
SUMMARY OF THE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Food Security and Nutrition Sectoral Assessment was conducted from 25th to 28th May 2021 in districts most affected by the disaster.

The assessment used the following tools: Household Survey and Key Informant Interviews.

A total of 394 households and 10 Key informants (community leaders) were interviewed to assess the situation related to food security and nutrition in the affected areas of 6 districts namely Jomi, Kulob, Muminobod, Vakhsh, Vose and Yovon.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Food Security

Livelihood impact: 62% of surveyed households reported the loss of standing crops whereas 53% reported loss of food stock. This was followed by 29% of households who reported inundation of agricultural land that was being prepared for cultivation. Households had been consuming from the food stocks from previous harvest and were relying heavily on the crops that were ready for harvest to replenish the stock which have now been lost. Additionally, 30% of the households had already been facing the economic shocks caused by rising food prices before the disaster.

Impact on food access: The survey showed that 48% of the households in the 6 districts had inadequate food consumption which was highest in Kulob with 70% of the households consuming inadequate diets.

Similarly, coping mechanisms of the affected population were alarming with 39% of households reducing portion size of meals and similar percent were forced to borrow food or rely on help from friends and relatives. 46% of households were also found to be spending their savings on food to cover the food gap.

Loss of livelihood options coupled with inadequate food consumption and wide-spread adoption of coping mechanism strengthen the call to provide immediate assistance so as to prevent further deterioration in the food security situation.

Population in need: Based on the damages suffered and high levels of food insecurity that was found, some 13,000 people (total for all districts) are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance to stabilize their current food consumption and prevent adoption of negative and irreversible coping mechanisms.

Response options: Immediate assistance in the form of food or cash is needed to ensure that the affected households are able to meet their daily food requirements also preventing them from adopting coping strategies that will have negative impact on their long-term livelihood options.

Immediate support should be followed by early recovery activities to ensure that the households are able to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Nutrition

Nutrition for children aged 0-23 months

The assessment of the infant and young child feeding practices revealed that milk consumption (either breastmilk or animal milk) among children has reduced by 13 percentage points after the

floods, suggesting that the floods may have caused physical, mental and psychological stress to lactating women and that livestock that had provided milk before the floods may have been lost.

Additionally, food consumption patterns among children were generally poor, with low intake of fruits, vegetables and animal-source proteins (except for dairy products). Although we cannot ascertain causality between the floods and the observed feeding patterns, given the findings of the food security assessment that showed that their crops have been washed away, their agriculture lands have been damaged and their livestock animals lost, we believe that complementary feeding has also deteriorated.

Nutrition for pregnant women

Nearly a quarter (23.5%) of pregnant women said they had meals twice or less in a day, despite their increased needs for energy and other nutrients. This is also confirmed by the coping strategy adopted by the affected households to reduce their meal frequency. Similarly, to children, pregnant women also showed suboptimal eating patterns with relatively high consumption of starchy food (i.e. energy dense, nutrient poor) and low consumption of fruits and vegetables and proteins, threatening their own and their foetus' health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide food assistance to 13,000 people affected by the disaster.
- Initiate plans for implementing early recovery activities.
- Provide nutrient supplement to pregnant mothers.
- Provision of multiple micronutrient powders for children 6-59 months old with clear IYCF messaging targeted at caregivers
- Active screening by healthcare workers and treatment of severe acute malnutrition among young children in the affected communities, given the reduced quantity and quality of foods consumed by children and worsened WASH conditions giving rise to diarrheal cases
- Inclusion of pregnant women and young children under 2 years in the food assistance, accompanied by nutrition messages on healthy, safe and nutritious eating/feeding and care practices