



**FSS WORKING GROUP MEETING April 9, 2020
Remote meeting - Beirut**

FSS COORDINATION TEAM: Carla De Gregorio; Elie Choueiri.

PARTNERS ATTENDING: ACF, ACTED, Almajmoua, Arc en ciel, ANERA,AUB, ANAAGRA, AVSI, CAMEALEON, CARE, CARITAS, CCP Japan, CESVI, CONCERN, DRC, FAO, Fair Trade Lebanon, Farah Social Foundation, French Embassy, GFSC, GVC, ICRC, ILO, Inter-Agency, IRC, Irshad & Islah, Lebrelief, LHIF Coord., LINGOforum, LOST, LRC, Malteser, MCC, MERATH-LSESD, NRC, OCHA, OXFAM, PARCIC, PCPM, PLAN, PU-AMI, Refugee Rights, Safadi Foundation, SHEILD, SDAID, SSW, Tres Amis, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UOB, URDA, WFP, WHH, WVI.

	Agenda item	Main discussion points	Takeaways/action points
1	<p>WFP VAM presentation on Economic Situation Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Implications of Covid-19 • Availability of Food Supplies • Exchange Rate/ Price Development • Food Transfer Value • SMEB Inflation Impact • 2020 Vulnerability Projections & Assistance Gap 	<p>Economic Implications of Covid-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global economic turmoil can have severe implications for trade-dependent countries. • Lebanon stopped all payment (capital and interest) of its public debt as of March 2020. • Foreign currency reserves (estimated at 29 billion USD in January 2020) will have to be rationed to cover the import of basic needs, such as food, fuel, and medicines and medical equipment, including the needed medical equipment to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. • The Ministry of Finance in Lebanon expects the real GDP to further contract by 12% in 2020 as the dollar 	<p>Economic Implications of Covid-19</p> <p>Covid-19 is further compounding the ongoing economic and financial crisis with dire consequences for vulnerable groups</p>

		<p>shortage puts a massive drag on nonfuel import and could be worsened by the additional impact of the Coronavirus outbreak.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forecasted inflation estimates for 2020 currently stand at 25%. <p>Availability of Food Supplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesale traders interviewed by WFP reported that their stocks should last for a minimum of two months based on their monthly turnover. • 46% of WFP-contracted shops have more than 4 weeks stock (45% in March). • Food supply decreases observed in North Lebanon. <p>Exchange Rate/ Price Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of 2nd April 2020, the vast majority (97%) retailers of WFP contracted shops were charged a rate of <i>2500 LBP or more</i> for their supply purchases. • With the announcement of the mobilization on March 16th, exchange rate resumed its increase, reaching 2800 LBP by the end of March, 85% above the official exchange rate of 1507.5 LBP • In March 2020, the national food basket price was approx. 52,839 LBP. The highest food basket price was found in Beirut (56,945 LBP), and the lowest in Akkar (50,699 LBP). • Approx. 47% percent weekly food price (SMEB basket) increase between the week of the 14 October 2019 and the week of 30 March 2020 	<p>Availability of Food Supplies</p> <p>Given the volatility of the situation, WFP will continue to closely monitor availability of food supplies in country.</p> <p>Exchange Rate/ Price Development</p> <p>Considering the close correlation between the prices of food commodities (mostly imported) with the de facto devaluation of the LBP against the USD, and the unlikelihood of a recovery of the LBP, it is not expected that the level of food prices will go back to their previous level any time soon.</p>
--	--	--	---

		<p>Food Transfer Value and SMEB Inflation Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average Food SMEB cost between December 2019 and February 2020, based on the prices collected from WFP contacted shops, was 49,521 LBP, 22% higher than the TV of 40,500 LBP. • Considering the close correlation between the prices of food commodities (mostly imported) with the de facto devaluation of the LBP against the USD, and the unlikelihood of a recovery of the LBP, it is not expected that the level of food prices will go back to their previous level any time soon. • Based on the above, in order to align the food transfer value with the current prices of the SMEB Food basket (based on the three month average of Dec 2019 – Feb 2020) WFP increase the transfer value to 50,000 LBP effective April 2020, to ensure that eligible Lebanese (under the NPTP) and refugee families are able to meet their minimum survival food needs <p>2020 Vulnerability Projections & Assistance Gap</p> <p>The VASyR 2019 data was used to estimate the percentage of households that could fall below the SMEB using different inflation scenarios and loss of income.</p> <p>When combining both scenarios (inflation and loss of income) refugees under the SMEB (825,000 people in 2019) could increase to 1,245,000 people. This represents a 51% increase in extreme vulnerability over last year and leaves 590,000 extremely vulnerable refugees unassisted</p>	<p>Food Transfer Value and SMEB Inflation Impact</p> <p>In order to align the food transfer value with the current prices of the SMEB Food basket (based on the three month average of Dec 2019 – Feb 2020) WFP increase the transfer value to 50,000 LBP effective April 2020, to ensure that eligible Lebanese (under the NPTP) and refugee families are able to meet their minimum survival food needs</p> <p>2020 Vulnerability Projections & Assistance Gap</p> <p>Under the combined inflation and loss of income scenario, to match even the current coverage of assistance (80% of below SMEB), WFP’s assistance should step up to reach an additional 341,000 extremely vulnerable refugees</p>
--	--	--	--

2	<p>Mapping of partners' response for food assistance under COVID-19 : mapping and gap analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping of partners' ongoing and planned interventions under COVID-19, on the basis on inputs that NGOs have provided until 7 April and that need to be updated by partners (fundraising) • There are approximately 217,500 food parcels/hot meals that include planned and ongoing assistance for all population cohorts. • Note that part of the assistance is planned either for Ramadan distributions after 20 April or in case of ITS quarantine. • A number of the planned interventions are waiting for donors' approval • Factoring in inflation (25%) and the lack of income opportunities, is estimated that 1,245,000 refugees will be falling below the SMEB. Currently 655,000 Syrians are receiving food assistance by WFP. <p>The sector has been taking the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed into appeal with partners' funding gaps (based on partners' inputs) • Prepared and disseminated the guidance on food parcel composition 1 month/guidance on food distribution; Currently being translated into Arabic • Set up a referral system for individual cases using service mapping and call center • Activation of regional coordination 	<p>Focusing on the Syrian refugees and after deducing the "Ramadan" and "ITS" specific assistance plans, approximately 37,100 food parcels are available for the first weeks of April with an estimated coverage 185,000 Syrians.</p> <p>This assistance is however earmarked by partners for Akkar, Baalbek and Bekaa Gaps are found in Mount Lebanon, North and Nabathie</p> <p>The gap of vulnerable refugees that are neither assisted by WFP nor by partners currently implementing COVID-19 response could be estimated at 405,000 individuals in the beginning of April 2020.</p> <p>The results from protection surveys also points out to dire food needs especially for at risks groups such as elderly and PLWD</p> <p>WFP is planning for in kind distributions for ITS in isolation/quarantine and cash options for Lebanese, consistently with the government planned response</p> <p>HCR highlighted need to advocate with local authorities mobility to refugees, with different approaches in different part of the country</p>
---	---	---	---

			<p>Regional coordination meetings are planned on 10 April and 14 April</p> <p>Action points: Given the above-mentioned gaps the IS and the FSS will work towards mobilizing resources to address in the short-term increased vulnerability of affected populations</p> <p>The sector will continue to update mapping with inputs from new partners and confirmation from current ones of funds availability and share regularly</p> <p>Awareness material on nutrition when ready from ACF will be disseminated by the sector to partners conducting food distributions</p> <p>All material and guidance document from the sector will be made available under the Lebanon Information hub by the IS</p> <p>Partners that are available for referrals need to continue update the AI online service mapping with the services they can provide</p> <p>The sector will provide more detailed guidance related to length to distribution in relation to different scenarios and on targeting</p>
--	--	--	--

			The IS recommended to adopt a partners' geosplit approach for food assistance for L3-L4 isolation scenarios and the targeting proposed by the WASH sector for urban areas
3	Inter-agency presentation of the online inter-sector service mapping (IA)	<p>Inter-Agency Referral Tools Inter-Agency Minimum Standard on Referral The Inter-Agency Minimum Standard on Referral lays out the steps for conducting a referral and sets clear expectations for referring and receiving agency roles and responsibilities</p> <p>The minimum standard explains what a referral is, the guiding principles for referral, the 8 steps of the referral process, and then has a list of the standards which all organizations should meet with respect to referrals. We will be holding trainings on the minimum standards from mid-April and May.</p> <p>Inter-Sector Service Mapping The Inter-Sector Service Mapping to facilitate timely and accurate referrals between service providers; but also for coordination purposes to provide an overview of services and assistance in the country. This will be the central platform used in Lebanon to capture information on available services and assistance across sectors and governorates. It will replace existing service mapping processes and referral pathways in place.</p> <p>Using a standard template we will be able to capture sufficient information on the service, location, eligibility criteria, referral protocol, and contact focal point for each service. The service mapping will be a resource for operational staff who are sending and receiving referrals</p>	Partners that are available for referrals to continue update the AI online service mapping with the services they can provide If any partner would like to have a training on the IA referral tools and service mapping, they just need to inform their regional coordinators and/or the national coordinator who ll organize with the IA a session during the week of 13 April.

		<p>to/from other service providers and it will support the identification of gaps in service provision and it will allow for changes to be reflected in a timely manner.</p> <p>Inter-Agency Referral Monitoring platform The Inter-Agency Referral Monitoring platform aims to maintain an overview of referral practices between service providers in Lebanon, to generate referral trend analysis which will help us to better understand the blockages in providing assistance for referrals, and enhance accountability for referrals. It requires all partners under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) to report on the total number of referrals made, to which sectors and their success rate on a quarterly basis.</p>	
4	AOB	<p>ILO is reaching out to partners working in agriculture for possible collaboration as their “Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Lebanon” has been suspended due to the COVID-19 “lockdown” measures. ILO looking for alternative activities in collaboration with other partners.</p> <p>Remember to update AI LCRP 2020 database</p>	<p>If interested in ILO’s initiative please contact Peter Farah, farahp@ilo.org</p>

The next FSSWG meeting will be held around 23 April 2020.