

Summary Note on Cash Working Group (CWG) Meeting

Date/ Time & Venue	8 Sept 2022, 10.00 – 12.00 AM (via MS Teams)	
Chair / Co-chair	John Nelson (Mercy Corps)	
Participants	CARE, CRS, DCA, DRC, ECHO, Health Cluster, Helvetas, IOM, JICA, KMSS, LIFT, Mercy Corps, METTA, MRCS, NPA, NRC, OCHA, REACH, Tearfund, TGH, UNDP, UNFAO, UNHCR, UNOPS, UNWOMEN, WFP, WFP – FSC, WFP – Sittwe, WFP-Myitkyina, WFP-Naypyitaw, WHO, WVI.	
Agenda items and summary of discussion	Action Points	
<p>1. Sub-National CWG updates</p> <p>Kachin</p> <p>In Kachin, continued armed conflicts and increased checkpoints further restricted access to IDP camps especially in non-government-controlled areas (NGCAs). Although private banks resumed operation, partners reported that 0.9-3% cash out fees still apply to cash withdrawal. Due to high inflation in NGC areas, partners are facing difficulties to distribute aid using Chinese Yuan. Partners are still collecting feedback from community in terms of beneficiaries' perspective on cash in envelope, and more information will be available around the end of September.</p> <p>Community engagement mechanism shows that cash transfer value became inadequate due to inflation. Therefore, WFP decided to increase transfer value starting from September 2022 onwards, and new transfer value has been shared with Food Security and other clusters.</p> <p>The chair added that CWG will also be updating SMEB over the next few weeks given increases in market prices using the prices of item monitoring in the market. The updated SMEB will be shared with CWG members.</p> <p>Rakhine</p> <p>In Rakhine, increasing armed conflict between AA-MAF has impacted many agencies' access and delivery of assistance. Joint effort was made for delivery of assistance to the field and partners are closely following up on this. Liquidity issue persists in township banks, especially in Myae Bone last month. According to new eKYC issue, WFP switched the modality to cash in envelope, and will also apply new cash entitlement of 22000ks per beneficiaries.</p> <p>The chair encouraged CWG partners to be engaged and share any updates with national CWG in terms of conflict in Southern Rakhine, and to explore available partners, capacity and market situation in the area.</p> <p>Southeast</p> <p>CWG co-chair will join the Southeast ICCG on Wednesday 14 September to better understand the need of different clusters, and where cash coordination fits best within the existing coordination structure. There is a need to have a better coordination system among clusters and local partners in terms of complementarity. It is also noted that in-kind distribution is impossible in Southeast due to checkpoint scrutiny, and new cash coordination structure is expected to address some of the existing issues.</p>	<p>#CWG to update SMEB to reflect market price increases</p>	

<p>2. Market updates</p> <p>Mercy Corps and WFP provided market price updates for Aug 2022 respectively on specific geographical areas, and nationwide market price updates.</p> <p>Overall, basic food basket prices increased by 14% compared to July 2022, and 52% compared to same time last year. Fuel prices increased by 28% on average, putting upward pressure on commodity retail prices via transportation costs. The price of onions went up to 24% compared to July 2022 due to low stocks and increasing export demand and is expected to keep rising in coming months. All prices elevated in northern Rakhine particularly due to heightened tensions and fighting that has disrupted supply. Oil prices continue to increase despite global downward trend due to volatile exchange rate, low supply and high transportation costs. Rice prices are rising due to a combination of factors including increased production costs, depreciation of the Myanmar Kyat, high transportation costs, declining stocks, and anticipation of a smaller output due to conflict-related access challenges and high agricultural input cost.</p> <p>In Central and Northern Rakhine and Chin state, prices shifted significantly in August which were among the broadest and widest compared to same time last year. Increases were widespread for items such as rice, pulses and palm oil at +20% in many of the markets, with palm oil price saw its largest one-month increase in a year. Many NFI items continue to see increases in prices particularly hygiene products. In general, all markets saw similar price hikes in August 2022, with only key difference being the magnitude of the change. It is anticipated that NFIs prices may be in for the extended climb if fuel and transportation costs do not recede.</p> <p>For more details on WFP and Mercy Corps MPM, please refer to attached presentations. Please visit here for WFP market monitoring dashboard and follow this link for Mercy Corps MAU dashboards and reports.</p>	
<p>3. Update on Market Monitoring Initiative</p> <p>Joint market monitoring initiative (JMMI) has been proposed by REACH in an effort to collectively improve nationwide market monitoring, and the concept note has been presented during the last CWG meeting. JMMI is flexible to the needs of the CWG and its partners. The agreed next steps are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mapping of organizations who have been doing market price monitoring 2. Requesting additional feedback from partners on JMMI proposal 3. Based on survey results and feedback, decision on scope of initiative and the need to change SMEB/MEB methodology will be made. <p>The CWG chair also presented the result of CWG market price monitoring survey; 21 respondents answered the survey including 4 LNGOs, 13 INGOs, 3 UN agencies and one Red Cross society. Out of 21 organisations, 11 have been doing market monitoring, however, Ayeyarwaddy, Bago and Naypyidaw regions are not covered. 7 of 11 monitoring are in Rakhine, 6 in Kachin. There are gaps for monitoring in Northwest but some expansions has been seen. MPM reports are produced mostly for organisations’ internal planning purpose.</p>	<p>#CWG to convert technical meeting with co-chairs, REACH and interested members for JMMI way forward</p> <p># Chair to present updated JMMI methodology and SoW for CWG endorsement</p>

<p>As next steps, CWG will develop mapping of ongoing market price monitoring based on the survey results and will attempt to acquire the full list of items and specification where available. CWG will convene a technical meeting between CWG co-chairs, REACH and interested CWG members to agree on key principles of JMMI methodology and scope of work (SoW). CWG will present updated JMMI methodology and SoW to CWG for endorsement.</p>	
<p>4. CARE Presentation on Rapid Market Analysis</p> <p>CARE provided briefing on rapid market analysis in Kayah and Southern Shan State.</p> <p>Data are collected using KOBO tool. Survey questionnaire involved 86 respondents (29 males, 57 females). Key target locations are Loikaw, Demoso and Hpruso Township of Kayah State and Moebye, Pekhonn and Hseng Township of Southern Shan State. Target populations are IDPs, Host Communities and Crisis affected people. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling to cover various levels. Analysis shows that 76% respondents are close to market, 62% answered that both men and women have access to nearest markets while 8% indicated that only men have access to the market. More than 78% of respondents said the market was competitive in their region. 60 %of the respondents said that the needed items are available in sufficient quantities to meet the demands. 90 % of the respondents answered that they have access to buy basic food commodities at local/village markets or shops. One-third of the respondents indicated that agricultural inputs and equipment are still available in the local market until June 2022. However, the price of Fertilizer has risen significantly. For more information, please refer to attached presentation.</p> <p>In response to question around feasibility of voucher in Southeast, CARE responded that CARE currently have not conducted voucher assistance analysis in Southeast yet, however, will share any available data in the future.</p>	
<p>5. Updates and discussion on KYC regulations</p> <p>OCHA provided updates on the new eKYC regulations.</p> <p>The new regulation around eKYC introduced by Central Bank makes it mandatory for individuals cashing out with certain Financial Services Providers (FSPs) to present national registration card (NRC). We expected that this will have an immediate impact on the way the CWG member organisations interact with beneficiaries of cash-based interventions. On 16 August, a first ad-hoc meeting was held among CWG members to discuss a way forward and potential workarounds, as well as advocacy efforts once the new regulation is started to be enforced.</p> <p>CWG reached out to the INGO Forum to check in if there has been any discussion among its members on the topic. The INGO Forum has been discussing these financial issues more broadly and welcomed our financial aid modalities workshop. However, there have not been specific discussions within the forum on the KYC issue, and no members have raised that issue. The INGO Forum will reach out to the partners via a survey to see if what the impact of the KYC rules are on their operation and to see if there is appetite for further advocacy to the authorities on it. It is expected that there is not much appetite to go to the authorities and understand there are risks in doing that. There is more</p>	

<p>appetite to advocate donors to be flexible with informal modalities and the CWG will try to work closely with the INGO Forum on that over the next few months.</p>	
<p>6. Update on CWG Dashboard</p> <p>CWG IM officer provided an update on the CWG dashboard. It was noted that a lot of work provided for CWG dashboard are contributed by clusters who incorporate cash into cluster 5Ws. CWG has been collaborating with different clusters to minimize duplication among clusters. Currently CWG is collaborating with Food Security and WASH clusters. The CWG dashboard is presented in quarterly basis and is now available on MIMU (https://themimu.info/sector/cash-programming) and Asia-pacific Regional CWG's platform https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/asia/aprcwg-interactive-dashboards.</p>	
<p>7. AOB</p> <p><u>FSP Mapping</u></p> <p>To keep up with the rapidly changing financial landscape and better understand the needs and perspectives of the beneficiaries, REACH developed a concept note to support CWG with the FSP mapping across the country. REACH will be holding an ad-hoc meeting to have CWG partners' input to the mapping before the next monthly CWG meeting.</p> <p><u>Cash coordination</u></p> <p>There is a potential for CWG to work together with AAP/CE WG to make sure that cash distributions happening in low profile manner is developing strategies and approaches to ensure participants have access to the feedback and complaint mechanisms without additional risks. CWG will also continue to work with various clusters to support better coordination and information sharing among local and international partners operating different cash programmes using low profile approach.</p>	
<p>Useful links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cash Programming page on MIMU Website ● Mercy Corps MAU market price report dashboard ● WFP market monitoring dashboard ● Myanmar: Cash Working Group (CWG) on MIMU Page ● Myanmar CWG final Terms of Reference (June 2020) 	

Next CWG meeting: Thursday, 10:00 – 12:00, 13 October 2022