

**FSS WORKING GROUP Monthly Virtual MEETING
13 April 2021**

FSS COORDINATION TEAM: Carla De Gregorio, Elie Choueiri, Kazem Elseblani, Amal Salibi, Hussein Nasrallah (MoA)

PARTNERS ATTENDING:

ACF, ACT, ACTED, ADRA, Arcenciel, ARCS, Armadilla, AUB, AVSI, A4tomorrow, Basmeh & Zeitooneh, CAMEALEON, CARE, Caritas Lebanon, Caritas Switzerland, CCP Japan, CIL, Concern worldwide, Dorcas, ECHO, FAO, FCDO, , French Embassy, InterAgency /UNHCR, ILO – EIIP, IRL, Lebanese Red Cross, LRI, MCC, MERATH/LSESD, MOA, NRC, Nusaned, Oxfam, Relief International, Safadi Foundation, SAWA For Development & Aid, SBT, SCI, SHEILD, UNDP, UNHCR, UNIFIL, We World, WFP, WHH, WWGVC.

	Agenda item	Main discussion points/highlights from presentations. For the full presentations please refer to the links provided	Takeaways/action points
1	WFP/RAM situation analysis	<p>Port of Beirut Good Movement from January 2019 till March 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A decrease of 20% is noticed when comparing Aug 2020 - Mar 2021 figures against the same period the previous year. ➤ A decrease of 18% is registered when comparing Jan to Mar 2021 figures to the same period in 2020. ➤ A decrease of 5% is registered when comparing Mar 2021 figures to Mar 2020 figures. <p>Between January and November 2020, and in comparison, to the same period in 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Total imports decreased by 34%. ➤ Food Imports (excluding cereals) decreased by 14%. ➤ Food imports decreased by 7%. ➤ Cereal imports increased by 3%. <p>Subsidized Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shops across the country witnessed several social tensions incidents over subsidized products, with customers fighting over available products. ➤ Reports that Syrian customers in several areas were denied access to such goods. <p>Exchange rate development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Link to VAM reports and assessment to be shared with partners: https://dataviz.vam.wfp.org/reports_explorer# Please select Lebanon - The VAM updates at next WG in May will include details on Syrians refugees purchasing power - A WFP/WB Lebanese vulnerability assessment is planned in 2021

- Black market rate heavily affected by developments on the political scene. Rate has been witnessing increased volatility lately. Rate reached the LBP 15,000 level last week.

Change of Monthly revised food SMEB price in LPB

- Revised Food SMEB recorded a 13% increase between February and March 2021, at LBP 176,203.
- The cost of the revised food SMEB in March 2021 is nearly three times the cost of the basket back in October 2019 (194% increase).
- Revised Food SMEB weekly price recorded a 35% increase between mid-February and second week of April, based on preliminary data from WFP retail database.

Subsidies Removal Latest Updates

- No official decision on the current subsidization mechanism has been taken yet.
- Authorities have remained vague about how the subsidies will be reduced, though meetings are ongoing.
- Finance Minister indicated that certain products will be removed, including certain food items from the basket of food items, as well as lowering the fuel subsidy.
- Parliament approved a USD 200 million advance expense to buy fuel oil for electricity generation. This would cover the needs for the next two months and delay the complete blackout that was expected to happen at the end of March.

Food Security Implications

- As inflation and unemployment rates continue to rise, so does poverty. This in turn will lead to further deterioration in the food security status of Lebanon's residents.
- Beginning of 2021, 20 percent of Lebanese, 50 percent of Syrian refugees, and 33 percent of refugees of other nationalities are estimated to be food insecure.
- Debt level of Lebanese, Syrian refugees and refugees of other nationalities increased; top reason for borrowing was to buy food.
- Among Syrian refugees, the increase in food insecurity goes in line with the increase in poverty.
- In March 2020, the updated WFP/WB/UNHCR report 'Compounding Misfortunes' suggests that, the extreme poverty rates of Lebanese will continue to increase by end of 2021.

FSS Advocacy Note on the impact of the removal of subsidies on food security will be updated in April and disseminated accordingly. It is a live document that will be periodically updated.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expected modification/removal of the current subsidies on key commodities and medicine could potentially further increase inflation trends. Social tensions and civil unrest could once again erupt across the country, as a result of the subsidy removal and decreasing households purchasing power, especially for the most vulnerable. 	
2	FSS sector updates (LCRP-COVID-19-Referrals) and presentation by IMO on interactive dashboards on appeal and implementing partners 2021	<p>For ActivityInfo output level indicators update for March 2021, please refer to the presentation in attachment and to the interactive dashboard. (click here to go to the dashboard)</p> <p>FSS transfer values (currently in LBP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In-kind food parcel: on the basis of the FSS composition of the food parcel: value @USD 550,000 LBP/HH/m. ➤ Cash-based food assistance (all modalities): budgeted for 2021 LBP 120,000 LBP/p/m; currently used LBP 100,000/p/m. ➤ Cash for work: LBP 50,000/p/d unskilled workers. ➤ FFA/FFT: monthly value aligned with WFP cash-based food assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beirut Blast Emergency Response: for partners with ongoing interventions please update the dedicated AI database - Partners are strongly encouraged to have their service information accurately entered and updated on the Inter-Sector Service Mapping tool (pls open hyperlink). This will ensure that all of services, contact information and information regarding complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) (in particular hotline information, WhatsApp, etc.) are up to date - Clarify who can accept referrals, who can't and why not (update of service mapping) and make information available to other sectors to manage expectations. - <u>Training on service mapping/referral system for sector partners planned on 22 April. Invite to be circulated.</u> - Sector preparing a write-up with BA Sector to explain why HCR/WFP do not accept referrals for MPCA/CFF/food e vouchers - Sector is continuing advocacy on funding for partners to respond to referrals.
4	Next steps on discussions on dollarization of assistance		
5	Sector Coordination Performance Monitoring (with GfSC)-2020	<p>Inter-Agency Referral Analysis Q4 2020 dashboard: FSS main results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Q4 2020: Decline in the total number of reported referrals for food security services from 68% of all referrals reported in Q3 to 2% in Q4. Q3 increase was led by WFP referrals to the LHF first standard allocation partners ➤ The biggest declines in referral rates by region are observed in Mount Lebanon, the North and the South. ➤ The response rate remained high at 82% of all referrals receiving response. Marked increase in the rate of acceptance from 0% in Q3 to 54% in Q4. ➤ All referrals continue to be for adults aged 18-59 years in most regions, except for Beirut and Mount Lebanon where about a quarter of all referrals are for services for those aged 60 years and older. ➤ There was a notable improvement in response time in Q4 with all referrals in Bekaa, Mount Lebanon and Nabatiye receiving a response in 48 hours or less. <p>FSS AWP 2021 update Q1 and Q2 focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guidelines for door-to-door distribution/home-based deliveries/proof of delivery. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Creation of a platform to link partners to local producers, easily accessible, comprehensive with updated contact info, able to be filtered by region and by item. ➤ Deduplication platform. ➤ Standard templates/core questions/indicators for outcome monitoring. <p>Feedback USD disbursement of humanitarian cash assistance The HCT has expressed support for a hybrid system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dollarizing all direct humanitarian cash assistance programs ➤ Exception for those programs where it is not possible; for which an exchange rate equal to the parallel market rate should be applied (i.e. programs channeled through government institutions) ➤ The transition to dollarization for humanitarian cash programs is temporary. <p>Sector Coordination Performance Monitoring (with GfSC)-2020, Main highlights:</p> <p>Supporting service delivery Full time IMO recruited in February 2021 (interactive dashboards appeal and implementing; partners presence maps; Ramadan dashboard; agri. cooperative mapping)</p> <p>Planning and implementing Cluster strategies Sector developed food parcels guidelines + COVID related+ C&V for farmers in 2020</p> <p>Advocacy Advocacy note on removal of subsidies Included in 2021 AWP, prepared and circulated. Currently being updated and will be disseminated in April. Advocating for more resources for responding to COVID-19</p> <p>Accountability to affected people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CFM is part of IS work ➤ FSS focal point for PSEA identified (CARE) 	<p>The HC tasked the Cash Task Force under the HCT to prepare a two-page document with clear red lines and caveats identifying humanitarian interventions with no ability to dollarize stemming from grave operational and programmatic risks that cannot be mitigated.</p> <p>Concerned partners to fill out google sheet template identifying the humanitarian interventions with no ability to dollarize by 14 April.</p> <p>For more details about the “Sector Coordination Performance Monitoring”, please check the sector updates ppt. file.</p> <p>For the 2021 Sector Coordination Performance Monitoring, we will consult with the GFSC to revise the indicators so as to adapt to Lebanon coordination context.</p>
3	<p>Conflict Sensitivity (CS) Guidance Notes (UNDP)</p>	<p>The Social Stability Sector Outcome 3 identifies the need to ensure that all partners and sectors are operating in a conflict sensitive manner with adherence to the do no harm principle.</p> <p><u>CS mainstreaming project</u> aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identifying key crosscutting issues. ➤ Developing guidance notes. ➤ Reviewing LCRP sectors strategies. 	<p>Feedback on guidance notes welcome, please contact fadel.saleh@undp.org</p> <p>The four Guidance Notes will be launched at the end of April 2021</p> <p><u>The FSS sector in collaboration with UNDP will prepare in the next weeks a brief guidance on prevention and</u></p>

	<p>The process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Brainstorming Workshop to identify key crosscutting issues ➤ Consultation workshops and research ➤ Guidance notes Development <p>Four guidance notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Getting Started with Conflict Sensitivity in Lebanon ➤ Conflict-Sensitive Project Preparation in Lebanon: Beneficiary Outreach &, Needs Assessment ➤ Conflict-Sensitive Project Design Cycle in Lebanon ➤ Conflict-Sensitive Procurement, Recruitment and Accountability in Lebanon <p>Use and benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The guidance notes provide a general conflict sensitivity analysis for Lebanon that needs to be contextualized and adjusted. ➤ The notes highlight dilemmas, challenges and issues faced and identified by LCRP partners. It suggests options to think of those challenges, but all actions must be reflected on locally. ➤ The notes can be used as a reference to assist technical and field staff to consider and apply conflict sensitivity in their daily work. They can also be used for capacity building and induction sessions. ➤ The notes can be used strategically when planning and designing new interventions and can be consulted upon the development of organisations and sectors strategies. <p>Guidance Notes: <u>Beneficiary outreach & Needs assessment:</u> Dilemma: Many donors’ anti-terrorism policies have led them to screen out communities that are affiliated with particular political parties. Since the parties are sect-based, this means in effect excluding a particular social group from assistance. Options for improving impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish collaborative partnerships with other NGOs and/or UN agencies that are able to operate in the excluded communities, so that you can contribute indirectly to their wellbeing and develop inter-group linkages even if you are not physically present. ➤ Channel aid through other neighbouring communities that are not under restrictions, in order to empower relationships and trust. 	<p><u>mitigation of social tension during in kind distributions.</u></p>
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4	<p>Partners' updates, constraints, and gaps</p>	<p>Lebanon Nutrition Sector (refer to attachment presentation for details)</p> <p>IYCF hotline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Requesting IYCF support (BF, CF, infant formula) ➤ Increased requests for food assistance, cash assistance and MHPSS services ➤ Reach more SyR → To improve reach to LB and other residents (e.g.: migrant workers) ➤ 656 calls ➤ 521 referred to IYCF specialist (79%) <p>Meetings with Dr. Inaya Ezzeddine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Trigger for discussion: Concerns over shortage of infant formula in the market ➤ Presence of UNICEF, MOPH, IYCF Committee, MOET, NS CT <p>Six months nutrition emergency plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scale up breastfeeding promotion and support ➤ Scale up programmatic solutions for non-breastfed children and for complementary feeding and feeding for children up to 5 years ➤ Improve the evidence base on malnutrition needs in Lebanon among all nationalities and across the country <p>SMART Survey planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess nutritional status of children 6-59 months, PLW; Led by UNICEF ➤ Discussions to have a SMART+ survey, revising CN and methodology ➤ Includes collection of data on: IYCF practices, with selected WASH, Health, FS; Anthropometric measurement; Anemia; COVID measures. Timeline: After Ramadan, Q2/3 <p>National IYCF campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Endorsed by MoPH in collaboration with UNICEF ➤ Led by national IYCF committee ➤ Started planning with timeline of launching: June <p>Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promoting optimal IYCF practices 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring access to IYCF services including counselling and support through the IYCF national support hotline. <p>FAO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scaling up of cash and vouchers scheme programme for farmers to access agriculture inputs thanks to funding from Japan and World Bank. ➤ Additional funding will allow to increase caseload to reach respectively 1,100 and 25,000 farmers (including herders working on livestock) ➤ Funding from Canada to promote resilience of vulnerable farmers ➤ Small project with MoA on a pilot survey targeting agriculture households and monitor food insecurity. The first round will be done in June <p>WFP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implementing livelihoods programme through 15 cooperating partners on agriculture assets and infrastructure, and on value chain development, support to cooperatives and SMES development ➤ Caseload of 50,000 beneficiaries and 10,000 participants to food assistance for assets and food assistance for training ➤ A call for proposals for a food system grant facility with a resilience window will be launched soon ➤ Climate change adaptation project in collaboration with AUB ➤ Food systems institutional capacity building <p>AVSI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support to greenhouse farmers through CFW is still on-going in Akkar coastal area; additionally, farmers were supported with around 300,000 vegetable seedlings distributed to more than 300 farmers ➤ Initiatives in collaboration with the municipalities and engaging youth to address food security are also ongoing mainly through community gardens 	
5	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ LCRP Review: identification of best practices and lessons learned ➤ LCRP/EOC Contingency plan ➤ Food system summit 	<p>Partners to send lessons learnt if they have any.</p> <p>Under the context of the Food system summit organised by the UN Secretariat</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ National training on child labor in agriculture 20 April ➤ Advocacy Note on removal of subsidies updated, presented at the national Inter-sector meeting, and will be disseminated in April again ➤ Joint bimonthly meeting on agriculture cooperatives on 23 April 	<p>a discussion on food systems in Lebanon will take place towards the end of April. The FSS sector will disseminate more information when available</p>
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