



KEEP AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAIN ALIVE → FEED THE COUNTRY → SAFE LIVES



1. Concerns and priority needs update

West Bank and Gaza Strip

- Workers cannot reach workplaces
Among the 134,800 Palestinian working in Israel and Israeli colonies, at least 16,000 cannot reach their working place, consequentially losing their earnings, worsening their already critical conditions. They need cash and food support. The most vulnerable groups are the informal labour and the poor and food insecure people.
- Women unable to continue their work.
The current movement restrictions (in WB) and family obligation (in WB and GS) with children not attending schools are preventing women to access workplace in cooperatives. This is increasing women's vulnerability who are working in cooperatives, especially if they are heading the households, or bringing in a significant portion of the income.
- Payments in cash requested to suppliers and producers.
Suppliers, importing inputs from Israel, cannot resort to credit as they are increasingly asked to pay in cash up front. This was reported as a major problem, as suppliers are then requesting herders and farmers to pay up front in cash for the inputs the purchase. The usual habit between suppliers and farmers and herders to resort on informal credit to be repaid during the marketing season is virtually discontinued at the moment. This might lead farmers and herders (especially the latter) to resort to distress and negative coping strategies, including destocking on their productive assets. This will also impact farmers for crucial inputs including fertilizers, plastic sheds and others.
- Exchange-rate fluctuation.
Fluctuations in the US dollar/Israeli Shekel exchange rate, from USD 1/ 3.46 ILS before the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis to USD 1/3.63 (2 April), have negative impact on people's purchasing power.

West Bank

- Low demand in the market for dairy and poultry, coupled with movement restrictions, result into products piling up with no market channels which is leading to severe losses, with implications on food supply. 50 farmers from Tulkarem area reported un-marketed production of 250 000 birds.
- Farmers in many areas confirmed that the price of broilers went down to 6.5 ILS per kg which is less than the break-even point, comparing with 8 or 9 ILS just before the virus outbreak and this due to the movement restrictions and the closing of restaurants as well, which led to access supply in producing areas and the weak purchasing power for the people. Consequently, prices might vary from one area to another depending on the supply volume in these areas.

- A substantial increase in the price of wheat flour (sack of 25 kgs had increased by 66% percent), was instead observed since the period prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Shipments made (to the US) are stuck in the port with daily landing fees paid.

Gaza Strip

- Disruption of agricultural supply chain will affect the whole community from farmers to people, in particular with regard to availability of fresh vegetables.
- MoA in Gaza is facing problems to maintain a safe operational environment for services related to food safety. Veterinary and plants health services within the MoA have scarce means to prevent the spread of the disease within their field operations. Interruption of their services can cause disruption in the supply chain of both local and imported fresh food as well as putting agricultural livelihoods at additional risks.
- Persons in quarantine centres cannot receive food or any kind of assistance from their families outside. Food provided only through the management of the quarantine centres. So far, three meals per day are provided through the private sector and Qatar Committee/ MoSD. People lack diversity of food, including fruits and vegetables, as well as special dietary needs for people with health conditions inside the centres. This affects 1,816 persons quarantined in 26 centres.



2. Response Update

West Bank and Gaza Strip

- WFP continues to work in consultation with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), in order to support around 65,000 of the poorest and most vulnerable groups (including elderly people, people with disabilities, and pregnant and lactating women have been impacted in the short-medium term by the crisis), and some 111,000 people who are not enrolled in the national social protection system..
WFP is also supporting the MoSD by working on an emergency response plan to address the effects of COVID-19 on the poorest and most vulnerable people. Food assistance was identified as a key component of this plan considering the foreseeable impact of the crisis on the socio-economic and food security and nutrition status of the Palestinian communities, particularly the most vulnerable groups. Alongside technical guidance, WFP's delivery mechanisms and platforms will be utilized to provide food and other essential needs, such as hygiene and sanitation materials, to the targeted affected people.
- Additional funding needed for the above interventions.
- UNRWA Gaza is assessing the need to provide in-kind food assistance to new vulnerable Palestine refugee households, who were affected by losing their only source of income through daily paid jobs. UNRWA also adapted a new door-to-door distribution modality to ensure the health and safety of beneficiaries.

- The government started paying the public sector 100% of the salaries, and this will be through ATM. The government will also resume shortly their CBT programme by issuing the quarterly cash assistance due last month through the MoSD.

Response needed/planned

- Women daily wage workers who cannot access workplace and who are heading households should be prioritized for income and food support response.
- Workers who cannot commute to access workplaces in Israel and Israeli colonies need urgent assistance to support their food security status. ACTED is being actively working with the MoSD in order to provide support to approximately 16,000 needy HHs. Around \$1,400,000 are needed to support these needy families for one month. This will also contribute to keep the production/consumption cycle alive.

West Bank

- MoA launched a campaign for planting one million seedlings to support home garden for workers who have lost their jobs. Local NGO's are working to implement this activity.
- More than 30 MT Vegetable were sent from Jenin, Qalqilya and Jericho to Bethlehem by UAWC, targeting 3,000 HHs.
- UAWC will distribute 1,855 food baskets in the areas of Tulkarem, Jenin, Salfit, Jerusalem, Hebron and Bethlehem
- PARC reported that more than 14 tonnes of cheese were sold during the last 10 days. The campaign already launched last week from poor farmers to consumers in North Jordan Valley.
- WFP together with UNRWA continue the distribution of in-kind food parcels to the Bedouin and herding communities in Area C of the West Bank, with the distribution of 4,000 food parcels to 1,113 families. These distributions, which are under the first quarter distributions (January-March 2020), are expected to be completed by 22nd April.
- UNRWA West Bank is supporting MoSD plan to address the effects of COVID-19 on the poorest and most vulnerable refugee households through food assistance, which was identified as a key component of MoSD response plan.

Response needed/planned

- Inputs distribution to avoid de-stocking among herders, and livelihoods loss of farmers and further disruption in this crucial food supply chain.
- Ongoing food distribution interventions should consider modalities such as from poor farmer to poor family approach, upon availability of funding to support this mechanism.
- WFP is working on contracting shops in the northern and middle parts of the West Bank in case of need to provide CBTs to affected people residing in these areas. Under its current operations, WFP targets beneficiaries in the southern areas of the West Bank where food insecurity is more prevalent.

Gaza Strip

- UNRWA Gaza resumed distribution of in-kind food starting 31st March, by adopting a new door-to-door distribution modality for direct delivery to refugee homes in order to ensure their health and safety, which is the highest priority for UNRWA. Beneficiaries were not requested to pay any fee for this service, and the delivery cost was fully borne by UNRWA, adding additional financial burden on the Agency. This new modality was adapted as a precautionary measure to prevent crowds as part of the steps to limit the spread of Corona Virus (COVID-19). As of 31st March and over 20 working days, the Agency will distribute in-kind food parcels to around 80,000 households, who represent the remaining case load for emergency food distribution in Q1,2020.
- CBT assistance has been functioning well and targeted beneficiaries reach the 275 designated shops across Gaza Strip and the West Bank to redeem their e-voucher cards with no reported challenges. WFP monitoring showed that food stocks are available in the local market in Gaza Strip for 4-6 weeks and in the West Bank for several months.

Response needed/planned

- MoA and partners in Gaza are finalizing a draft of emergency response plan. The main objective is to guarantee the continuity of supply chain of production from farmers to consumer. The plan is to have assembly points in each governorate, as well as packaging and transportation facilities for agricultural products.
- FAO is planning an immediate delivery of PPE for installations and staff working under Veterinary and Plants protection services. The cost is estimated to be around 10,000 USD
Quarantine centres: fruits and vegetables, dairy products (yoghurt and cheese) and special healthy food for people with health conditions.
- WFP and partners are looking into ways to ensure continued CBT assistance if the situation will not allow beneficiaries to reach the shops. Among the proposed alternative mechanisms is that shops deliver the food, or a standard food basket, to the households.