1.1 HIGHLIGHTS

- WFP distributed 103,106MT of food assistance to a maximum of 4.02 million beneficiaries, through the General Food Distributions (GFD), school feeding and the Blanket Supplementary feeding programme.
- Some 2,952 pregnant and lactating women received WFP’s fresh food voucher nutrition support in Homs and Lattakia governorates to complement the general food distribution basket.
- 78% of WFP beneficiaries are internally displaced households (IDPs) and 24% are female headed households.
- Majority of the displaced households have limited access to income through occasional work.
- Approximately 68% of households interviewed spend more than three quarters of their income on food, indicating high vulnerability of displaced households to food insecurity.
- In ten governorates, monitoring analysis indicates a decrease in the proportion of households with poor food consumption scores from 15 percent during the third quarter to 10 percent during the reporting period.

The Household Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a food consumption indicator that is used as a proxy for household food security. Food consumption indicators are designed to reflect the quantity and quality of people’s diet.
1.2 Monitoring Coverage

- WFP continued to encounter access challenges to monitor food distribution activities in some governorates due to insecurity, particularly in southern (Quneitra, Dara) and northern governorates (Aleppo, Idlib, Al Hasakeh and Ar Raqqa).
- WFP and project facilitators conducted 381 monitoring visits (42 percent by WFP and 58 percent by project facilitators) to 242 food distributions points (FDPs), which is 48% of the 505 FDPs that received WFP assistance during the fourth quarter. The number of FDPs visited during the fourth quarter increased by 12% when compared to the third quarter. However the monitoring coverage decreased by 4 percentage points from 52% during the third quarter. The decrease in monitoring coverage is due to an increase in distributions sites that received food rations during the fourth quarter when compared to the third quarter - 417 food distribution points were reached with food assistance during the third quarter and 217 were monitored.
- Food distribution points visited by the project facilitators are mainly in Hama, Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Idlib governorates where WFP staff have limited access to monitor food assistance activities. In these areas, process level monitoring confirmed the distribution of food assistance to vulnerable households that were selected by partners through a verification process of households’ food security status. Monitoring also indicates growing humanitarian needs as the conflict has disrupted sources of livelihoods for majority of the displaced people.

WFP monitoring conducted in locations that are assisted through cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan in the northern and southern governorates, respectively, confirmed that WFP food assistance is the main source of food for majority of the targeted households. Beneficiaries in cross border areas request for regular delivery of WFP rations.

- Household interviews were conducted to collect information on household satisfaction with WFP food assistance, household’s food consumption patterns, income sources and coping strategies. The number of households interviewed increased by 78% from 270 to 480 when compared to the third quarter.
- About 90 key informants were interviewed through telephone calls in Idlib and Aleppo to monitor the distribution of food assistance in the northern parts of Syria where WFP food rations are distributed through cross border deliveries. The key informants confirmed the delivery and distribution of WFP food assistance to the food insecure households. WFP is in the process of identifying project facilitators from Third Party Monitoring Companies to conduct post distribution household interviews in cross border locations in the northern part of Syria.

1.3 October to December Food Distributions

1.3.1 General Food Distributions:
- During the reporting period 102,772.63MT of food were distributed to maximum of 4.02 million beneficiaries, reached in November, which is 95 percent of the 4.25 million GFD beneficiaries targeted each month. Food distributions were conducted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, local charity organizations, and the Aga-Khan Foundation inside Syria; whereas; International NGOs partners conducted food distributions through cross-border deliveries.
- The worsening security situation resulted in new displacements during the fourth quarter, particularly in north-east and southern governorates. Beneficiary registrations conducted by cooperating partners indicate growing needs due to these new displacements. This contributed to an increase in the number of food insecure beneficiaries assisted in Aleppo, Homs and Hama; Idlib and Damascus governorates, as food rations were reallocated to locations that received new internally displaced people.

\[2\] WFP distributed food assistance to 355 food distribution points (FDPs) in October, 373 FDPs in November and to 274 FDPs in December. The unique number of FDPs reached during the fourth quarter is 505 in 13 governorates.
Over the reporting period, no food deliveries to a targeted 600,000 people could take place in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor as a result of widespread insecurity and radical armed groups preventing the safe passage of trucks into these territories. Ar-Raqqa was last reached in November 2014 after WFP gained singular approval to deliver 7,350 family food rations to support over 36,700 civilians in the governorate. However, no access into Deir-ez-Zor has been possible since May 2014.

Beneficiaries assisted through cross-border deliveries increased by 215 percent from 100,000 to 315,060 beneficiaries when compared to the third quarter. Locations reached with cross border deliveries are in Quneitra, Dara, Idlib and Aleppo governorates.
1.3.2 School feeding
- About 222.11 MT of date bars were distributed to 90,055 children during the third quarter, in 163 primary schools in Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Tartous governorates.
- The school feeding programme expanded to include 74 additional schools in Aleppo in December 2014, increasing the number of assisted children from 43,038 in October to 90,055 in December.

1.3.3 Blanket Supplementary feeding (BSFP)
- WFP and partners are prioritizing the distribution of BSFP rations in areas that have Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of greater than 5% as per the 2014 Rapid Nutrition Assessment (RNA). All the targeted beneficiaries are from the displaced households comprising of 41% that are staying in collective shelters and 59% in host communities.
- As a preventative measure for acute malnutrition, about 111.26 MT commodities for Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP) comprising of plumpy doz (85.15 MT) and nutri-butter (26.11 MT) were distributed to about 59,790 out of the targeted 103,700 children under the age of five years in Aleppo, Hasakeh, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Idlib, Lattakia, Tartous and Rural Damascus governorates. Limited capacity of the cooperating partners and delays in dispatching the commodities contributed to low coverage in BSFP activities.

1.3.4 Voucher based nutrition support to Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW)
- US$174,267 was paid for the fresh food vouchers that were distributed in Homs and Lattakia governorates, targeting 2,952 PLW beneficiaries, to complement the GFD basket and increase access to fresh and nutritious foods. PLW beneficiaries receive a bi-weekly voucher with a value of SYP1800 (≈ US$ 9)

![Figure 3: Number of PLW beneficiaries and amount paid for the redeemed vouchers](chart)

2 GAM: The global acute malnutrition rate (GAM) is often used to measure the severity of a food crisis. At the population level, global acute malnutrition (GAM) is the total proportion (prevalence) of the population of children 6-59 months old with either severe acute malnutrition (SAM) or moderate acute malnutrition (MAM).

3 Collective shelters include schools, mosques and unfinished buildings where displaced people are residing.
Monitoring data suggest that majority of vulnerable people selected for the GFD comprise of internally displaced households (78 percent) and female headed households (24 percent). Moreover, most of these beneficiaries have limited/no income sources.

On-site monitoring conducted at Dara’a Al Balad food distribution point in Daraa governorate, where food rations are distributed through cross border delivery, indicates that about 15% of the assisted households were female headed.

Key informants that were interviewed in locations that are assisted through cross border deliveries confirmed that WFP beneficiaries are selected through analysis of household’s vulnerability status including demographics (female headed, households with orphans) and households with limited access to income.

Analysis of Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) data shows that, due to limited income sources, 45 percent of the displaced households are residing in decrepit buildings and other public places including schools as they can not afford to pay rent.

Some beneficiaries have access to waged labor activities, particularly in Tartous, Damascus and Lattakia. PDM data also indicates that some of the vulnerable households in Lattakia, Tartous, Hama, and Aleppo were receiving cash assistance from humanitarian organizations including the local charity organizations that provide support to vulnerable people including households with orphans.

Approximately 68 percent of respondents indicate that more than three quarters of their income is spent on food purchases, indicating high vulnerability of displaced households to food insecurity.
1.5 Household food security status

1.5.1 Household food consumption patterns – households benefiting from GFD

- Monitoring data indicates that a higher proportion of female headed households are consuming less than three meals per day in comparison to male headed households.

- Analysis of the food consumption score of households assisted through the GFD, suggests a decrease in proportion of households with poor food consumption score\(^5\) by 5 percentage points from 15 % during the third quarter to 10 percent in the fourth quarter.

- Household food consumption score indicates that female headed households are more vulnerable to food insecurity when compared to the male headed households.

- 90 telephone interviews with key informants in Aleppo and Idleb confirmed the delivery and distribution of WFP food assistance to the food insecure households in the northern part of Syria through cross border deliveries. More project facilitators are identified to increase the post distribution household interviews in cross-border locations.

\(^5\) These adjusted FCS threshold of 28 and 42 is used for this analysis as the consumption of sugar and/or oil is frequent among nearly all households surveyed.
The Dietary Diversity indicator is the number of different food groups consumed over a given reference period of time. It gives an estimation of the quality of the diet. The report is using the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)'s Dietary Diversity Score (DDS) as it is compatible with the FCS data collection tool and recall period.

For information and interpretation, IFPRI thresholds of the DDS is used in this report: 6+: high = good diet diversity 4.5–6 = medium diet diversity <4.5 = low diet diversity

The average dietary diversity score during the reporting period is 5.85 (5.95 for male headed households and 5.51 for female headed households). Some 14% of interviewed households are reported to have low dietary diversity, 18% are considered medium and 68 percent of households have good dietary diversity.

1.5.2 Food Consumption pattern – Pregnant and Lactating Woman benefiting from fresh food vouchers:

- PDM data provides evidence that the fresh food voucher has a positive impact on the dietary diversity of pregnant and lactating women supported by WFP. The table below depicts an increase in the proportion of households displaying a “good diet”.
- Analysis of food consumption levels from household interviews indicates a 9 percent increase in the proportion of pregnant and nursing women beneficiaries with “good diet - from 74 percent to 83 percent when compared to the third quarter.

There is an increase consumption of nutrition rich food items including the vegetables, meat, fish and eggs.
The livelihoods-based coping strategies are used to better understand longer-term coping capacity of households. The recall period for the livelihoods coping strategies is 30 days which is longer than the food consumption based coping strategies, because often these livelihood strategies are stretched over a longer period of time.

The coping strategy index is applied by WFP to measure food insecurity by considering the activities undertaken by households to manage food shortages. Data for the CSI scores is collected using the 7 day recall period.

1.5.3 Household coping strategies

- Compared to the third quarter, PDM data indicates a higher coping strategy index (CSI) in the last quarter of 2014, increasing from 11 to 14.
- Consumption of less preferred or less expensive food items is the common coping strategy practiced most often by households, followed by borrowing food from friends and/or family and reducing the number of meals consumed per day.

- Some 80 percent of respondents state that they engage in livelihood based coping strategies such as buying food on credit or borrowing money to purchase food and reducing essential non-food expenditures such as education/health.

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