

## Minutes of Meeting | Food and Nutrition Security Sector Committee

### 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2020

The meeting was called to discuss the food and nutrition-specific preparedness and response to COVID-19 on 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 via Zoom. List of participants, and the agenda of the meeting are attached in the Annex 1 and 2. The agenda wise key discussions, decisions and action points are as below:

#### Key Issues:

- a) Members agreed upon the need of an assessment tool to identify vulnerable population and hunger hotspots across India. Maintained in a time-sensitive manner, this database/matrix will provide live update on the need for and provision of food and nutrition on-ground, following which, members of the civil society can respond immediately or urge the government to act accordingly. The tool shall also prove to be a platform for knowledge-sharing, wherein members can highlight the challenges faced and the good practices followed.  
It was discussed that the tool could be shared with all Sphere India members on the lines of the URS matrix, and the tool may involve a GIS-tracking platform, providing focal contact at district and state level. Further suggestions are welcome.
- b) Members agreed that the extension of lockdown by three weeks, although welcome, puts the food supply chain under tremendous strain, and therefore swift action needs to be taken by civil society to fill in the gaps.
- c) Members have noted that district administration authorities have welcomed the participation of CSOs, heeding to their information about hunger hotspots, although they sometimes face issues in obtaining the passes required to undertake food distribution.
- d) It was to be noted that the population dependent on non-timber forest produce has been under increasing stress due to the lockdown since they are not allowed to enter forests – depriving them of their source of income which has led to acute hunger.
- e) Similarly, livestock management is another area of concern with cattle starting to show signs of diseases such as mouth and feed disease due to neglect.
- f) The good practices that were shared includes SHGs in Kashmir opening their kitty to village members for loans at low interest to sustain themselves during the lockdown, while farmers were also observed as sending their produce to the houses of needy.
- g) It was noted that caste plays a major detrimental factor, especially with regards to food distribution – either distributing members prefer to distribute among their caste-group, or sometimes other caste members do not accept food being distributed by members of a different caste.
- h) The concern regarding provision of PPE kits to AWWs was highlighted.
- i) The issue of maltreatment of animals as a result of misinformation relating to animals being carriers of COVID-19

#### Key Discussions:

- a) Dr. Sujeet (CFNS) shared that members of the Coalition are providing food in Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh. The Coalition has also formed a group under Ms. Sonali Pattnaik, connecting member organizations with donor agencies. Coalition has prioritized doorstep delivery of food and suggested that AWWs provide doorstep delivery of ration every 15 days and same has been shared by GoI. The coalition also held a meeting of 17 organizations working in Jharkhand on 14<sup>th</sup> of April to understand the gaps and advise government on their response.
- b) Anthony (IGSSS) shared that they are active in the 12 urban centres of Delhi, Raipur, Bhopal, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Jamshedpur, Vizag, Cuttack, Patna, Muzaffarpur, and Prayagraj while they are active in rural areas elsewhere. IGSSS has created whatsapp groups at district level to get live updates on needs, and is currently working with NGO Partner in Guwahati, Assam. Along with that, the approach of the organization has been to target the most vulnerable, and therefore, they are working

along with their NGO Partners with the homeless population, the transgender population in Chennai and with sex workers in Kolkata.

- c) Harish (WVI) shared that 40,000 families in different parts of India, especially in rural areas are being provided dry ration, with 2,500 families in Tonk district, Rajasthan being the beneficiaries. 1200 community health workers have been trained in COVID-19 response, while 2,78,000 individuals have been reached out through awareness campaigns. WVI has also provided 710 hygiene kits, cash transfer to 65 families, 7000 masks to frontline workers.
- d) Shatarupa (CARE) shared that the organization has been exclusively focusing on rural areas, especially where their programmes are ongoing, including in Bihar where 1400+ of their employees are providing PPE kits. They are also focusing on getting SHGs to produce protective face masks, while they are providing dry ration, sanitizing villages and village wells, and providing seasonal seeds to farmers for the upcoming sowing season.
- e) Abner (UNICEF) shared that UNICEF is primarily focusing on supporting government efforts in getting their supply chain and delivery of services back on track. He highlighted that as a phase-wise removal of lockdown is anticipated, organizations should focus on the issue of AWWs and their role in delivering the packages of essential nutrition services.
- f) Prashant (EFICOR) highlighted their novel method of partnering with Reliance stores in 5-6 locations, wherein beneficiaries are given food vouchers on their phones which could be exchanged for food items at a designated mall in the neighbourhood. He also highlighted that with UNICEF, EFICOR is supporting 14000 families in Jharkhand and Odisha – with NFI, hygiene kits and cash transfer being adopted in Odisha. In terms of urban areas, EFICOR is active in Delhi.
- g) Hansen (World Animal Protection) shared the joint efforts taken with their volunteer networks in Delhi, wherein food is sourced for community animals. He also shared the Do's and Don'ts being created for care of animals during COVID-19, along with a checklist of necessary items required for animal care during times of disasters. He shared that they have a UN-accredited course for veterinary professionals during the case of disasters, while the organization itself is active within 6 regions of the country.
- h) Sanjay (ACF) shared that the organization have presence in both urban & rural areas of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan. Organisation is active in food distribution in Mumbai slums, while they are also active in the tribal regions of Rajasthan, MP and Maharashtra. They are distributing hygiene kits & PPE kits to police and health personnel, handing over the material to State & district governments and cooperating closely with them. They are also designing interventions to work on PRI level, especially the sarpanch in food distribution. Collaboration with media to highlight good practices is also being undertaken.
- i) Pradnya (WFP) shared the WFP is liaising with the Empowered Group of NITI Aayog to flag the issues on ground and facilitate ground level action. Also, WFP has developed guidance note on field-level food distribution and developing some visual aids for hygiene and food safety. WFP will be happy to share the same for use through the network for on-ground implementation.

#### **Key Decisions and Action Points:**

- a) Hansen (World Animal Protection) to share link to the course for veterinary doctors regarding humanitarian emergencies  
(Completed: <https://animalsindisasters.org/prepvet>)
- b) Pradnya (WFP) to disseminate among the group the guideline for distribution of food during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency
- c) Members to provide their inputs on the assessment tool for information exchange (attached in the mail alongwith) by EoD 17<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020.

### Annexure I: List of Participants

Registration for Sector Committee Meeting for Food and Nutrition Security			
Sr. No.	Attendee	Organization	Contact No.
1.	Pradnya Paithankar	WFP	9868186749
2.	Pranay Sinha	WFP	8789529566
3.	Prashant	EFICOR	9955378347
4.	Sujeet	CFNS	9934013273
5.	Anthony	IGSSS	8116493204
6.	Hansen T Prem	World Animal Protection	9810169117
7.	Sanjay Kumar	ACF	9012240001
8.	Harish	World Vision India	8130866331
9.	Shashank Bhibhu	CARE India	8860749910
10.	Shatarupa	CARE India	9971981206
11.	Abner Daniel	UNICEF	9424201190
12.	Paritosh	Sphere India	9637070738

### Annex 2      Agenda of the Meeting: Food and Nutrition Security

- 1) Discuss programming and civil society-led food and nutrition-based interventions. (PFA the summarized version of Food sector advocacy points. Kindly refrain from sharing, as the entire advocacy note is yet to be disseminated)
- 2) Review and provide inputs on needs and response assessment tool; kindly request members to keep the information mentioned in the tool available. (The draft tool is attached herewith)
- 3) Gaps and interventions in COVID-19 response and strategy to address the same.
- 4) AOB