



**FSS WORKING GROUP Virtual MEETING
On Agriculture Support
May 12, 2020**

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PARTNERS ATTENDING: ACF, ACT for Communities of Tomorrow, ACTED, AFDC, Al-Majmouaa, ANERA, Arc-en-ciel, AVSI, Basmeh & Zeitouna, CARE, CARITAS, CONCERN, ECHO, FAO, Fair Trade Lebanon, French Embassy, GVC, ICRC, ILO, Inter-Agency, Islamic Relief Lebanon, LOST, LRI, Michel Daher Social Foundation, MoA, MoSA, OCHA, Oxfam, Plan International, PU-AMI, PCPM, Save the Children, UNDP, UNHCR, URDA, WFP, WVI.

	Agenda item	Main discussion points	Takeaways/action points
1	<p>The context: COVID-19/economic crisis and agriculture in Lebanon:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FAO Presentation 2. Updates from partners on agricultural support 	<p>FAO Presentation on the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAO Policy Brief prepared to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Agriculture and Food Security and Nutrition • Effect of lockdown and restriction movement measures taken by different governments in NENA Region, halted the economy with consequent job losses and reduced revenues • Food supplies and reserves are currently satisfactory in most countries in the NENA region, but worries remain for countries affected by conflict and instability • NENA countries vulnerable to risks triggered by COVID-19 inducing impacts on production, availability and access to food 	<p>FAO Presentation on the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture</p> <p>Takeaways</p> <p>Challenges posed on localized disruptions (logistics)/food supply chains</p> <p>Continuous raising awareness (small-scale agri-businesses) essential</p> <p>Food itself is highly unlikely to be a transmission route for the virus. It is safe to eat when prepared following</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More vulnerable people expected to fall into food insecurity especially if the lifeline of food assistance is cut or disrupted • Value chain actors following standard food safety and hygiene practices unlikely to contaminate food or surfaces • Food value chains need to keep operating <p>Ample cereal supplies to help shield food markets from the COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereal markets expected to remain balanced and supplied (exports meet demand) • Both cereals production and stocks were at good levels in 2019/2020 in comparison to 2018/2019 campaign • Cereal stock-to-use ratio comfortable • Commodity Food Price Index decreased for most of commodities since February 2020 • Driven by COVID-19 pandemic demand contractions and favorable production prospects • Food prices remained stable or even declined since February 2020 <p>FAO Recommendations to national governments to consider, to mitigate COVID-19 impacts on agriculture sector and Food Security</p> <p>Six proposed Areas for action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform trade and tax policies to facilitate trade flows and monitor food prices • Ensure Institutional coordination with all actors to keep food value chains functional • Protect those who have lost their jobs and vulnerable groups, including farmers 	<p>good hygiene and food safety practices</p> <p>Action point: Share FAO Policy Brief on NENA countries with proposed action areas: shared by the sector on 15/5</p> <p><u>Updates from partners</u></p> <p>Action points: Basmeh and Zeitouna to follow-up with FAO for potential technical support/advice from FAO on their project (vertical hydroponic)</p> <p>LRI asking about the guidance for agriculture workers developed by UNDP/FAO on how to go back to work : FAO to follow up on when the guidance will be ready</p> <p>The Ministry of Industry and UNIDO guidelines on the SMEs (including agro-food): they should be ready by end of this week. When ready they will be share by the sector</p> <p>Digitalization of the agriculture sector need to be brought to the attention of donors for funding</p>
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2	<p>New initiatives in response to COVID-19/economic crisis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MoA Presentation (Emergency plan) 2. FAO Presentation (SFERA) 3. Premiere Urgence (PU-AMI) Presentation 4. Arc-en-ciel Presentation 	<p>The Ministry of Agriculture Emergency Plan on Agriculture</p> <p>Aims at encouraging the increase of local agricultural production and productivity in order to accomplish food security and narrow the gap between the food demand and production</p> <p>The short-term emergency plan will help the farmers directly in order to overcome a set of pre-existing constraints compounded by the economic and by COVID-19 crisis. It includes six intervention areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserving the quantities produced from the agricultural areas as well as the quality of the agricultural plant production and increasing the agricultural areas as well as the productivity of the main commodities • Enhancing the marketing capacities of the agricultural products • Enhancing the agricultural technical education and extension • Supporting small and medium agricultural producers • Supporting agricultural irrigation water • Adopting an agricultural information policy <p>FAO Presentation: SFERA project</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 	<p>MoA Emergency Plan Takeaways</p> <p>MoA requesting authorization to use public lands and let farmers cultivate them</p> <p>Expected support of 130 billion LBP to small and medium-farmers (25,000 beneficiaries)</p> <p>MoA extension services halted due to the COVID outbreak, however e-learning and distance education (videos, websites..) is being strengthened</p> <p>Need of guidance from partners on land management and suitability of cultivation (what and where to plant)</p> <p>The Emergency Response Plan needs to be accompanied by an investment/budget plan for resources mobilization</p> <p>Important to ensure linkages between the MOA emergency plan, the agricultural activities under the LCRP and the intervention on the COVID-19 emergency response plan of the UN</p>
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3	AOB		<p>IMO will send a message on reporting under Activity Info for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ramadan distribution database - New activities implemented under COVID-19 emergency (food assistance and agricultural support) database