post distribution monitoring report
december 2021

Context
The conflict in Syria entered the 11th year since its outbreak in 2011. The socio-economic situation of Palestine refugees has worsened as a result of the protracted conflict and additional difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation drove around 438,000 Palestine refugees currently resident in Syria into increasing vulnerability, leading to even higher poverty levels. According to the Agency’s May 2021 Crisis Monitoring Survey Report, about 83 per cent of Palestine refugees live on US$1.9 or less per person per day. In this challenging context, UNRWA is responding to the protracted humanitarian consequences of the situation through an annual Emergency Appeal process. In 2021, UNRWA provided emergency cash and in-kind food assistance to about 418,000 Palestine refugees.

UNRWA utilizes Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) as a mechanism to collect and understand Palestine refugees’ feedback on their access to assistance provided through emergency cash and in-kind food distribution, as well as their satisfaction with the service provided. The data presented in this report, which was collected through phone-based household interviews with randomly selected heads of the family or their representatives, also documents the impact of distributed entitlements on Palestine refugees.

Methodology
The post distribution monitoring survey was designed based on a cross sectional study design that aims to assess the views, feedback and conditions of a representative cross section of a community. A total of 986 households were randomly sampled to participate in the survey. 11 per cent (110) of the sampled households were in most vulnerable category (female-headed households, older persons, persons with disabilities and orphans), while 89 per cent (876) were from the less vulnerable category. The survey was conducted between 20 September and second of October 2021 by a team of 22 staff from the UNRWA Relief & Social Services department using mobile-based Kobo collection software.

food assistance
89 per cent of interviewed households had received the first round of in-kind food rations at the time of the survey while 11 per cent were still waiting to receive their rations.
94 per cent of interviewed households did not face any problems with the food distribution process, while 6 per cent reported they faced. The majority of concerns were reported on overcrowding at the distribution centre, followed by long waiting time and also lack of food items.
92 per cent of respondents received communication on date of distribution via SMS, followed by UNRWA staff and UNRWA brochure.
83 per cent of interviewed food aid recipients reported that they utilised their food rations entirely for consumption, 12 per cent consumed some and sold some, 2 per cent shared with friends and relatives.

94 per cent of interviewed respondents did not face any problems with the food distribution process, while 6 per cent reported they faced. The majority of concerns were reported on overcrowding at the distribution centre, followed by long waiting time and also lack of food items.

100 per cent of interviewed households had received the second round of cash assistance at the time of the survey.
94 per cent of interviewed respondents reported that they received cash assistance timely to address their needs while 6 per cent said the cash was a little late.
99 per cent of respondents were able to use their cash entitlements without any restrictions.
99 per cent of respondents reported facing no problems during distributions while 1 per cent (6 people) reported facing issues related to family size differences, incorrect records and not visiting designated distribution centres.
94 per cent of cash received by most vulnerable households was spend on food items while 6 per cent was spend on health and social services. Less vulnerable households on the other hand spend 51 per cent of cash on food items and 47 per cent on health and social services.
53 per cent of interviewed households were not satisfied with the cash amounts received while 47 per cent were satisfied.

Key reasons for dissatisfaction include the needs to increase cash amount, the needs to include chronic medical cases as part of most vulnerable groups to receive high cash value etc.

food consumption patterns and livelihoods coping strategies
The food security situation of Palestine refugee households continue to worsen despite the delivery of assistance. There is a case for urban food insecurity driven by a collapsed market and ever increasing prices of goods and services that forces households to rely on cheaper food items and are forced to have low nutritional value food consumption patterns and higher coping strategies index.

37 per cent of assessed households showed acceptable food consumption patterns, 44 per cent borderline and 19 per cent poor food consumption patterns.
22 per cent of households in Damascus area showed poor food consumption patterns, 12 per cent in North area and 10 per cent in Central area.
Vulnerable categories showed elevated levels of poor food consumption compared to less vulnerable ones (44 per cent child headed households, 24 per cent older persons headed households and 17 per cent older persons headed households).
26 per cent of interviewed households were practicing some form of livelihoods coping strategies at the time of the assessment. Predominant coping strategies used were borrowing food or relying on help from friends and relatives, relying on less preferred foods, reducing meals eaten per day and limiting meal portion sizes.
Damascus showed the highest coping strategies index with 6.25, followed by South Area 5.73 and Central Area 1.63.

Conclusion
PDM findings generally show a well-executed distribution process characterised by minimum challenges related to long queues and modalities for older persons and women to access assistance without challenges.
Finding show no improvement of food security situation despite of distribution.
There is strong characterization of urban food insecurity mainly driven by a collapsing market and skyrocketing cost of food, pushing people to rely on less nutritious foods.