



**FSS WORKING GROUP MEETING March 11, 2020
UNDP- Beirut**

FSS COORDINATION TEAM: Carla De Gregorio; Elie Choueiri.

PARTNERS ATTENDING: ACT for Communities of Tomorrow, Arc en ciel, French Embassy, ANERA, Banin Charity Association, CAMEALEON, CARE, CESVI, CONCERN, FAO, Fair Trade Lebanon, Inter-Agency, Irshad & Islah, MCC, MERATH-LSESD, OCHA, Safadi Foundation, UNDP, UNIFIL, URDA, WFP, WHH.

	Agenda item	Main discussion points	Takeaways/action points
1	COVID-19 information and discussion on risks on programming and mitigation measures	<p>Updated figures (February through March 2020) were given on CoVID-19 according to WHO dashboard at global, regional and national levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights on the cases, deaths and countries affected • Two trainings conducted by the Ministry of Public Health with the Order of Nurses and with the National Infectious Disease Committee • Hotline for support established • Overview presented on symptoms, transmissions and incubation period <p>Partners were informed on “what has been done”, “what is still needed and on “Risks”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National committees established, technical SOPs updated, reference laboratory at Rafic Hariri University Hospital, awareness brochures 	<p>Action Point from Inter-Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of prevention measures for all partners on how to organize meetings • National Risk Assessment to be conducted • Service mapping for Health Actors • Community sensitization • Coordination through the Disaster Risk Management Unit (DRM) (WHO/UNDP/UNICEF) • A National Task Force established

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Risks</u> mainly for the Food Security Sector and impact on programming and interventions below: • This situation exacerbated by the ongoing financial and economic crisis and impact on food access and gaps in procurement • Mitigations measures taken by partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing preventative measures for staff and for beneficiaries at the distribution sites for the new cards for food cash-based transfers • Having smaller groups of beneficiaries coming to redeem assistance • Concerns for children benefitting from school feeding as schools are closed • Distribution of masks and disinfectants • Some municipalities asking to suspend current activities • Concerns raised on harvesting and current planting season which may be affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under LCRP, a Business Continuity Plan put in place to identify impact on operations • Monitor the situation especially with upcoming VASyR and RIMS surveys (should it be postponed?) <p>For the FSS :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to be distributed to beneficiaries at household level (door-to-door distribution) • Precautionary measures to be taken
2	<p>WFP VAM presentation on Economic Situation Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of Supply Chain Assessment • Monitoring results for FSS indicators (Oct 2019 to Jan 2020) • Purchasing Pattern Assessment • Review of Food Transfer Value 	<p>Results of supply chain assessment</p> <p>The objective of the WFP retail supply chain assessment was to understand the wholesalers' capacity and the supply-related risks in the supply chain of WFP-contracted shops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decrease of almost 50% in the unloaded imports weight is registered at the Port of Beirut, between June 2019 and February 2020 (25% decrease in food and beverages imports weight) • A decrease of 40% is registered from October to November 2019 (26% decrease for food and beverages) • However, since November 2019, a slight increase has been noticed • As of January 2020, stocks amounted to approx. 72,600 tons, whereas the monthly turnover is 50,000 tons 	<p>Results of supply chain assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-contracted shops are also being visited for comparison purposes • To be able to bring commodities, suppliers work with banks outside Lebanon

		<p>Monitoring results for FSS indicators (Oct 2019 to February 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45% of contracted shops have more than 4 weeks stock and 87% of WFP contracted shops say they have more than 2 weeks of stock • By end of February 2020, 17% of shops witnessed disruptions from suppliers (10% in January) versus 83% of shops not witnessing any disruption from suppliers • 79% of shops reported not affected by a change in the number of food e-card beneficiaries visiting the shop versus only 21% affected by this change (versus 2% in January 2020) <p>Purchasing Pattern Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Unit of Commodity in sale value (SKU) was analyzed for Lebanese (NPTP) and Syrians to understand the price elasticity of demand between September 2019 till January 2020 for top 10 SKU • Commodities regrouped in 12 categories as per FSS partners suggestion. They represent 20% of total wholesale volume • Top 10 SKU commodities remain the top 20 sales ranks • Based on what people buy. <p>Exchange Rates and Price Developments</p> <p>CPI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Consumer Price Index (CPI) produced monthly by the Central Administration for 	<p>Monitoring results for FSS indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results showed that since January 2020 a status quo is being observed and there is still inflow of commodities • Need for more monitoring and investigation to check if the situation is being stabilized • Witnessing that beneficiaries with food e-cards are not coming to shops with two potential reasons: prices increase or displaced leaving the area where they live this is reported by key informants interviews <p>Purchasing pattern assessment :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egyptian rice recorded the highest increase in sales value for both Syrians and Lebanese (NPTP) • Sunflower oil was ranked first for Lebanese and second for Syrians • Awareness on nutrition aspects is needed • No major shifts observed in buying
--	--	--	---

		<p>Statistics (CAS) showed an inflation of 8.4% between September 2019 and January 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CPI is divided into 12 expenditure categories • The Food Price Index registered an inflation of 18.7% for the same period • The food price index month-on-month changes are: 1% in October, 4% in November, 6.4% in December, and 6.2% in January 2020 • By January 2020, the annual change in the food price index was 14.5% (between Jan 2019 & Jan 2020). For the CPI, it was 10%. • Housing costs (which includes rent, water, electricity and gaz) holds the highest weight (28.4%), followed by food & nonalcoholic beverages (20.6%), and followed by transportation (13.1%) and health (7.7%). • Alcoholic Beverages & Tobacco category witnessed the highest inflation rate between September 2019 and January 2020 (33.2%). <p>WFP Contracted retailers shops feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February 2020, 82% of the suppliers charged WFP contracted shops above 2,250 LBP. Only 14% of the suppliers charged WFP contracted shops between 2,000-2,250 LBP • In February 2020, the national food basket price was approx. 49,651 LBP. The highest food basket prices were found in Beirut (53,422 LBP), and the lowest in Akkar (47,996 LBP) 	<p>Price Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP retail unit started visiting non-contracted shops since January 2020 to compare price trends with contracted shops • Approx. 36 percent weekly food price (SMEB basket) increase between the week of the 14th of October 2019 and the week of 24th of February 2020 • Black market rate has been increasing steadily since its emergence. Rate hovering around the 2500 LBP barrier from mid-February onward • With the existing problem in liquidity and cash, what would be the behavior in purchase? • There is a need to review how and who to target more? (taking into consideration the NPTP Lebanese) • What would be the essential needs of the vulnerable population? • Monitoring the access to WFP contracted shops is needed with the mobility restrictions • More clarity on exchange rate is needed • WFP is considering increasing the transfer value to 50,000 lbp, to reflect inflation
--	--	---	--

3	Presentation by FAO consultant on the methodology of the assessment of the impact of the financial/economic crisis on agriculture	<p><u>Objective of the Assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus particularly on the impact on imports of agricultural inputs • Understand the impact of the ongoing crisis on access to domestic input markets covering different geographic areas • Assess potential short and medium-term impact on farmers • Explore any feasible actions that could be taken at policy level to alleviate the situation <p><u>Methodology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with different stakeholders held (government counterpart such as the concerned ministries of Agriculture, Economy and Trade, private sector such as the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture and the agricultural inputs importers, farmers and Unions of farmers, Academia, etc....) <p><u>Some findings for potatoes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no certified Potato seeds produced locally • The share of certified imported potato seeds from the Netherlands represent 66% of total imported seeds from the EU (21,475 tons imported in total in 2019) • Before the crisis, seeds importers had the possibility to make a letter of credit (LC) to the import 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be gaps in potato demand especially there is no sufficient cold storage facilities as not enough to store as well other products such as apples • Main concerns are that farmers must pay in cash and in USD dollars to purchase agricultural inputs • No more credits given by wholesale markets to farmers as before the crisis which allowed them to cover the expenses of production and to reimburse after marketing <p>Some suggestions from partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look into small farmers and in all regions • Assess the exact availability of agricultural inputs and their stocks

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For potato cost of production, 45% of cost of production incurs to land rental and irrigation water, 25% for fertilizers and 22% for seeds • There are three growing seasons: one for Akkar and two for Bekaa (early and late) • This year the minister of agriculture set the import period for potatoes from Egypt to be from 6 of February till the 18th of March (normally 67,000 tons are imported) <p>Some findings for vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon imports as average 85% of fresh and chilled vegetables (for the last three years 2017-2018-2019) • To cope with the prevailing situation, farmers are cultivating uncertified seeds of lettuce <p>Some findings for Cereals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereals (Wheat, rice and corn) constitute 86,6 % of the total imported cereals to Lebanon • Wheat constitutes around 37% of total cereals value imports <p>Some findings for Meat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon imports yearly around USD 133,8 million of Meat (bovine, swine, sheep, goats) • Bovine meat represents more than 96% of total meat imports value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the facility of access of agricultural inputs to farmers (quantity and prices) • Coordination between all agencies and partners for interventions and better advocacy to donors to support farmers • How to intervene in an optimal way • Which sub-sector to intervene according to the needs • Importance of supporting vulnerable farmers as individuals even if not business-driven • Study what would be the impact of micro-credits given from institutions • Have a more market-driven approach • Results of the assessment shall identify the type of programmatic response to be done. <p>It was decided that a meeting will be called specifically to share the results of the assessment when the report will be finalized.</p>
4	Presentation by Banin Charity on their assistance to vulnerable Lebanese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banin Charity Association provides a monthly food subsidy valued at more than \$50 for each family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility to have this initiative twice a

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance provided through food coupons or in-kind food parcels • The family can choose the food they need from a local Coop Supermarket that Banin has mutual agreement with, or Banin can deliver a box of food directly to the family • An average increase in food assistance from Banin Charity is observed from year-to-year (>300%) with more than USD 100,000 reached during the first quarter of 2020 for around 250 families. <p>Project 10,452</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with MTV • To distribute 10,452 food portions all over the Lebanese Territory to the <u>most Vulnerable Lebanese</u> • The initiative will start in Ramadan • Each Portion is priced at \$100 and is sufficient to feed a family of five for at least 2 weeks • The overall sum to raise is 1,000,000\$ to be able to fund this initiative • Campaign will include media coverage (press conference, talk shows, malls, billboards, social media, etc..) 	<p>year (e.g for Ramadan, for Christmas).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banin will welcome other partners willing to participate
--	--	---	--

5	Presentation by FAO on the RIMA methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presentation on the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA) methodology was postponed due to the importance of the subject • The main objective is to better have an understanding of factors that enable households to recover from shocks, stakeholders are able to determine strategies that combine short and long term approaches to address needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been agreed to have an ad hoc meeting specifically on RIMA for Lebanese vulnerability Assessment
6	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situation analysis update: risks and mitigation measures related to COVID 19 and apply if possible a gender/age/disability perspective to current situation and indicators - The Global Food Security Cluster launched a Survey and partners are encouraged to fill it - A reminder to complete the 4 Ws - Next regional WG meetings: North 31 March 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners to send their inputs by 24 March 2020 for the situation update of the COVID 19 • Assessment done by PU/AMI to be shared among the FSSWG

The next FSSWG meeting will be held around 7 April 2020.