



FSS COVID-19 Crisis Sitrep-04 13th April 2020

KEEP AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAINS ALIVE --> FEED THE COUNTRY --> SAFE LIVES



1. Concerns, Priority Needs, and Gaps update

West Bank and Gaza Strip

Most of issues previously reported still stand. The pandemic also has severe socio-economic consequences for the Palestinian people, some of them already happening (value chains disruption, unemployment, poverty levels...), with direct consequences on food security status.

- **New vulnerabilities**

According to MoSD, approximately 53,000 families are considered falling into poverty. The driver of vulnerability is loss of jobs due to COVID-19 restrictions and further closures. MoSD conducted a quick survey only on the number of families who lost their sources of income according to the type of work of the family breadwinner.

MoSD is expecting that the number of new poor families will reach to one hundred thousand within a month. Figures are expected to further increase if the emergency period is prolonged.

- **Movement goods and production inputs inside/outside Palestine**

Due to movements restrictions, the medical herbs market in the Jordan Valley was affected significantly. The harvesting season has already begun, farmers were not able to export their production at all. Similarly, the commercial, industrial and agriculture chamber in Tubas, during the last 10 days, only 2 certificates of origin were issued - document needed for moving goods inside/outside WB - compared to 50 used to be issued in this period for the same group of farmers. Currently, the volume of sale has reduced compared to the period before the COVID-19 crisis in both West Bank and Gaza Strip since the number of customers has decreased.

West Bank

- **Low demand in the meat market.** The low demand is linked with the movement restrictions. Price of lambs decreased mainly in the north of West Bank. The livestock market in those areas is currently closed. Herders are struggling to sell their lambs. The price of lamb is decreased from 5.8 JD (Jordan dinar) to 4.9 JD per kg (-15.5%).

Gaza Strip

- Due to restriction on movements, exported vegetables from Gaza faced low prices in Israel, West Bank and Jordan.
- Poultry meat prices noticeably decreased because low purchasing power of consumers.
- Lack of agricultural inputs and fodders in Gaza Strip.



2. Response Strategy and Challenges Update

West Bank and Gaza Strip

- The MoA, and NGOs partners highlights the importance of ensuring the continuity of Palestinian agri-food value chain as a crucial goal. Preventing its disruption is a top national priority at the immediate, medium and long term. MoA called international partners to give priority to that concern in their planning and programming.
- MoA is looking forward at the short and medium term to help and sustain production and stabilize the local agri-food market. Which includes:
 - Provision of time critical inputs for small scale farmers.
 - Support to home-based food production.
 - Support to small scale food processor.
 - Support to innovative marketing facilities.
 - Boosting food basket initiatives (including fresh vegetables, olive oil, diary production, etc...)
- To prevent deterioration, and ensure adequate level of food security of poor and marginalized households, as stressed also by the MoSD. New emerging groups of poverty are reported, due to loss of jobs, especially those who were living out of daily wages from informal works.
- The major challenge is represented by the time gap between the immediate needs and the availability of required resources to address these needs.

West Bank

- MoSD prepared a simple form, consisting of 7 questions, according to which it will determine the families that will be included in the new lists and recently fell into poverty, due to the current crisis.
- MoSD declared that they started to track and elaborate the information related to new poor or "new exposed", in preparation for possible disbursing cash and food assistance to these families before the end of April.
- According to MoSD, the updating process for their data base, which will include the new poor families started. This activity is taking place now with full assistance and cooperation of local councils, charitable societies and Zakat committees.
- MoA confirmed that the trucks with vegetables and fruit can move from 6AM to 6PM without prior coordination or permission. Trucks with broilers can move from 6PM to 6AM.

- Following the campaign that launched by MoA for 1 million seedlings for the home garden in the West Bank. Distribution to the communities have already begun through local NGOs.
- Partners on the ground have good network with farmers and herders. Some partners are working on campaigns to help the herders to market their products, mainly herders in Jordan Valley.

Gaza Strip

- Banking system and cash assistance challenge. Banks stopped receiving face-to-face clients; humanitarian projects' beneficiaries are unable to receive their cash assistance.
- Income reductions for most categories. More than 75% of the interviewees mentioned that the average daily wages for taxi drivers has decreased from 50 NIS to 30 NIS while the average daily wage for the owners of old taxis has become 20 NIS.
- Most of transactions between wholesalers and retailers are being settled in cash.
- Cash-for-Work (CfW) intervention is impacted by COVID-19 as many skilled and unskilled jobs come to a halt with education and other organizations implementing a work-for-home modality.
- Temporary decrease in the liquidity of the exchanged New Israeli Shekel between local banks.
- MoA is working on an emergency response plan built on ensuring safe and healthy access to the agricultural value chain. The plan is expected to finalize and circulated soon and includes"
 - Farmer access their lands safely;
 - Farmers access to agricultural inputs necessary to farming practice;
 - Safe transport and access of fresh vegetables/crops to wholesale and retailers' markets
 - Safe and healthy access to consumers to safe fresh vegetables.
- MoA and MoNE encouraged agricultural trades to secure agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, ... etc) for the coming season. Traders complained their low purchasing due to weak financial liquidity. MoA and MoNE will ensure VAT exemption to relevant traders in order to stockpile agricultural inputs.
- MoA in Gaza will distribute fodders and agricultural fertilizers for farmers and poultry (broilers) breeders with total value of \$1 m.
- MoSD with WFP and some FSS partners and Cash Working Group (CWG) conducted rapid survey to monitor local market in terms of availability of food items (and others) and identify gaps and needs. It was recommended to coordinate efforts and continue market monitor and put mechanisms to ensure stability of goods and prices.

Summary of activities implemented by FSS partners:

Objective	FSS Partner	Activity	Beneficiary/recipient	Geographical area
Support non-refugee households whose food insecurity is directly affected by the virus outbreak with in-kind and cash assistance, including e-vouchers.	Caritas – Jerusalem	distributed food parcels for poor families	541 HH	Jenin, Ramallah, Bethlehem
Support persons in quarantine centers with hot meals, fresh food, and drinking water	Oxfam	Provision of hot meals to persons in quarantine centers	280 persons	North Gaza
Support persons in quarantine centers with fresh fruits	BLDA	Provision of 7 varieties of fresh fruits to persons in quarantine centers	80 persons	North Gaza
Support poor households whose food insecurity is directly affected by the virus outbreak with in-kind assistance	Al-Nakheel	distributed food parcels for poor families	35 HH	Khan Yunis – Al-Satar area
Continuation of emergency in-kind food distribution using a door-to-door modality to ensure the health and safety of Palestine refugees	UNRWA	Distribution of in-kind food parcels to beneficiaries by delivery service from UNRWA distribution centers to Palestine refugee homes to ensure zero crowds and adhering to health recommended precautionary measures	32k HH (43% of the targeted population in this distribution rond)	North, Middle, South and Gaza city
Vulnerable households have access to food		Distribution of food baskets carried out by various organisations, privates, local councils, NGOs	N/A	West Bank