

Slide 1: Introduction

- Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen
- Nowadays, the MENA region is the most challenging region in the world in terms of addressing the complex and multifaceted elements of food insecurity.
- RBC remains to be a conflict-torn region with tensions and ongoing fighting in several countries. We are witnessing the rising tensions and conflicts in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Ukraine. And just recently, fighting has picked up again in Sudan.

Slide 2: The RBC Region

- Today, as a result of conflicts, around 9.3 million people are internally displaced in Syria and Iraq alone, representing more than 90 percent of displacements across the region.
- In MENA, the principal driver of vulnerability to food insecurity is the continuation of the fighting causing loss of lives in addition to displacement and heavy damage to critical infrastructure.
- The food security situation in the MENA remains unpredictable and seems to worsen, and until political solutions are found, all the pressure will be put on the humanitarians to find solutions.
- In addition to conflicts as a crucial defining factor in influencing food security in the region, trends such as socio-economic conditions, high dependency on food imports, overpopulation, increased urbanization, resource scarcity, high environmental degradation and climatic shocks are also contributory factors to food insecurity.
- On the other hand, the CIS countries are having to contend with the effects of the regional economic slowdown with some countries having a near-to-zero growth prospect and a serious fall in remittances which are a key contributor to livelihoods.

Slide 3: WFP Response in the RBC Region

- In response to the increasing humanitarian needs, WFP RBC portfolio today aims to support 24.1 million people, which represents 400 percent increase as compared to 2011 and prior to the Arab Spring.
- The RBC region has to address the wide range of needs across the region, we have two L3s (*Syria* and *Iraq*) and three L2s (*Yemen*, *Libya* and *Ukraine*). In addition to the large scale emergencies, RBC had to address the limited sudden emergencies such as the flood in *Albania*.
- **Despite operational and financial challenges, WFP continues to scale up while refining targeting and prioritization of the programmes.**

Slide 4: WFP Response in the RBC Region (cont)

- RBC very much appreciates the support of all our donors and member states. Unfortunately funding presents serious concerns for many operations in our region. At the moment, our RBC portfolio is facing a shortfall of 74 percent (US\$ 1.44 billion) over the next six months.
- We have countries like Yemen that needs US\$43 million every month to reach its target of feeding some 2.5 million people. Over the next three months, Syria needs US\$ 98 million and the regional operation needs US\$ 170 million and another US\$ 100 million needed for Iraq.

Slide 5: WFP Operational Challenges: Security and Access

- **We have a long list of operational challenges in the MENA region, first and foremost security and access.**
- **The overall deterioration of security and access constraints demands *diverse and flexible operational modalities*.** In many situations, we are forced to operate remotely such as in the case of Libya or in the case of Yemen where we had to temporarily relocate our staff to Jordan.
- **We also engage and lead clusters, create strong partnerships** with cooperating partners and adopt flexible operational modalities such as with the cross border operation in Syria and the rapid response mechanism (RRM) in Iraq with UNICEF and UNFPA.
- **WFP is actively engaged in contingency planning.** In the last couple of months contingency planning exercises were revised for Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Ukraine.
- Given access constraints, ***WFP needs to be ready with contingency stocks*** to provide assistance once access is made available. For instance, in Iraq, WFP contingency planning indicates that 2.7 million additional people are expected to be displaced in the coming year. Securing the necessary contingency stocks to meet their immediate needs is essential.

Slide 6: YEMEN

- ***So what's happening in our region?***
- We are very concerned over the humanitarian situation in **Yemen** which has been rapidly deteriorating in recent weeks due to intense fighting. The conflict has now affected 19 out of 22 governorates resulting in displacement of at least 584,000 people across the country.
- According to WFP's estimates, the number of food insecure people increased by 13 percent from pre-crisis level and is now 12 million people.
- Currently, humanitarian partners are undertaking Humanitarian Needs Overview that will feed into the Revised Humanitarian Response Plan.
- As Yemen imports more than 90 percent of its food requirements, it is critical to allow commercial sector to resume its normal activities. With 3.5 million mt of food being imported annually, humanitarian actors are in no position to fill in this gap.
- Fuel shortages significantly hamper humanitarian activities in Yemen. The de-facto blockade severely limits fuel availability for private sector as well.
- **In response**, WFP has prioritized life-saving interventions within its existing project and launched emergency food distributions for conflict-affected populations. Since the start of its emergency response (15 April) up until now,

WFP provided critical assistance to almost 1.5 million beneficiaries in nine governorates through communities and schools.

- At present WFP aims to assist 2.5 million people monthly with full rations of 2,100 kcal. This response requires US\$ 42.5 million per month. WFP Yemen is looking into a further scale-up.
- During the humanitarian pause (on 12 – 17 May), WFP aimed to reach with emergency assistance the areas that had been previously inaccessible and where the food stocks had been depleted (Aden). As a result, WFP dispatched food for more than 400,000 people with a one month ration.
- Logistics hub was established in Djibouti and is now fully operational. During the humanitarian pause WFP-chartered ships carrying 420,000 liters of fuel arrived in Yemen and three airlifts, including transporting the UN staff, were implemented.
- WFP has partially re-established its international presence in Yemen with two international staff based in Sana'a on a rotational basis. Pending assessments, international presence will also be maintained in Hudaydah and possibly Aden.

Slide 7: IRAQ

- The **situation in Iraq remains tense and unpredictable**: The most recent figures indicate that 5.6 million people are now affected by the crisis. 2.8 million people are displaced, spread across all 18 governorates of Iraq.
- **WFP is responding to a deepening food security crisis**: since the crisis began in January 2014; WFP has reaches an average of 1.5 million Iraqis with food assistance each month, and is working in every governorate.
- In response to the latest wave of displacement from Ramadi, WFP has so far distributed 32,000 Immediate Response Rations (IRRs), enough to support 160,000 people for five days. The ongoing fighting will cause further mass displacements, with vulnerable people likely to congregate in the difficult to access central regions.
- Based on limited resources and responsible programming, WFP altered its distribution strategy in April. WFP is now shifting from blanket coverage of the ready-to-eat food to a strategy targeting the most vulnerable.

Slide 8: SYRIA Response

- **The Conflict is fuelling displacement and increased vulnerabilities:** A disastrous turn in the conflict dynamic - expected to have far reaching consequences - is leading to massive population displacements. The capture of Idleb city and suburbs came at a very high price – hundreds of lives lost and over 100,000 people displaced. The continued ISIS threat and unification of armed extreme groups wreaking havoc in their wake and displacing communities is of grave concern to the international community, while reaching those under siege and in other hard-to-reach areas continues to be a pressing challenge.
- **Scaling up the humanitarian response across borders and conflict lines:** WFP is fully implementing the UNSCRs 2139/2165/2191 and is significantly scaling up deliveries through all accessible means. Using approved borders from Jordan and Turkey, WFP has increased its cross-border deliveries more than six-fold since September 2014. In April, some 612,250 people who would not have been easily reached from within were provided with WFP food assistance from neighbouring countries.
- **Increasing focus on women and children:** With women and children continuing to bear the brunt of this violent conflict, WFP is scaling up efforts to ensure they have sufficient nutritional support. In addition to prioritising food assistance to female-headed households, 24 percent of Households supported are headed by women and 54 percent of all beneficiaries are women. The numbers are expected to increase with more men being lost to the conflict.

- At the regional level, WFP continues with improving targeting and prioritization of support. All countries in the region have completed or are in the process to complete targeting/verification of their current caseloads which will result in the reduction of the number of people supported by 22 percent.

Slide 9: LIBYA and UKRAINE

- WFP continues to provide support to people impacted by the conflicts in **Libya** and **Ukraine**.
- In Libya, according to the 2014 Inter-agency assessment, it was estimated that 400,000 people were displaced. WFP is leading a new IA assessment in Libya to update the needs and the operational plans. Despite serious security challenges and operational restrictions, WFP has managed so far to provide food to 90,000 internally displaced people.
- In Ukraine, the current EMOP provides in-kind food and food vouchers assistance to 188,000 beneficiaries to the most vulnerable internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, host families and individuals trapped in conflict hotspots. Since WFP has initiated operations in Ukraine in November 2014, and despite of all the constrains, it has reached 95,000 individuals. WFP established an operational presence in the eastern region with one area office and is recruiting staff for four field offices.

Slide 10: Supporting Resilience and Longer Term Efforts

- Given the context, WFP aims to support resilience building whenever possible. WFP is working at three interlinked levels:

1) **In contexts where priority must be on lifesaving response activities, WFP is starting more systematic support to livelihoods activities** to prevent the further erosion of livelihoods for affected populations – most notably Syrians.

We are also using Cash based transfers that also support the local economy such as in the case of Jordan and Lebanon. Also in Palestine, WFP has injected more than US\$150 million into the local economy over the last three years.

The gradual shift from relief to recovery will better support resilience outcomes. This will be presented in today's PRRO document submitted for approval by Sudan CD.

2) **In more stable environments**, tailored programmes are being implemented to support communities to address specific shocks such as in Sudan, Egypt, Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan.

3) **At national and regional levels**, WFP supports institutions and systems by establishing multi-hazard early warning systems, monitoring and targeting systems, social protection and safety nets, or supporting national coordination to support resilience and risk management.

Slide 11: Social Protection and Safety Nets: School Feeding

- RBC is also actively working to ensure that *school feeding programmes are framed and leveraged as social protection and safety net interventions* that contribute to stabilizing complex situations.
- We continue to implement our School feeding programme in **Syria** which was launched in August 2014. The programme has significantly scaled-up to reach 111,500 children.
- In **Iraq**, WFP plans to continue providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Education, to refine the locally-sourced school meals programme being piloted in the southern governorate covering some 20,000 children.
- In **Palestine** and **Sudan** WFP is conducting similar interventions contributing to creating an enabling environment for children.
- Nearly all school feeding programmes in RBC incorporate a capacity development component and two of our programmes in **Tunisia** and **Morocco**, focus only on capacity development in support to national programmes enhancement.

Slide 12: Conclusion

- Mr. President, Ladies and gentlemen,
- I live and work in a troubled region. A region that if not supported now by the international community will surely yield waves of ideological Ebola that will have detrimental effect not only on the people who live in the region but also on the rest of the world.
- We have no option but to meet the needs of the people in distress and close the door in the face of immorality and pure evilness as it tries to spread venom through opportunistic pro poor agendas.
- Without bias, discrimination or hidden agendas we must meet the needs of women and children trapped in conflicts, we must support education programmes and ensure that we introduce the needed recovery and resilience Programme to slam the doors on the face of terrorists.