

**Executive Board**  
**June 2014**  
**Statement of the OMC Regional Director**

### **Introduction/Trends**

- **Madam President, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**
- **OMC region today is probably one of the most challenging regions in terms of political dynamics, social vulnerabilities, environmental hazards and food insecurity. There is a very high degree of vulnerability with intersecting natural and man-made hazards and risk drivers, including resource scarcity and climate hazards, rapidly changing demographics.**
- **Weakened capacity of social protection systems to address inequality and social tension often stemming from longstanding socio-economic issues has eroded people's livelihoods and coping strategies.**
- **This is also the region of the protracted humanitarian challenges in Syria and bordering countries, Sudan, Yemen and other conflict-affected areas such as Al-Anbar in Iraq, and Palestine. Just over the last months, we have witnessed a worrying escalation of tensions in Ukraine, the renewed conflict in Libya, drought in Syria and the floods in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.**

### **Emergency Response**

- **In terms of natural disasters and responding to emerging needs...**
  - As the ED mentioned earlier, WFP was the first UN agency to deliver support in response to catastrophic floods in *Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia* that has affected a total of 1.5 million people. Within 36 hours of receiving request for assistance, OMC launched two IR-EMOPs<sup>1</sup> which allowed us to provide life-saving assistance in the form of High Energy Biscuits and critically needed life-saving NFIs<sup>2</sup> to the most vulnerable and affected people.

Fortunately the disaster phase is over. WFP is finalizing its engagement with needs and logistics assessments that will support follow up action by the national institutions. Further to our immediate response, we received a

---

<sup>1</sup> [US\$ 1.5 million for Serbia and US\$986,000 for Bosnia]- provided support to 7,000 people in Serbia and 150,000 through HEBs

<sup>2</sup> WFP provided 60 water tanks, 24 generators, 3 water purification systems and 10 boats that were dispatched within 36 hours from the initial request. The items were sent from the UN Humanitarian Relief Depot (UNHRD) in Brindisi, Italy, from stocks belonging to WFP and the governments of Italy and Norway. This was the first UN assistance to arrive in the country. A second consignment of 750kg of HEBs arrived in Belgrade from UNHRD Dubai on 26 May.

request from the Government of Bosnia-Herzegovina for assistance with capacity development interventions in the area of humanitarian logistics.

- Another request was received from the Government of Serbia in strengthening their safety nets through temporary expansion of cash/voucher in support to affected and vulnerable people<sup>3</sup>. This initiative would be part of a coordinated UN intervention facilitated by the UN RC and is to be funded by the EU.
- **Let me move to some of the critical operations underway in OMC. Operating in an extremely challenging environment of deteriorating security and access constraints, WFP is committed to provide humanitarian support to ongoing emergencies in Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Al-Anbar in Iraq and other conflict-affected areas.**
- In ***Syria***, WFP is presently seeking to support 4.25 million people inside Syria each month. Having reached a record of 4.1 million people in March, the number of recipients declined to 3.3 million in May – a consequence of conflict-related access constraints, and the introduction last month of new administrative regulations imposed on movement of humanitarian supplies.
- WFP recognizes the need to reach more vulnerable people in areas that can be difficult to access throughout the country and is stepping up operational coordination with humanitarian actors providing food assistance from neighboring countries.
- As per the November 2013 assessment conducted by WFP and FAO, the number of people in need of food assistance inside the country exceeded 6.3 million. A number likely to increase as a result of the drought. WFP and FAO will conduct a crop and food security assessment later this month to have a clearer picture.
- In ***Sudan***, the humanitarian situation deteriorated drastically in 2014 as conflicts continue unabated in Darfur, the White Nile states and South Kordofan resulting into new displacements<sup>4</sup>. It is expected that the food insecure population will reach nearly 5 million this month.
- UNHCR estimates some 81,000 arrivals from South Sudan; as of mid-May, WFP has provided assistance to over 44,000 South Sudanese who took shelter in West and South Kordofan and White Nile States.

---

<sup>3</sup> This initiative would be time bound (3-6 months) and part of a coordinated UN intervention facilitated by the UN RC. It would be funded by the EU through the reallocation of an existing Euro 30 million budget (from IPA 2012) for emergency recovery/infrastructure

<sup>4</sup> A series of displacements occurred, resulting in an overall displacement of over 310,000 people across Darfur.

- To cater to these additional humanitarian needs, requirements were increased from US\$ 383.8 million to US\$ 403.4 million.
- In ***Yemen***, humanitarian agencies face obstacles on all fronts: insecurity and attacks on aid workers, limitations on access to people in need amidst widespread poverty, rising unemployment, endemic food insecurity and rapidly declining water resources. On a more positive note, the political process is on track despite continuing security threats and rise in AQAP related activities.
- WFP remains engaged and operates on the ground and aims to assist with basic food and cash support to some 3 million most vulnerable people in June.
- The recovery and resilience operation which was approved by this Board last February will commence in July as planned. Strong partnership is being established with several key sister agencies, including Rome-based agencies, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank and others.
- In response to the conflict in Al-Anbar governorate in ***Iraq***, a six-month EMOP was launched in April providing assistance to IDPs and vulnerable groups, targeting 48,000 families.
- It is clear that the crisis has spread beyond the borders of Al-Anbar to the neighboring governorates; as a sign of the escalating situation is when fighting hit the dams near Fallujah, causing major flooding in the area between Fallujah and Abu Ghraib. WFP provided emergency assistance to the families affected by the floods [Within 72 hours after the request was received, WFP mobilized and delivered 98mt of food assistance to Abu Ghraib].

### Emergency Preparedness

- Given the increasing hot spots in the region, OMC is working towards strengthening its preparedness capacities, including national and regional Early Warning and VAM capacities, multi-hazard early warning services and food and nutrition security monitoring systems. Such support is provided in Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Kyrgyz Republic and Sudan.
- In terms of recent preparedness measures, let me also make a rapid reference to two evolving situations that are of great concern, and that engaged the OMC RB from a preparedness perspective - I am referring to situations in Libya and Ukraine.

Concerning Libya, the RB is monitoring developments and has established contacts with UNCT in Tripoli, as well as Tunisia and Egypt. We have deployed personnel to participate in an inter-agency contingency planning mission to border areas in Tunisia and possibly inside Libya.

- In ***Ukraine***, while no critical humanitarian needs have been assessed to date, OMC has deployed a small team to undertake preparedness work also in support to the UNCT. In this context, we are conducting assessments<sup>5</sup> and are also looking into potential interagency requirements in a situation of crisis.

### **Fostering Resilience: Households, Communities and at the national level**

- **Given the challenges listed above, several factors contribute to diminishing the capacity of households, communities, systems and governments. It is therefore an OMC priority to contribute to strengthening their resilience. Efforts include:**
  - Building strategies in and around Syria – linking it to a broader interagency approach;
  - Shifting programmes to incorporate and leverage resilience building opportunities, as it is happening in Yemen, Sudan, and Palestine;
  - And implementing community based strategies in rural settings through tailoring activities to context specific opportunities.

### **Strengthening safety nets and national social protection systems**

- **In OMC, another linked priority is strengthening national safety nets and social protection systems. WFP supports several Governments in the region through the provision of technical assistance, capacity development and policy support to improve efficiency and effectiveness of national programmes.**
  - In relation to this, a new DEV project document from the KYR Republic “Support for National Productive Safety Nets and Long-Term Community Resilience” will be presented today. While we will later provide an overview of the project, I wish to take a few seconds to express our gratitude for the support received from many of you in the country, including the significant contribution of the Russian Federation. We are also appealing to new partners to join WFP to successfully implement this operation.

---

<sup>5</sup>a C&V, Logistics Capacity and ICT assessments

- WFP continues to support safety nets across the region through the school feeding programmes. OMC is supporting 2.6 million beneficiaries in 10 countries. Thanks to the generous contributions of the Russian Federation, we have now established four new programmes and expanded on two existing ones.

### Strengthening innovative approaches and expanding C&V

- **Another area of OMC focus is strengthening innovative approaches including scaling up C&V interventions.**
  - In support of Syrian refugees in the bordering countries, 1.4 million are currently receiving their food assistance via vouchers, a number we expect to increase to 2.7 million by the end of the year. We are also in the process of region-wide transition from the use of paper vouchers to electronic vouchers.
  - Inside Syria, WFP will initiate its first pilot voucher programme later this month. This will support up to 1,500 pregnant and lactating women in the cities of Homs and Lattakia<sup>6</sup>.
  - In Palestine, WFP and UNRWA have launched a new collaboration in April on electronic food vouchers in the West Bank. This is the first new large scale collaboration since the Executive Director signed a global MoU with UNRWA in June 2013. WFP will provide electronic food vouchers to meet the food needs of UNRWA- supported beneficiaries.
  - In Darfur, cash vouchers were introduced to three IDP camps as part of the expansion plan. A notable achievement was made in the largest IDP camp<sup>7</sup>, where almost 120,000 registered GFD beneficiaries received vouchers for the first time. Other innovations like the distribution of smart cards to families were introduced this year.

### WFP Challenges/Risks

- I wish to bring to your attention the serious constraints and risks that WFP is faced with.

---

<sup>6</sup> The vouchers will enable the women to buy fresh foods – meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables – not included in WFP's general food rations, so as to meet their nutritional requirements.

<sup>7</sup> Zam Zam in North Darfur

- In addition to humanitarian access constraints, the security situation poses a serious concern for WFP in several countries. For example, looking at this map from Yemen, we can see the black and red zones indicating the seriousness of the security situation.
- Finally, I wish to thank you for your generous support to OMC operations, yet unfortunately in terms of the regional pipeline requirements for 2014, OMC is facing a shortfall of 65 percent out of the US\$ 1.5 billion required.
- This has obliged WFP in some cases to rotate support among different groups of beneficiaries, reduce caseloads and rations which results in negative implications on the nutritional status and coping strategies of our beneficiaries. This underlines the importance of maintaining well-funded and balanced pipelines to ensure adequate and continued response to increasing humanitarian needs in this especially volatile period.
- Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we continue to count on your support.
- Thank you