Minutes 2019/2

Monday 30th March 2020 at 02:00pm - 03:00pm PNG time | via Zoom

Chair

Mr. Brown Konabe, Director Food Security Branch DAL

Co-chair: Helmutrude Sikas-Iha FS Cluster Coordinator FAO

Participants

Refer to Annex 1.

Agenda

1.0 Opening remarks and agenda list (Chairperson)
2.0 Brief introductions of who is on the call (Cluster Coordinator)
3.0 The Government’s overview on the current situation (Chairperson and Cluster Coordinator)
4.0 Current response activities: Updates on market monitoring, impact assessment and risk communication messages (FSC coordinator)
5.0 Short brief and respond to questions relating to paper (Dr. Mike Bourke)
6.0 Updates and plans on reprogramming of resources from partners (Cluster Coordinator)
7.0 Action Items and next steps (Cluster Coordinator and Chairperson)

AOB and closing remarks

1. Brief introductions of who is on the call

The cluster members were welcomed by the Chair and co-chair. Participants were then asked to self-introduce themselves.

2. The Government’s overview on the current situation

- Governments attention is currently on the health aspects of COVID-19
- Food cluster Chairman to provide information to the Agriculture Minister and Secretary on issues that need to be addressed
- Information that needs to be gathered pertaining to food security are; disturbances in the supply chains of the food supply, availability of food supply,
local food supply, accessibility (shops, markets), production, shipping (transportation), support that can be obtained.
- Due to lockdown and roadblocks between provinces, transport of food from Lae to the highlands is restricted, permits needed to pass through road blocks
- International food supply of rice/flour, 50% imports from China, Malaysia, are on lockdown in many countries due to COVID-19
- There are issues on the local food production issues

3. Current response activities: Updates on market monitoring, and risk communication messages impact assessment

The current response activities discussed were preparation of the impact assessment, monitoring of market prices and risk communication messages.
MDF reported that there is information collected from partners, fresh produce aggregators in Morobe that due to limited knowledge in regards to COVID-19, villagers are not allowing sale of fresh produce, coffee to companies and vice versa, communities cannot buy from local shops. Hence, there are gaps in terms of communication about the correct messaging of COVID 19 and this has taken effect into the supply chain and livelihoods.

IFPRI enquired if FAO and WFP have started working on rapid assessment survey or framework across countries. Communicated with other country offices in the Pacific and Africa for a streamlined effort. The cluster coordinator noted that the approach would using the cluster network.
WFP work has started in PNG, however demands from countries in the region is to support impact assessment using remote capabilities for assessment and monitoring, i.e. mobile phones, MVAM or web-based surveys. They are working with their country office to design household questionnaires, market questionnaires, community-based questionnaires to under household level of food security, essential needs, access to services, market functionality, market price etc.
FAO will use baselines such as DHS, MVAM to conduct the planning. FAO will be supporting the cluster in prioritizing and conducting a needs assessment, in a holistic and coordinated manner.

It was noted that WFP was happy to assist the cluster with the assessment, questionnaires to be tailored to PNG context. Also, assist with liaising with Digicel call centre to assist with remote data collection.

There has been minor disruptions caused as per the current lockdown, what to anticipate in the coming months when COVID-19 causes massive disruptions to society, suspicion that the virus has been in PNG since Jan 2020, hence, timing is important.
IFPRI has started work with NSO and FPDA in terms of market price information but is at early stage. IFPRI has a survey on small and medium businesses conducted via telephone this tool can be shared with the cluster. FPDA can also provide information.

There are needs for risk communication in the Highlands taking into account both COVID-19 and ASF, this would involve the health aspect (currently lead by WHO) and the food security aspects and communicating to communities as well as those on the key value chain. One key concern at present is potential risks of protection to communities with the advent risk to the virus, associating this disease with sorcery, triggering gender-based violence because of lack of food. Risk communication across different fronts also needs to be done and not only for food security, as well as packaged specifically for regions and to take in protection and GBV.

4. Short brief and respond to questions relating to paper on effect of COVID-19

Upscaling food production. Corn hybrids can be sourced externally. Should lockdown continue, there would be huge number of vulnerable communities in the cities, more people going into hospitals and in the absence of vaccines and medicines, food will be paramount, hence the need to upscale food production. Food supply comes from provinces/places such as; Hagen central, Markham valley, Asaro valley, Gazelle peninsula and goes to mines centres. Movement of food going east and west has stopped. Food production needs to be functional, as currently there is no marketing in Lae (suppliers and aggregators to be contacted in regards to the survey). Apart from small scale farming, wrapping up production in the three food production areas and partner with agri-businesses (NKW, Trukai, Tininga, PAU,) to increase certain types of foods production. National Capital District Commission to be involved in food production.

5. Updates and plans on reprogramming of resources from partners

- The Cluster will be conducting an impact assessment and will include cluster partners in the strategy of the assessment
- Cluster to work on risk communication messages on food and nutrition
- Partners to continue to work together to collate information on markets using the monitoring sheet for monitoring of market prices
- FAO is working DFAT and NAQIA to support ASF issues in the country
- DFAT and partners are currently focussed on COVID-19 and health response and support at the national level
- Cluster to review current plans and share work plan and budget with DFAT
- DFAT is also reprogramming activities to be COVID-19 responsive
IFPRI has analysis tools and information available for use by the cluster for the assessment

6. Action Items and next steps

Action Item

- Start the preparation of the impact assessment
- Develop risk communication messages on food security in relation to COVID-19
- Review Food Security Cluster Action plan to capture the immediate, short term and long plans. Cost the plan.

NEXT MEETING
Monday 6th April 2020 | 2-3pm PNG time via Zoom

ANNEX 1 – ATTENDANCE LIST

Attendees:
1. Fiona Lynn, DFAT
2. James Marshall, DFAT
3. Shariful Islam, MDF
4. Mike Bourke
5. Mathew Kanua
6. Barath & Steven- Australian High Commission Port Moresby ()
7. Brown Konabe, Chairperson
8. Sharon Inone, UNDP, DMT Secretariat
9. Emily Schmidt, IFPRI
10. Nicolas Bidaut, WFP Regional office Bangkok
11. Geethi, World Bank
12. Gerard Ng, UNDP
13. Lyndsay Lambi UN women
14. Mirriam Mondia, FAO
15. Helmtrude Sikas-Iha, FAO
16. Melinda Benjamin, FAO