

Minutes for 59th Food Security Forum

At the Office of the Council of Ministers

21 Sep 2016

Chairman: HE Lao Sokharon, Secretary General CARD

Attendance:

Points Carried Over from Previous Forum (presented by HE Chairman)

1. The National Nutrition day is planned for 6 Nov 2016 and two or three meetings have been conducted to plan for the event. The concept note, theme, slogans and the speeches for the Prime Minister and Deputy prime Minister have been completed.
2. The Provincial Committees for FSN were considered and was agreed that the situation would be studied to determine which committee was most suited to this role. It has been agreed that the most suitable committee structure is the Provincial Committee for Women and Children.
3. The budgets for individual Ministries have been discussed with MEF already and each Ministry is responsible for arranging their own financial responsibilities.
4. A field study was proposed and the NOURISH project has agreed to host a study for the DPM and others to help understand FSN issues at field level. Other agencies are invited to the same.

Remarks from the Co-Chair Gianpietro Bordinon (World Food Program)

Increasing internal and external migration are signs of stress and these are made worse by drought and falling rice prices. There are not bright prospects for export as there are large stocks of rice and many big producers to compete. Cassava prices have also fallen 25% since last year. In this situation the debt problems for farmers accumulate and nutrition is affected as families substitute less desirable foods and skip meals to cope. When there is a lot of migration, and in the absence of mothers, children are impacted as hygiene and nutrition become more of a burden on caretakers.

The stresses on the agricultural sector and on livelihood mean that we need to think about problems in a different way. Targeting of assistance is different for a mobile population.

We can hope for a better season ahead, but drought has long term effects and these are compounded by climate change. We need to work on adaptation, extension of services, diversification of crops and utilization of more nutritious foods.

WFP is pleased to have begun buying produce from farmers in Preah Vihear and Oddar Meanchey and helping farmers to support their local needs. These are important steps to building the resilience of communities.

Chairman's Response

There RGC is taking action to manage the fall in rice prices but the situation is challenging due to external forces of the market, the stocks of rice and the influence of competition. The Government has made an injection of funds, supported by the Rural Development Bank and foreign capital. In addition,

there is an appeal to businesses to purchase rice at prices above market value and for better living families also to buy stocks of rice at fair prices.

World Food Day

Mr Oum Kosal of FAO announced that the World Food Day this year will be still on 16 October, and the theme is 'Climate is changing: agriculture must too'. The event would be conducted in Svay Chum District in Svay Rieng province. More details will be provided in due course and invitation would be provided by MAFF.

Discussion

Provincial Structures for Food Security and Nutrition

Comment from Mr Hou Kroeun of HKI that the current situation at provincial level is very confusing as some organizations follow the guidelines and others set up their own structures. The Women and Children's Committees may be the best structure but everyone needs to work the same way. It is important to use existing strengths and work through these and for NGOs to work through and support the designated structure.

Presentations

1. EU funded FIRST Programme, by Ilean Russell, Senior Policy Officer FAO Cambodia
2. Presentation on SOKAPHEAP KNHOM Project by Mr Un Sam Oeurn, Nutrition Officer UNICEF
3. Presentation on creating Food Based Dietary Guidelines (FIDR) for Cambodian School Aged Children by Miss Sar Kanha, Nutrition Coordinator and Professor Nobuo Yoshike, Department of Nutrition, Aomori University of Health and Welfare, Japan.
4. Presentation on NOURISH project, Core findings from baseline survey in Battambang, Siem reap and Pursat, by Mr Srales Math, NOURISH M&E Specialist and NOURISH Baseline Principal Investigator (not presented due to insufficient time)

Q&A

1. FIRST Programme

Q. The NSFSN is coming to an end and what plans are there for a Mid-Term Review?

A. The MTR is being planned and arrangements will be assisted by commitments made by FAO under FIRST and other projects. Other stakeholders will be invited to contribute. The SDGs should be considered as part of the review.

Q. Request for assistance to the MoP Department of Nutrition Improvement for capacity building and other support for food fortification work at national and sub-national level.

A. This will be considered in the development of capacity building plans under FIRST. In addition, Mr Gianpietro Bordignon stressed the importance of fortified foods and stated that fortified rice was now in use in some school feeding programmes in Cambodia thanks to assistance from the MoP and the National Sub-Committee for Food Fortification. We must understand that all families cannot have access to diversified diets at all times and in those situations fortification has a very important role to play. Trials in Cambodia have shown that fortified rice provided children with better resistance to

sickness, a sharp increase in cognitive capacity and this is a safe and proven technology, cost effective and suited to many applications. This is not say food diversity is not important.

Chairman's Comments

The situation for capacity development at sub-national level is not so well coordinated. There has been much discussion about provincial committees and the fact that too many NGOs and coordination structures is a waste of time and effort. The Women's and Children's Committees are working already and so this is the mechanism that should be supported and worked through. CARD is working on capacity building issues at national and sub-national levels and the FIRST programme will help with this planning.

The points raised about fortification are well noted, there are important links with the private sector. We must continue to work with the private sector and too provide education to help deal with conceptions about higher costs of production and taste differences for consumers.

2. UNICEF Presentation

Q. Are there any guidelines for medical staff for situations where a mother is unable to breastfeed a child, especially for the first critical breast feeding? It seems that medical staff is reluctant to give any guidance because of the general policy to encourage breastfeeding even when there are critical immediate health concerns for the baby.

A. The point was addressed by a number of speakers including a representative from MoH. The main advice was that the training is provided to medical staff but that sometimes people do not absorb the training and that it takes a concerted effort to get messages through to all staff.

Comment: It is not clear what the advice is.

Comment: A statement from a representative of the MOEYS about the dangers of poisons in foods available to children at or around schools and the need to monitor foods closely to protect against poisons. In addition, there is a lack of funding to integrate health education concerning communicable and non-communicable diseases into the school curricula and a general request to give money to MOEYS to support this.

Q. Why are boys more stunted than girls?

A. From Professor Nobuo Yoshike to explain that growth is accelerated in girls at ages 10-12 years as they approach sexual maturity. The same maturity process and growth occurs later in boys.

3. Food Based Dietary Guidelines for Cambodia

Three questions from Hou Kroeun (HKI)

Q. Have the dietary guidelines been shared with the Nutrition Working Group to discuss? These would be important points to share.

A. WFP and MoH and many others are on the working group and have been involved and have met six times already.

Q. Why were only 8-9 micro-nutrients were mentioned in the presentation and not the full list of micro-nutrients?

A. The presentation selected the main micro-nutrients of concern but the full analysis including 19 micro—and macro-nutrients has been conducted and is available.

Q. Have the recipes been created to show how much food should be provided for children of different ages in order to meet the dietary guidelines.

A. Yes, these have been provided in the publications and the information is freely available.

Meeting Summary

1. For the sub-national level, we must choose to work through one structure of Women's and Children's Committees, ensure there is capacity building and streamline coordination and smooth functioning.
2. CARD will look into the training needs of the National Nutrition Committee and micro-nutrient knowledge and fortification to help re-enforce the importance of this work.
3. The detailed planning of the National Nutrition day requires on-going work by the sub-committee working on this.
4. The IFR Guidelines should be incorporated into the National Curriculum and be presented to the National Nutrition Program and CARD.
5. Next Forum

The next meeting will occur in November or December 2016 and details of presentations will be sent out to the members in advance. USAID will take over the minute taking function at the next forum.

Thanks to all members for their participation and collaboration to work towards food and nutrition security in Cambodia.

lean Russell
FAO Cambodia, Minute Taker