Regional FSAC meeting
WFP meeting room, Faizabad, Badakhshan, 11 March 2020

Minutes of Meeting

TYPE OF MEETING
FSAC Meeting for North East Region,

DATE & LOCATION
Wednesday, 11 March 2020, Faizabad, Badakhshan 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

CHAIR PERSON
Rahmatullah Mowahid (WFP)

NOTE TAKER
WFP

ATTENDEES
National FSAC, ACTED, AKAH, NAC, SFL, IDS/H, DAIL Badakhshan, SALEHO, DOWA Badakhshan, WFP (13 participants from 10 organizations)

MEETING AGENDA

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AOB:
1) Open discussion.

All partners

NEXT MEETING

DATE
Next FSAC Meeting in May 2020 (Exact date to be confirmed)

LOCATION
PAIL Takhar

MEETING MINUTES

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Mr. Hayatullah Rasoli, the head of WFP Faizabad Field Office welcomed the participants to the meeting with warm welcome to Mr. Jean Noel Melotte (National FSAC Coordinator for Afghanistan) and Mr. Barat Sakhizadah (National Food Security Officer) who have been on field visit to Badakhshan. Followed by thanking the partners for their active participation and contribution to the FSAC actions follow up. Moreover, he emphasized the importance of the FSAC meeting for the partners and apologized for the unexpected change of meeting’s timing as there have been other meetings planned for the same team in governor office coupled with political changes occurred crossing the same duration.

The national FSAC Coordinator thanked the team for their participation and action management. “we are here to see the implementation of activities in the field and how they are impacting the livelihoods and food security of needy people” Said Mr. Melotte, he added “we have visited the AHF funded project of ACTED in Faizabad city. It was an example of effective support to the farmers and the beneficiaries were happy with the project. We have noticed some
important points that needs follow up at national level with the donors and relevant partners for improvement of our interventions in order increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our activities”.

**MINUTE NO:** 2
**AGENDA:** Review of the action points and adoption of previous meeting minutes
**FACILITATOR:** WFP

The minutes of previous FSAC meetings was reviewed. Actions have been taken for majority of the planned actions by the relevant partners. The actions that still need follow up are listed below.

**Action point**

1. Possibility of reopening FAO office in Badakhshan or Takhar: National FSAC have followed with the FAO Country Office, they are looking on the possibilities, and the final update will be shared through national FSAC.
2. FSAC Retreat Workshop: national FSAC have planned the workshop twice in the month of March 2020, but due to COVID-19 precautionary measures, it has been cancelled. It could be organized in the month of April or later (if the situation improved).
3. List of districts and quantity of wheat seeds and fertilizer distribution: DAIL of Takhar and Badakhshan were supposed to share the details of their district allocation/distribution with the FSAC partners that didn’t happen yet.
4. Sharing the Pre-lean season baseline assessment and Cost of Diet Reports: WFP still didn’t release the report and upon release should be shared.

**MINUTE NO:** 3
**AGENDA:** Updates on food security situation of Northeast region’s provinces.
**FACILITATOR:** PAILs of Takhar and Badakhshan

**Badakhshan:**
Mr. Keshawarz, representative of PAIL Badakhshan:

- Due to COVID-19 diseases, Tajikistan has closed its border and the weekly joint markets that were one of the sources of food availability for the people of Badakhshan living in border districts (Wakhan, Ishkashim, Shighnan, Nusai, MaiMai, Shukai).
- DAIL Badakhshan have received 412.5 MT of wheat Seeds and Fertilizer that have been dispatched to 25 districts of Badakhshan province for 8,250 farmers. Almost 80% of the dispatched seeds and fertilizers have been distributed.
- As result of the climate change, production has been affected negatively and limited the food access of the farmers, because the snowfall/rainfalls normal timing have changed, and temperature is not normal too.
- Food security situation has worsened, and poverty increased in remote districts of Badakhshan province due to limitation of access, no wage and employment opportunities, insecurity and livelihood access disruptions by the AGEs.
- Presence of AGEs in the concerned villages are additional burden on the poor food security of the people, because all AGEs are eating forcefully the limited foods of people.
- Road accessibility to 10 districts of Badakhshan is blocked (with better inter-district accessibility comparing to previous years). However, this year due to lesser snowfalls, still the road access to Raghistan, Yawan, Kohistan and Shahr-e-Bozurg is possible (which is abnormal).

**ACTED (Eng. Hadafmand):**

- ACTED is implementing the Project of Emergency food security, agriculture and Livestock assistance for 26,600 drought affected populations in Badakhshan province. The project covers 13 districts of Kishm, Shuhada, Teshkan, Khash, Darayeem, Warduj, Yaftal Payan, Argo, Baharak, Faizabad, Yawan, Shahr-e-Bozurg and Jurm.
• Distribution of improved seeds that are for the irrigated lands will not have positive impacts on the rainfed lands and will lead to poor productions. Moreover, the FAO and AHF funded wheat seeds have arrived later this year that needs improvement in future.

SALEHO (Amanullah Zebakpur):
• SALEHO operates mostly in Zebak, Ishkashim and Wakhan districts. Majority of the lands in these are irrigated that farmer cultivate in spring. Farmers do not have access to improved seeds and fertilizers. The local seed is prone to diseases and pests that result to poor production every year.

Takhar:
Due to change of meeting venue and time (that was initially planned to be organized in Takhar), we didn’t have any representative from Takhar province. However, based on the phone conversation with DAIL Takhar below points were shared:
• Farmers are worried due to lower snowfall.
• Prices of food items have increased significantly that makes access of poor people to enough food difficult during this lean season.
• The impact of government distributed wheat seeds will be low for the farmers, because they receive the wheat seeds and fertilizers late and farmers were not able to cultivate them on due time. Therefore, they may eat or sell the received wheat seeds.

Action points:
1- Field level consultation about the type of land and needed variety of wheat seed should be discussed with the partners before planning/delivery, to ensure that each type of land receive the appropriate seed type (national FSAC and AHF implementers).
2- AHF and FAO partners to consider timely delivery of improved wheat seeds and fertilizers. (national FSAC)

MINUTE NO: 4  
AGENDA: Early Warning Updates  
FACILITATOR: National FSAC (Barat) & All partners

Following the agreed action point of previous FSAC meeting, AKF has collected the prices of staple food items from Darwaaz area (Mai Mai, Nusai, Shukai, Kufab and Khahan districts). The regional FSAC is grateful for the remarkable support of AKF and seeks their continuous support.

The below charts indicate the comparison of prices between those districts and Faizabad for some of the most essential goods during the same time (2nd week of Feb 2020).
Major reasons for the higher prices in those districts are:

- Very limited road accessibility from Afghanistan side that almost all the food and NFIs are bought in Kunduz and supplied through Tajikistan to Nusai and Khahan districts. This process requires very high transportation costs and impacts the prices.
- Prices of Diesel are quite high that makes the inter-district transport cost very expensive.
- Since there is no proper road access, livestock buyers are not going to these districts, also it is not cost effective for the livestock owners to bring their livestock to the major markets of Faizabad or Kunduz, therefore the livestock prices are lower than Faizabad. The prices of sheep/goats are higher in Khahan district exceptionally because there is no imported chicken meat available and mutton is the main source of meat for local people.
- Due to limited lands availability, wheat production is significantly low, and people generally purchase it from the market.
- Quality of the available food items in these remote districts are very low. e.g. what is called high quality rice in Nusai is equal to medium quality rice in Faizabad market.
- These districts highly depend on the remittances coming from working in Iran.

Comparison of prices between Faizabad and districts in Darwaz area during 2nd week of Feb 2020

AKAH (Dr. Rahim Rashid):
AKAH is working in whole Badakhshan and Takhar provinces (as needed) with focus to the remote and hard to access areas.
- The situation in hard to access areas (Darwaz area and border districts) got deteriorated, because the prices are high, people do not have access to enough agriculture lands or other means of livelihoods, Recently it got worsened due to COVID-19 outbreak that affected the Iran economy (many factories and businesses affected and work availability decreased significantly). These factors forced the families’ breadwinners to return back to their villages. Estimated, for 75% of households living in these districts the remittances from Iran is the main source of cash income.
NAC (Noor Ali Kariami):

- Due to lesser snowfalls, the road access to Raghistan, Yawan and Kohistan districts are fairly better this year, but it made the farmers worried about the upcoming harvest. Since most of the lands are rainfed, they usually have lower production. Likewise, many of other districts of Badakhshan, people highly depend to the income from Iran that is affected significantly.

FSAC Kabul team updated partners on the progress of wet season and the season projection through May 2020.

- Based on accumulated precipitation through mid-March 2020 and forecast precipitation for March-May 2020, cumulative precipitation for the October 2019 to May 2020 wet season is anticipated to be average in western and northern Afghanistan and above average in central Afghanistan. Persistence of precipitation deficits and abnormal dryness is visible in northern and northeastern parts of the country. However, projections show that these areas will recover through May and June 2020. The situation will be monitored continuously.
- During the meeting, it was discussed that people will not be able to cultivate their spring crops due to forecasted precipitation between March to April 220. Conversely, untimely rains will negatively affect field crops. However, if there could be gaps among the rainfalls (particularly in April), it can have good impacts.
- Comparing to 2002 – 2011 average precipitation, so far this year, Badakhshan received 58%, Takhar 48% and Kunduz received 31% of precipitation. Forecast suggests that the region will recover between March to May 2020, however, partners argued that these untimely precipitations will not have positive impact on field crops.

**Action point**

1. Remote and hard to access districts should be prioritized for the humanitarian livelihood assistance. (all partners)
2. Considering the outbreak of COVID-19 and its possible impacts on the food security of the people, all partners should regularly monitor the situation in their target areas and share the burning information timely.
3. Situation monitoring is required in April to see if the possible dry-spell is over, also farmers are able to cultivate their lands on time (all partners).

### MINUTE NO: 5

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The Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF), formerly known as ‘Afghanistan Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF)’, was established in 2014 in order to enable quick and needs-based humanitarian action in Afghanistan. Under the leadership of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) for Afghanistan, the AHF is supporting the timely allocation and disbursement of donor resources to the most critical humanitarian needs defined in the Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). AHF is designed to complement other humanitarian funding sources such as bilateral funding and other pooled funds such as CERF.

All prospective national and international NGO partners are required to undergo a due diligence process and internal capacity assessment in order to determine their eligibility and risk levels. Capacity assessment validity period is 36 months all partners are required to undergo a new capacity assessment in order to re-establish their eligibility.

There are two types of allocation 1. Standard Allocation, 2. Reserve Allocation:

Standard Allocation is the usual process through which AHF funds are disbursed. Based on fund availability, at least two standard allocation processes are conducted during a calendar year. The process for standard allocation is competition based.

Reserve Allocation is used for rapid disbursement of funds in the event of unforeseen emergencies based on acute humanitarian needs. It provides funds to specific humanitarian situations that require a timely response and in addition to standard allocations. The process for reserve allocation is non-competition based.

**Action point**

1. Interested partners that meet the eligibility criteria and/or are interested to apply should send an email to national FSAC colleagues.
2. National FSAC colleagues to share the AHF eligibility guideline and essential information with the partners.
**MINUTE NO:**

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Using the opportunity of having the national FSAC team, the major recommendations for FSAC activities (relevant to the region) have been shared:

- Local NGOs need more support and guidance from national FSAC team on “how to apply for Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF)”.
- National FSAC is requested to share the Eligibility guidelines and other essential information with the partners.
- SFL has supported the regional FSAC on the role of NGO Co-chair for the last 4 years, and it is time to select a new NGO Co-chair for the region. Since ACTED has wide coverage in the region and is interested, national FSAC is requested to discuss with ACTED main office and provide the necessary supports.
- OCHA participation to the regional FSAC meetings are very low, while their attendance/contribution makes the meetings more effective (invitations and meeting minutes are always shared with them).
- Consideration of remote districts for AHF targeting is essential. We are grateful for the 2020 selection of the districts in Badakhshan.
- Active participation and contribution of partners to the regional FSAC should be considered seriously during AHF eligibility review.
- Having an AHF summary reporting to the regional FSAC meeting is recommended.
- Regional voluntarily supports of FSAC partners for the EFSA and SFSA should be considered and valued.

**Action point**

Nil.

**End of Report.**