Food Security Situation in Syria

The level of food insecurity in Syria has progressively deteriorated since the start of the conflict. Based on WFP’s ongoing monitoring, food prices have been steadily rising across the country. Inflation has been increasing and there has been significant currency depreciation of the Syrian Pound, while salary levels have remained stagnant. These are all factors that have further aggravated an already weak purchasing power of the most vulnerable people, who find it increasingly difficult to meet their basic food needs.

The food security situation in Syria has progressively deteriorated since the start of the conflict. Food production hit a record low in 2016, according to the latest Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission conducted by WFP and FAO. The wheat harvest is estimated at 1.5 million tonnes, about 55 percent lower than the pre-conflict average.

The livestock sector, once a key sector in Syria’s domestic economy, has suffered drastically since 2011 with reductions in herd and flock numbers of over 30 percent for cattle and over 40 percent for sheep and goats, while poultry, traditionally a source of affordable protein, has shrunk by 60 percent.

Recent surveys have shown that almost 85 percent of households across the country are living in poverty; struggling to cope with a lack of food or money to buy food, particularly in areas where income generating opportunities are extremely limited and markets are disrupted. Available data suggests that as of December 2016, nine million people are in need of food, agriculture and livelihoods assistance. Of these, some seven million people are food insecure. An additional two million are enacting negative coping strategies, which put them at risk of food insecurity, and require targeted interventions to protect their livelihoods and strengthen resilience to withstand further shocks.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Since October 2011, WFP has provided emergency food assistance to vulnerable Syrians affected by the conflict. The prolonged nature of the crisis necessitates a constant and large humanitarian response, and WFP currently targets four million beneficiaries on a monthly basis, who receive a food
red split lentils, whole lentils, white beans, olive oil, salt, and sugar providing each beneficiary with approximately 1,700 kcal per day. Each ration is for a family of five. Currently, WFP is assisting beneficiaries in all 14 Syrian governorates in cooperation with 54 cooperating partners, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), 14 international NGOs and 38 national partners. The beneficiaries are able to collect their food rations from more than 900 distribution points.

**Immediate Food Assistance for Newly Displaced People**

In response to sudden population displacements, WFP and its partners also distribute ready-to-eat rations for newly displaced households that do not have access to other sources of food or cooking facilities during the initial days of their displacement, after which they are transitioned to WFP’s General Food Assistance programme.

The ready-to-eat ration meets the needs of a family of five members for a period of five days when complemented with bread; it provides beneficiaries with approximately 2,100 kcal per day and consists of: canned fava beans, canned humus, canned vegetables, canned chicken, olive oil, canned tuna, juice, and dry thyme.

**WFP’s Flexible Delivery Modalities**

WFP strives to reach people in need wherever they are through the most efficient delivery modality. Each month, a fleet of more than 4,200 trucks transport food assistance across the country.

Deliveries via land remain the preferred option as trucks can carry greater quantities and are more cost efficient. However, in areas where land access is currently not possible, WFP may choose to deliver via air where operationally and logistically feasible.

WFP is currently providing assistance to an estimated 93,500 people in the besieged parts of Deir Ezzor city in eastern Syria, inaccessible via land since March 2014, through high-altitude airdrops operated from Jordan and in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).

In addition, the WFP-led Logistics Cluster is currently conducting humanitarian airlifts to Qamishly, in Al-Hasakeh governorate, where land deliveries have been suspended since the end of December 2015 as border crossing points are currently not passable. The airlifts enable WFP to provide food assistance for 192,500 vulnerable beneficiaries every month in urban and rural areas in Al-Hasakeh governorate, including thousands of Iraqi refugees. Moreover, WFP and other humanitarian actors have been able to pre-position supplies for a possible refugee or IDP influx.

**Bread Production Project**

Bread is a key staple in the Syrian diet, and therefore WFP includes fortified wheat flour in the monthly food basket. In cooperation with partners, WFP has been operating a bread production project in Aleppo since October 2013 for the most vulnerable families. In 2017, WFP scaled up its bread production to reach about 515,000 people in western Aleppo city, parts of southeast rural Aleppo as well as the formerly inaccessible parts of eastern Aleppo city.

Furthermore, the bread production project has enhanced access to bread and at the same time created job opportunities for more than 150 people at locally contracted bakeries in Aleppo city. As of mid-2017, bread produced under WFP’s bread project accounted for 30 percent of the total quantities produced in Aleppo city.