



FSS COVID-19 Crisis Sitrep-08 10th May 2020

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



1. Concerns, Priority Needs, and Gaps update

West Bank and Gaza Strip

- Fear of contagion, movement restrictions, input price increases and demand uncertainty continued affecting **production decisions**. This affects all agriculture producers: farmers, herder, breeders, fishers. In the absence of a sustainable availability of fertilizers and pesticides, some farmers opted for planting perennials instead of vegetables.
- **Agri-food value chain still affected by major constraints** mainly due to reduced market access and closures, decreased demand, requests for cash-up-front payments and limited credit availability, with few favourable exceptions for exports.
- **Cash only based payments** started to have repercussions on the availability of liquidity for input suppliers that in the case of fodder, for example, in the absence of bulk purchases do not manage to cover transportation costs.
- **Bedouins communities**, whose livelihood highly depends on livestock activities, are reporting worsening of their food security status. Even those communities who are benefiting from existing food assistance support, are facing an unprecedented challenge in terms of fodder provision for their livestock, mainly due to price volatility and request of up-front cash payment requests. Lacking fodder in the face of the grazing season coming to an end, some herders initiated feeding livestock vegetable production by-products that is an unfavourable coping strategy for animal fattening.
- The number of aid applications submitted to the Ministry of Social Development by **people who felt under poverty status**, and who have lost their jobs due to the impact of COVID-19 is still growing. The MoSD is now in the process of scrutinizing, reviewing, and examining applications. It is expected that approximately 20% of the applicants may come from the agri-food sector.

WFP administered a survey to food shops to assess the impact from the current crisis:

Shop monitoring

- Most of interviewed shops reported that currently the volume of sale has reduced compared to the period before the COVID 19 crisis in both West Bank and Gaza Strip, this is due to the number of currently customers has decreased.
- In both West Bank and Gaza Strip, the half of interviewed shops reported that the number of customers who asking for credit increased during the emergency situation.
- More than half on interviewed shops reported that the price of these commodities; cereal, pluses, vegetable oil, sugar, dairy products, eggs and cleaning material has not changed during the emergency period.

Challenges:

- In Gaza Strip, the interviewed owners' shops reported that the main challenges that the shop will face if the current emergency situation continue are closure of crossing board, commodities stock will decrease, volume of sales will decrease, reduction in liquidity.
- In West Bank, the challenges that the shops will face if the current emergency situation continue are reduction of liquidity, volume of sales will decrease and increment in the number of customers whose asking for credit.
- The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics continues to work on data collection and production of Palestinian Industrial Production Index in light of COVID-19 (CORONA VIRUS) pandemic

West Bank

- The agriculture sector still facing a **difficulty in marketing** its products, mainly due to movement restriction. Price of some vegetable and fruits have been reduced. One of the products that farmers used to sell with less input cost comparing with other products, is cherries. In the north of West bank, mainly in Jenin, the figures indicate that annually farmers produce about 1,000 tons of cherries, of which about 150-200 tons are exported to Israel and the rest to Jordan, which is not possible now. The price of cherries last year reached 18-20 ILS/kg, compared to 6-7 ILS per kg now. It is expected that the losses will be more than 2 million ILS.
- In the two months since the occupied Palestinian territory went under a Covid-19 lockdown, it is noticed that a sharp increase in the number of **settler attacks** on Palestinians and their properties in the West Bank. The attacks have increased despite the movement restrictions, lockdowns and social distancing. The attacks have been physical, involved the torching of Palestinian cars, theft of livestock and destruction of trees.
According to PUI, farmers reported increased movements restrictions by Israeli army and settlers, and issues in accessing their lands after the outbreak. PUI also reports that the difficult financial situation results into beneficiaries having difficulties undertaking land rehabilitation activities.

- **Sharp Decrease in the Industrial Production Index (IPI)** in Palestine during March 2020. The overall IPI in Palestine reached 86.32 during March 2020 with a sharp decrease of 24.60% compared to February 2020 (Base Year 2018 = 100). IPI for March 2020 sharply decreased due to the decrease in the activities of Mining and Quarrying by 28.77% which had a share of 2.68% of the total industry, the activities of Manufacturing Industry by 28.62% which had a share of 82.98% of the total industry, and the activities of Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply by 0.79% which had a share of 11.95% of the total industry, while the activities of Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation increased by 0.53% which had a share of 2.39% of the total industry.

Gaza Strip

- PA MoSD staff stopped working from the premises of the ministry, due to issues between PA and DFA MoSD senior management. This puts at risk the humanitarian response under the current situation of CO-19 pandemic, specifically with regard to addressing, in a unified and coordinated manner, essential needs identified by different sources.



2. Response Strategy and Challenges Update

West Bank and Gaza Strip

- The governmental solidarity fund secured some \$17m to support the most affected households due to COVID-19 pandemic in West Bank and Gaza Strip. Around 8,000 affected households will benefit from cash assistance support during the coming few weeks. This monetary fund was announced by the prime minister and meant to be donated through private sector in Palestine.

West Bank

- Based on MoA request, MA'AN is in the process of amending some of activities under their new project funded by GAC, to address the new needs due to COVID-19 outbreak. The revision would include new activities and/or location where the needs recently emerged.
- As part of the Response Plan to COVID-19, to reduce the impact on the food security of most vulnerable households, UNRWA Area Staff contacted more than 136 beneficiary families by phone to provide instructions regarding the collection of their



food baskets and on disease-preventive measures. The staff has prepared the list of beneficiaries for a second round of food baskets distribution and to start food assistance through e-vouchers.

- Quick and safe cash-based interventions is confirmed to be a successful approach, as reported by PUI and their partners UAWC. This approach also brings reduction of paper transactions in favour of electronic ones, including for the tendering process.

Gaza Strip

- In response to the needs of 'new poor' daily-waged workers, those who lost their source of income due to COVID-19 safety measures and temporary closures of some facilities, ICRC is going to provide multipurpose cash assistance to 1,700 workers for three months. Each beneficiary will receive an amount of 350 NIS for three rounds.
- MoA continued its support distribution of fodders to broilers breeders in Gaza Strip. Some 1,080 breeders all over the Gaza governorates received 2 tons of fodders with a total value of ~\$400k. This assistance comes as part of the DFA assistance to agriculture sector as a response to COVID-19 pandemic. During the coming few weeks, the MoA will start the second phase of the governmental assistance by distributing agricultural inputs into vegetables' farmers. This type of support will serve farmers to enable them start the coming cycle in August.