysis, multiple return on investment analysis that have been done globally have demonstrated that any anticipatory action done pre-hazard has offset another monetary value in the post disaster crisis. We have monetary equivalence of anything between \$4 all the way up to \$15, depending on what return on investment has been done. So, I think there's still a lot of advocacy needed, but us as a wider community of practice, and even within this cluster, we have witnessed first-hand what reaction does, and if there are any opportunities for acting in advance, even if we start with small steps, I believe that it is the way to go.

WFP: Does resilience building not yield better results than Finance based forecasting (FbF), which seems too short term to have tangible results?

A: One of the slides mentioned the integration of forecast based action with longer term development and DRR initiatives. You can have a standalone FbF project, but our experience is that there's a lot of value in integrating that component into a resilience building program on the understanding that if you have a two-to-four-year resilience program, for example, at any point over that project timeline, there are going to be droughts, there are going to be floods, and they are going to be dealt with. And so FbF is really setting aside flexible financing to finance that risk within a short period of time. It does not in any way replace any other resilience or disaster

management strands but actually complements and enhances that ability to predict and act within that short period of time. Because what's missing are those actions within that short period of time that accompany the longer term one. And I also think there's quite a lot of learning for those who followed the UNDPs program for quite a long time while it was a five year, and I think to some degrees continuing, there have been opportunities as well only month to month to monitor and use forecasting information for quick decision making at the same time as well. Another example is the Oxfam Project, which is also taking advantage of climate information while implementing a longer-term resilience program. So, the amount is understanding how anticipatory action links up with other disaster management and other resilient strands as well, and how integrating it in other projects brings value that wouldn't be there if that element hadn't been included there.

USDIA: Comment: From the question and the answer that was given, it's very clear that this issue is a critical one. That's why we use the FSLC forum to try to somehow spread the voice and somehow try to bring more partners embracing this approach and to change, as you said, kind of the common culture of get ready just to respond.

RCO: What is the appetite of supporting anticipated reaction from a resource mobilization perspective? It's a good question for donors, but could be a good question.",

A: We are noticing a shift even from a financing perspective. We know ECHO for example, has quite a strong appetite for anticipatory action for the last two years, and I'm sure even the next plan will reflect that quite strongly. German Federal Foreign Office as well. A lot of the UN agencies, especially the Rome based agencies, have a lot of appetite for that, as well as UNESCO and UNDP. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Society globally you may have heard of the Anticipation Action Hub, which is a global coalition. Again, for focus based action, anticipatory action, there's a lot of action happening as well as regional and global levels.

There are also what are called dialogue platforms that have been set up for the purpose of generating the evidence again, that is needed to stimulate that funding. But we will still have some donors who prefer the traditional way, who would say we would rather wait for presidential declaration. Some have started showing interest and they're waiting for their own back processes to become a bit more flexible and receptive of the idea.

Q: What is the involvement of Indigenous knowledge systems in the AA space?

A: Work going on well but not very well documented and are working towards involving them more, so there is work that is actually going on in that regard. But one of the challenges that we have observed with like systems is some of them, they are not really well documented."

Contacts:

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4. Seasonal rainfall forecast (MSD)

Food Security and Livelihood Cluster Zimbabwe

WFP/FAO Harare

<https://fscluster.org/zimbabwe> | info.zimbabwe@FSCluster.org

Seasonal rainfall forecasting. The MSD projects average to above-average rainfall in the whole country for the coming rainy season.

Presentation [link](#):

Questions:

PA: When we are projecting that most of the dams are almost full and the predictions for the coming season might also cause flooding from those areas. Are we also taking into account the land degradation and natural resource, which is continually being eroded? This also brings up the fact that that most of these catchment areas for water run off already the capacity, the volume is reduced because of the situations, and that is also an area of concern, which I think we also need to factor in and work across relevant stakeholders to try and keep that to continue happening. So that might also bring in false readings in terms of volumes and capacity. The second one is the water harvesting, ran, water harvesting and storage initiatives and technologies? The adoption rate is very low and it's due to the issues that they are very labour intensive, especially in the driest and arid areas of the country, where, like you readily said, the first quarter of the Renaissance and there are flash floods and then we go back to the dryness. So is there also another way in which we can address those issues from collaborative coordinated point of view.

A: Unfortunately, I will respond to some queries because of the issue of mandates. We also inform the other authority and government departments that are involved in those areas. For example, given the season that we are expecting, one of the issues or one of the implications that we've actually raised is there is a lot of mining that is going on, open cast mining. And once we have a season like this, it has a downstream effect because there are a lot of players. The issue of water bodies is twofold, it affects the capacity of the dams but also has a bearing on how much will then go downstream and therefore cause potential flooding there.

PA: Is there is a framework for collaboration across the relevant and responsible authorities to address these keys issue if you want to also address this question

A: The framework exists but then due to the issues of mandates of various departments, we are not responsible for the implementation. We share this information with the relevant players every season.

5. FEWSNET

Food Security Outlook for Nov 2021-Jan 2022 (FEWSNET). The outlook until Jan 2022 shows that in some districts there will be a IPC3 (Crisis) equivalent categorisation. FEWSNET carries out these outlooks using an IPC-recognised methodology, whereas the missing part is the stakeholders open discussion among key stakeholders through dedicated workshops. As mentioned elsewhere, there was no IPC analysis carried out in Zimbabwe in 2021.

Presentation [link](#)

Questions:

SOS Children's Villages Zimbabwe: In terms of yields of average and above average, are we able to translate these into figures at macro level?

A: Given the situation, the position that we are at the moment, the season has not yet started, and it's always informed by how the season starts, how it progresses, then somewhere midway or somewhere along the line those figures can start coming up to say given the scenario and the outlook, then that can be possible. For now, no figures can be given. So far, it's just a macro forecaster and then figures will come along later on.

RCO: Despite the independence of the IPC analysis, what is the extent to which it speaks to the ZimVAC assessment?

A: ZimVac is one of the sources of data for this analysis

FEWSNET Comment A: Reports are online and if some partners want to have copies once they are released, they can subscribe online for reports and regular updates.

6. Resident Coordinator Office Disaster Risk Management and Resilience Coordinator - introduction

Regina Chinanga - Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Coordination Officer.

Role is to bring together all various stakeholders that are working in Resilience to have a more strengthened partnerships and really looking at how to continue to strengthen systems in Resilience building in Zimbabwe.

Going to be working together in terms of looking at how we can do a consolidated mapping exercise, looking at how we can establish the working group that has been talked about and looking to see how generally we can strengthen Resilience. Will be reaching out to colleagues in the next couple of weeks again to touch base and to see how best we take the discussion forward.

7. Update on food security beneficiaries joint targeting (MPSLSW)

Join targeting presentation by Ministry of local government. The Ministry and WFP with its partners have been conducting this exercise in order to properly plan their respective interventions for food assistance during the lean season.

Presentation [link](#)

Question/Comments

FSL: What is the progress about what was announced months ago like being a joint beneficiary database from which anyone willing to support through the systems should get the list of beneficiaries from. Is there any other update about that? Is it taking place? If I am an NGO who wants to support food assistance and I'm not within the WFP programming implementing partners, how should I move in terms of beneficiary identification and selection in this regard, is there anything as a guideline or is it business as usual?

A: There is actually a process where the government is trying to come up with a database where our partners should draw the beneficiaries from so that we make use of one database. If there is anyone who wants to support, they are free to visit our offices so that we can make a way forward on how the processes will take place.

Q: What is the process of retargeting at the moment?

A: As indicated earlier, the process is a little bit late. It started late and it's a little bit slow. Some of the issues are just technical issues that actually leading to the slow movement of being at the ground. But people are already doing the processes and we anticipate and hope that by end of this month, all the districts finish the processes, but we still have that slow movement of things at the ground.

WFP: What is the status of the targeting guidelines?

A: As government, we advised our guidelines in terms of using the Food Mitigation strategy manual to do the targeting for food distribution in rural areas. So that is what is guiding us right now to do the distributions. The manual was approved so that it can be used.

CBM: In the absence of the database, what should partners do?

A: In the absence of the database, the partners should engage the government or the Ministry to say they want to operate in this area, to cover so many ones and other things. And then from there they will come up with a way on how best that partner together with government and then assist.

It may take us time to have that database, and I was informed that we might have something like that around next year, which is around April or May, which might be a long way too. So, it's now up to those partners to visit the Ministry and get some clarification. In a nutshell, the message is the identification. The listing of the people is going to be available soon because of the retargeting exercise being completed by the end of the month.

WHH: Was the retargeting exercise inclusive of other NGOs and WFP

A: Yes. NGOs attended the meeting and were partners of WFP. There are NGOs also attending this meeting that were part of the targeting exercise, especially implementing partners of WFP. Some of these NGOs are already in some of the committees that are operating on the ground, and they are already part of the process.

8. Rapid Assessment Teams – Focal Points by Districts

The forecast for the coming rainy season is confirmed to be average or above average. The big issue is excessive rainfall due to extended rain. If that is the case, flooding would be expected. At the Inter-cluster level, OCHA is working on a contingency plan following these extreme scenarios for flooding. Each cluster has been tasked to put together a contingency plan around preparedness and relevant response activities.

The focal point [list](#) is crucial within the notion of anticipatory action and preparedness before anything hits. You can see who nominated themselves for the last season.

All FSLC Partners were asked to confirm their nominations and to send new ones for covering gaps, but no one responded so far.

FSLC is going to send some request on the way forward to partners to kindly provide availability to the focal point list. Key point is to enhance response coordination in times of response.

9. Updates from Partners

PA: The National Biodiversity Forum, which is being led by the Minister of Agriculture, working with FAO was scheduled for the 8th of October. The Ministry has now rescheduled it to the 9th of November, and currently they are saying it's going to be a face-to-face event. As soon as the confirmation is received from the hotels which they have reached out to, then I'll communicate through the various platforms for sharing the location of the venue.

10. AOB

Nothing reported

END