

**Nepal - Food Security Cluster (FSC) Meeting**  
**Note for the Record**  
**10 April 2020**

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**Chaired by:** Dr. Hari Bahadur KC and Shabnam Shivakoti, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) - FSC lead

**Participants:** FSC co-leads: WFP and FAO and FSC Partners

**Key decisions/action points:**

1. Before the detail assessment results are available, food assistance related immediate relief support can be provided by FSC partners in coordination with the Local Governments following the one-door system of relief/response management at local-level.
2. The joint assessment on impact of COVID-19 in food security, livelihood and agriculture to be coordinated and facilitated in overall by MoALD whereas WFP and FAO to technically lead and carry out the assessment. The concept note and questionnaire of assessments to be shared with cluster partners for feedback and INGOs can also take part in assessment through WFP/FAO.
3. The questionnaire of WFP's planned nation-wide household food security survey (mVAM) to be shared with cluster partners for quick round of feedback, so the results will meet the need of FSC partners for response planning.
4. Repurposing/reorientation of existing and upcoming programme can be done in response to COVID-19. FSC partners can develop new food security, livelihood and agriculture recovery project/programmes to support the farmers, agribusiness entrepreneurs and poor/unemployed impacted by COVID-19. MoALD will also finalize the proposed agriculture and food security related immediate, medium- and long-term interventions and relief package to be provided to the farmers/agribusiness entrepreneurs together with development partners.
5. The modality of food assistance/relief support (in-kind or cash) should be agreed with the local governments. The cash for work should be focused on agricultural production i.e. fruits plantation and other productive activities and development of productive community assets.
6. Since the FSC COVID-19 PRP has included the immediate and recovery related food security interventions to respond the immediate food need, cases related food need and the secondary effects/consequences related food security need, partners planned food security interventions are covered through the ERP.

**Summary of the discussions and conclusion by agenda item:**

**Agenda 1: Sharing of updates on COVID-19 impact on food security, livelihood, agriculture sector and ongoing response from MoALD and cluster partners**

**Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD)**

- COVID-19 and the situation (lockdown) has badly impacted agriculture sector and food security of the country.
- During this lockdown period, regular agricultural operations has been impacted and MOALD is requested all the local level for the facilitation of the regular agricultural activities.
- MoALD taking information from various sources and trying to facilitate food supplies, agricultural production and its supplies, trade of the commodities etc. However, lot of problem being faced for collection of the information due to lockdown.

- As per the preliminary general assessment, poultry is highly affected sector followed by dairy products (milk) and vegetables among the other produced in the sector. Also, distribution of feeds and fertilizer has been disturbed.
- Food supplies in urban area is sufficient. But the daily wage labour and urban poor (most affected ones) are unable to access the food commodities due to lack of work/income. There are problems in stock and supply of food commodities in rural areas.
- MoALD is facilitating, marketing, and transportation of produce and production of the crops (Dairy products and vegetables) and assessing remotely on effects.
- MoALD has also prepared a matrix showing the action to be taken in the coming days and engagement of the development partners.
- For immediate relief, Government of Nepal has authorized the local level to coordinate process of the relief to needy people. It is currently on-going with support of different private sectors, I/NGOs, etc. referring to the guideline and adhering one-door policy.
- MoALD expects support from the development partners to deal and cope with the situation.
- After lockdown is over, there is a need of a field level assessment to identify actual effect and the need of the support.
- The returnee from India might not be able to go back and continue their work in future. Therefore, all partners need to plan keep them in consideration also.

#### **Food Management and Trading Company (FMTC) Limited**

- Stock of food across the country is sufficient. Dispatching required quantity as per demand through cooperatives and dealers.
- Total 35 outlets across the country and 5 depots in Kathmandu are being operated.
- Started online sells delivery within Ring Road of Kathmandu.
- Planning for additional purchase of 10,000 MT rice.

#### **Agenda 2: Sharing 3W (who is doing what and where) information collected from cluster partners in terms of ongoing/planned food security response**

- Collected information from the cluster partners in terms of existing and/or plan presence in the response to COVID-19.
- Sixteen I/NGOs have existing and/or planned presence in 50 districts. WFP doesn't have any geographic preference, however, can prioritize based on the level of food insecurity and needs.
- All agencies have planned for their assistance in three modalities: Unconditional in-kind food assistance to the affected people; unconditional cash as food assistance for targeted people; & conditional CBT in the form of Cash for Work for the restoration and recovery of livelihood and food security for the vulnerable families who are adversely affected by COVID-19's economic impact.

#### **Agenda 3: Sharing on key findings/highlights of WFP-conducted food security and market situation monitoring**

- Immediate food security threat and future due to COVID crisis. Tentative assessed on pre-mature returning migrants, loss of income/job working in informal sectors, and the agricultural sectors.
- Market disruptions: Current supply is adequate for at least next 2 to 3 months.
- There has been sharp increase in vegetables, above more than 100% in some areas though there are instances where the food is going bad as it has been unable to reach the market.
- Identification of the vulnerable households: Governments in provincial and local level (43%) have reported 832,000 households. These numbers are expected to increase.

- There are also risks: Further slide in the NPR compared to USD, production of food and demand of the labour in India, recovery of the key sectors i.e. tourism, manufacturing, etc., and winter crop harvest.
- WFP is producing weekly report which are just basic updates based on the data received from the field. Weekly market monitoring report will be published starting next week for 40 districts. Preparing for nationally sampled households survey which will enable to understand how and amongst which household there is food insecurity. Working on the questions for targeting i.e. looking at criteria from the monitoring to apply that to existing or future government estimation of food insecurity/vulnerability and understand if more precise targeting can be done.

**Agenda 4: Discuss and agree on the assessment/monitoring on impact of COVID-19 in the livelihoods, food security, agriculture sector and market from food security cluster,**

**WFP:**

- Food Security Monitoring, Market monitoring (currently on weekly basis), nationally sampled households surveys (on three months interval), market functionality analysis, Joint Assessment being planned by MoALD, WFP, and FAO and other planned assessments.
- Households survey questionnaire and the concept note on joint assessment will be forward to the cluster partners for feedback.

**FAO:**

- Share a concept note on joint assessments and move forward.

**Livelihood Working Group/AIN:**

- Mapping plans through individual organizations in terms of assessment.
- Interested to facilitate the process for border assessment.

**MoALD:**

- Immediate relief is to be considered. Cannot wait for detail assessment and planning.
- Sharing of the available information in the cluster so as to support the further assessment.
- Agencies to have flexibility to re-orientation for the programme.
- The local level government will be acting as focal point to manage the activities of COVID-19 crisis.
- The government is trying to recover the SMEs and preparing a package to ensure engagement of the returnees labour in the agricultural section. All the agencies can contribute in jointly implementing possible activities.
- Agricultural technology delivery system has been disturbed, therefore, working remotely. This will hamper the production in coming days.
- Assessments will be facilitated by the government, however, WFP and FAO till technically lead and carry out the assessment and other cluster partners/development partners can also support in the assessment process.

**Agenda 5: Discuss and tentatively plan for food security/food assistance response from the cluster partners for vulnerable population (daily wage workers, poor, food insecure, unemployed, returnee migrants, etc.) who are adversely impacted by COVID-19 issue, during and/or after the lock-down and containment period**

- Through 3W reporting three broader activities have been mapped out.

- Two aspects in COVID-19 response plan and intervention: 1) The infected and collaterally affected cases based scenario and potential food assistance for those affected population; and 2) livelihood and food security plan in case of adverse economic impact which is related to the response to the consequences of COVID-19.
- CRS is in communication with municipalities i.e. Arughat and Bhimsen of Gorkha and Tansen, Ridhikot and Bagnaskali of Palpa. Provided IEC materials to spread awareness on COVID-19. Currently looking at ways to support in terms of cash and their food security needs. Also discussing with Cash Working Group to identify the acceptable cash transferable amount.
- Save the Children: Looking at the impact of the COVID-19 in Karnali area, large number of migrants are entering Nepal. Around 80% of households are food insecure. All the returnees came back without any money and lost their job. SC is planning for cash support in close coordination with the local level government.
- IMS: Communicating with donor for the possibilities to re-orient the programme fund. Also approaching with donor for other funds. There are networks and partners in different districts with which government, FAO and WFP can be supported for the vulnerability assessments.
- In order to meet the additional unforeseen food assistance needs which are emerging as a result of COVID and its impact on vulnerable people, WFP plans unconditional cash-based transfer as food assistance for targeted population and conditional cash-based transfer for restoration/recovery of livelihood and food security for vulnerable families adversely impacted by COVID-19 socio-economic implications, based on the food security and market monitoring/assessment findings.
- The FSC – COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (PRP) has 2 aspects of planning assumptions and planned response: (i) infected and collaterally affected cases-based scenarios and potential food assistance response (1500 and 7000 confirmed cases), this is now being covered by government-announced immediate relief programme, (ii) Livelihood/food security recovery plan in case of adverse economic impact: the planned activities included in the PRP are relevant to respond the consequences of COVID-19 (detail livelihood and agricultural damage/loss and need assessment, design appropriate recovery programmes based on the result of the assessment, design and implement the livelihoods/food security recovery and employment generating programmes, rehabilitation/reconstruction of agriculture infrastructures facilities such as storage, processing, marketing, and other community infrastructures/assets through cash for assets modality in the worst affected/food insecure areas and ensure the provision of quality seeds, agriculture tools, inputs and extension services for the most affected farmers including technical support for livestock management).

#### **AOB/ Additional information sharing**

- CARE Nepal in coordination with Palikas, Dhangadhi Mai/Siraha and Gaighat/Udaypur has started to support 135 Mushahar HHs, most vulnerable communities of those Palikas for their immediate food assistance.
- Oxfam is also working in province 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of some districts and we want to share our plan and further development in next meeting.
- Save the Children wants to be part of the assessment. Save the Children has a good report from HEA in Jajarkot. It can be shared with the cluster, if required.

## Summary of additional questions and answers:

Questions	Response/Discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where can INGOs support the most based on the current gaps?</li> <li>• What is the MoALD's understanding of the dangers to winter crop harvest (wheat, barley, etc.)?</li> <li>• What is GoN's plan to support small entrepreneurs to revive their business?</li> <li>• For those who are very poor and are food insecure especially from Karnali zone, Now they are back in their home from India losing their job/wages, what is your plan to support them?</li> <li>• There are some globally tested tools to do market assessments. Can Nepal use them in our situation?</li> <li>• If the COVID-19 situation goes worst, there is need to import food. What is the government's policy on GMO food?</li> <li>• While assessing the situation, there are large number of labourers, what is the status of those people and what is the plan to support them?</li> <li>• Is there any consideration taken on women and inclusion issues on food security assessment?</li> <li>• I want to know on the support need from INGOs and plan for assessment?</li> <li>• For the assessment at least we should be looking at key sectors in the economy that may be impacted by COVID 19, in particular food systems and other sectors where the extremely poor groups gain employment, I would like to suggest to have a team for the assessment led by the clusters?</li> <li>• I understand municipalities are mapping vulnerable households (to food insecurity) in their constituency, is there a common framework across the country with specific criteria to identify those?</li> <li>• I met some producer in Nawalparasi. They are worry that product ( perishable mostly) produced for distant market supply is being spoiling in field due to lack of transportation means. What is government's plan to support such farmer to solve tier problem?</li> <li>• What is ministry's plan to sustain food supplies to the country since the COVID-19 crisis in India may go up, and India may extend lock down for longer period.</li> <li>• Standard shared by government is vague and not practical for implementation. It should be specific and concise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MoALD would like to understand what the development partners are doing and planned in the assessment of food security and vulnerability.</li> <li>• Government has already facilitated agricultural operations. Agricultural work can continue following health protocol. Movement of the machineries are also not restricted. There will not be loss in winter crop harvest.</li> <li>• Currently the government is only facilitating marketing of the produce, operations of agriculture, and transportation. The demand is highly reduce in urban areas as people moved to their home. The government is working out on package for SMEs, which could be a soft loan, start up grant, equipment/input facilitation, etc. for the immediate recovery. Partners have also been requested for support.</li> <li>• Currently government is not accepting GMO food.</li> <li>• Government just has a general overview of the situation. Detailed assessment is required to understand the actual situation.</li> <li>• The government has not differentiated currently based on gender, ability, etc. The relief has been targeted to the most vulnerable people.</li> <li>• Central government is not directly involved in relief distribution. The local level is fully responsible.</li> <li>• Government has issued a standard for the relief package distribution which also includes detail procedure and 11 categories of the vulnerability.</li> <li>• FAO together with WFP, MoALD and I/NGOs in same sector are planning for a quick assessment from next week onwards. Later a detailed assessment will be planned.</li> <li>• The cash modality of response and recovery can be implemented in coordination with respective local-governments and depending on the local context to promote the local market. MoALD promotes cash for work for fruits plantation and other food production related activities.</li> <li>• Access to the assessment reports: <a href="http://www.neksap.org.np">www.neksap.org.np</a></li> <li>• It is difficult to do the national households targeting without specific data. WFP's households survey is expected to enable to see what the impact is and be able to plan intervention.</li> </ul>

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Response/Discussion</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HI has recently conducted a rapid assessment in 12 districts, we found around 40% of persons with disabilities and their families are in shortage of food stock (less than a week). So any specific plan of GON to address such specific needs of the most vulnerable groups?</li><li>• In terms of vulnerability, through a telephonic survey, identified 40% of the vulnerable families have food stock for less than one week.</li><li>• Where can we access these reports like market monitoring, HH survey , etc.?</li></ul>	

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