

EXECUTIVE BOARD
OMC RD STATEMENT
JUNE 2013

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF CHANGES IN WFP OMC REGION

- Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

REGIONAL CONTEXT

- The OMC Region is going through a complex and volatile transition phase following the Arab Spring. The Regional Syria crisis is reshaping the geo-politics of the region and is causing wide-scale regional displacement and a dramatic refugee crisis in neighboring countries which is placing additional pressure on local fragile economies and taxing social services. There are serious concerns about stability and spillover effects in other bordering countries.
- High unemployment and growing social unrest are dampening regional growth prospects. Rising food prices present a serious challenge given the heavy dependency on food imports; the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is the most food dependent region in the world, importing more than 50 percent of its population's daily caloric intake.
- The majority of OMC countries are middle-income countries, with functioning markets and with long established safety nets programs, some of which however might need to be enhanced and reformed. This presents an opportunity for WFP to engage and partner with countries in the region and to deploy a mix of tools and transfer modalities.

OMC is expanding Cash and Voucher (C&V) activities in the region. C&V are now implemented in 11 countries reaching 2.8 million beneficiaries with a total value of US\$ 521 million. These, coupled with the proactive local procurement and local production of nutritious food is effectively translating the Strategic Plan into action.

REGIONAL PORTFOLIO AND STRATEGY IN 2013

- OMC strategy for 2013 will continue to focus on scaling up of humanitarian response while supporting, when conditions allow, stabilization & recovery efforts and fostering the resilience of the most vulnerable communities. In line with the new strategic plan, OMC strategic focus is placed on:
 - i) Providing humanitarian assistance, strengthening emergency preparedness and response, & fostering resilience;
 - ii) Enhancing national food security and nutrition related safety nets, policies and services and building lasting resilience;
 - iii) Contributing to reducing under nutrition including addressing 'hidden hunger'.

OMC STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA # 1) Providing humanitarian assistance, strengthening emergency preparedness and response, & fostering resilience

- OMC's main priority is to provide humanitarian assistance.
- Operations for **Syria and the Sub-Region** are aligned to Humanitarian Community Response; Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) for Syria and Regional Response Plan (RRP) for the Sub- Region which will be launched on the 7th of June.

- Last week, the total number of refugees registering with UNHCR or awaiting registration was almost 1.6 million. In Syria, the total IDPs approached 4.25 million (OCHA) whilst those who are food insecure are estimated to be 4 million (SARC).
- In April, WFP reached over 2 million vulnerable in Syria, and 710,000 refugees in the neighboring countries. These numbers reflect 80 percent of planned numbers within latest BRs.
- The Syria operation is facing many challenges; volatility, insecurity, access, limited NGO capacity, and need for resources. The Sub-Regional Operation is facing an elevated tension between the refugees and the host communities especially in Jordan and Lebanon. WFP plans to reach up to 160,000 vulnerable Jordanians through food and cash transfer in rural and urban areas and 190,000 vulnerable Lebanese.
- In Syria, after cooperating with only the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), WFP was able to expand its cooperating partners (and thus operations) to cover 19 local NGOs spread throughout the country. WFP goes through a due diligence process following a strict selection criteria for the NGOs.
- WFP is struggling to get sufficient funding to reach its current targets; based on latest BRs only 51 percent of required funds are secured for Syria and 33 percent of the Regional Operation financial requirements.
- **In response to the increasing humanitarian needs, WFP is planning to gradually scale up its food assistance to reach 3 million people in July and 4 million people from October onwards –if resources are secured-.**
- In **Yemen**, the on-going humanitarian efforts are playing a crucial role towards peace and stability. The peace process is supported by the UN Security Council.

WFP has reached almost 5 million people in 2012 with food assistance and plans to reach a similar number in 2013. As of end of May, WFP has reached 4.6 million people, majority of them are children and women. Despite the significant challenges in Yemen; the general insecurity, access, weak local capacity and limited partners and funding; WFP is on track to meet its target of 5 million food insecure persons in Yemen in 2013. WFP has also started incorporating resilience and capacity building components into current responses. With a current shortfall of US\$ 98 million (39 percent) for 2013, WFP continues to reach out to donors as new funding is required by July to avoid pipeline breaks.

- In **Sudan**, WFP is currently supporting 3.6 million beneficiaries including IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host and mixed communities in Darfur, severely food-insecure refugees and resident communities in Central and Eastern Sudan and IDPs and conflict-affected communities in the border states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States.
- WFP is increasingly concerned regarding the recent fighting across Darfur and South and North Kordofan, which has generated a fresh caseload of nearly 300,000 beneficiaries, of which 243,000 are in Darfur alone. In addition to the volatile and disbursed armed conflicts, access to conflict-affected areas particularly those under rebel-control present a major challenge.
- In March this year, WFP was able to gain access to Government-controlled areas of Blue Nile State, where conflict-affected populations have been without humanitarian assistance for eighteen months. To cater for the needs of an additional 95,000 people, WFP reached out to donors for immediate funding and we are grateful for the support received so far.

- WFP has also been implementing a rationalization strategy since 2009, transitioning when and where possible from emergency food assistance to more targeted recovery and resilience type activities in Darfur as part of a long-term exit strategy.
- In ***Palestine***, WFP is leading a transition from emergency response to relief and resilience approaches; linking programmes to support the value chain and renew focus on Disaster Risk Reduction and support for emergency capacity building. This will be the basis of the new PRRO covering both the West Bank and Gaza that we will present to the Board in November.
- In several OMC Countries targeted programmes such as Food or Cash for Work (F/CFW) offer “conditional transfers” with the objective of **building resilience** of households in response to climate change and other disasters. F/CFW or F/CFA programmes are implemented in seven countries.

OMC STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA # 2 Enhancing national food security and nutrition related safety nets, policies and services and building lasting resilience.

- All OMC programmes place special **emphasis on developing sustainable intervention in close coordination with national partners**. WFP collaborates with Governments on a range of activities; including the 1) reviewing national food security strategy 2) reviewing the national Social Safety Net/food Subsidy Systems, 3) setting up food security monitoring and evaluation systems, and 4) developing disaster risk reduction and disaster management capacity.
- WFP sets up food security and monitoring systems to monitor the food security situation on the ground, which can also combine as early warning systems. As possible, WFP strengthens the Governments’ systems in order to

enhance national capacities. Such systems are in place in Sudan, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

- WFP provides direct support to national safety nets through a number of programmes; **School Feeding** being among the largest and most successful in the region. In OMC, School Feeding Programmes are being implemented in 13 countries reaching almost 3 million beneficiaries which makes up 18 percent of the overall number of OMC beneficiaries.
- In partnership with the Russian Federation, WFP plans to enhance the school feeding programmes and capacities of Governments across the region to replicate successful models. WFP in Armenia, the Kyrgyz republic and Tajikistan are moving forward in the implementation of the School feeding programmes in close partnership with the Governments with plans support the development and optimization of national school feeding programmes in a sustainable manner. Preparations are underway to launch the school feeding capacity development programmes in Morocco and Tunisia.

OMC STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA # 3) Contributing to reducing under nutrition including addressing 'hidden hunger'.

- The OMC Regional approach for nutrition supports and strengthens the capacity of the national authorities in addressing the nutrition challenges through strategies and interventions, based on thorough analysis of the situation in order to identify the key drivers of malnutrition.
- In order to address micronutrient deficiencies, we seek to replicate successful programmes in the region; similar to the fortification programme in Egypt where WFP has worked in close partnership with the Government to improve

the food-subsidy system by fortifying wheat flour for subsidized bread with iron and folic acid to address high anemia prevalence. In 2010, this was expanded to the fortification of subsidized cooking oil. Reaching 67 million people, the fortification programme is now managed and funded by the Government.

CONCLUSIONS

- Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- WFP is grateful for all your support and continues to depend on your assistance. Thank you.