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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Report

Workshop on conditional cash transfers in the Arab region Beirut, 19-20 July 2016

Summary

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized a workshop on Conditional Cash Transfers in the Arab Region, at the United Nations House in Beirut, on 19 and 20 July 2016.

The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the potential for cash transfers to further inclusive development in the Arab region.

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Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized a workshop on Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) in the Arab Region, aimed at discussing their potential for furthering inclusive development. The workshop also had the following objectives:

- (a) To share experiences in designing and implementing (conditional) cash transfer schemes (CCTs), and discussing their outcome in terms of poverty alleviation and human capital accumulation;
- (b) To discuss the future role that CCTs could play in the Arab region;
- (c) To identify particular opportunities and challenges that policymakers in the Arab region should bear in mind when implementing CCT schemes;
- (d) To establish networks among stakeholders and identify areas for further cooperation and capacity-building.

I. FINDINGS

2. During the workshop, the following was noted:

(a) Social protection was critical for social and economic development, and for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region; and cash transfers were an important means of social protection, especially as general subsidies were being scaled back;

(b) For cash transfer programmes to be effective, it was vital that policymakers should be able to identify and reach beneficiaries, including the poor in rural areas; this required appropriate registries, information systems and infrastructure;

(c) Empowering women and children should be a central objective of cash transfer programmes and of other social protection instruments;

(d) Cash transfer programmes worked best when they were part of integrated and coherent social protection systems whose different components were harmonized; in particular, the success of cash transfers, conditional on beneficiaries' use of public services, required that such services be accessible and adequate, and that all engaged actors coordinate their efforts;

(e) Coordination among implementing actors and the harmonization of definitions, data sets and approaches were among the biggest challenges to the design and implementation of cash transfer programmes;

(f) Securing continued funding from national budgets required strong evidence of cash transfers' effectiveness; relevant impact evaluations thus needed to be designed at the planning stage of programmes.

(g) There were no blueprints delineating how cash transfer programmes should be designed and implemented, including whether or not they should be conditional, since the characteristics of each context were unique;

(h) The integration of cash transfer programmes into the wider social protection system and their harmonization with contributory components needed further research.

II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

A. INTRODUCTORY SESSION: CASH TRANSFERS AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

3. The introductory session consisted of two presentations and an open discussion. Ms. Gisela Nauk, Chief of the Inclusive Social Development Section at ESCWA, noted that social policy was now one of the most important topics for the Arab region, and underlined its indispensability not only for poverty reduction and economic development, but also for social cohesion. Social cohesion was at risk as a result of growing rifts between different groups and sectors of society in countries around the world. In the Arab region, this was largely reflected, for example, by the division between the formal and informal labour markets. Formal workers, and sometimes their families, were covered by social insurance, but informal workers were not. Informal workers were often meant to be protected by social assistance schemes instead, but such schemes were not fulfilling their objectives in practice. This problem had been especially evident during recent crises.

4. Many countries in the region had begun scaling back general subsidies, which had long been criticized for being expensive and regressive. However, such reforms could affect vulnerable groups living on marginal budgets. For that reason, countries were seeking to replace subsidies with more targeted forms of social assistance. Targeting implied new challenges: Governments needed to know who the poor were, what their needs were, and how they could be reached, but incomplete population registries and high levels of informality often made this difficult. This problem was compounded by the fact that the poor, especially in rural areas, were particularly likely to be absent from civil registries. These problems had been aggravated by ongoing conflicts in a number of countries.

5. Social protection should serve not merely to alleviate poverty, but also to pre-empt it. This meant investment in human capital and access to adequate social services, such as school and health clinics. Arab countries had made enormous progress towards full primary school enrolment in recent decades, but gaps remained. Non-enrolment was often highest in contexts where education was of low quality, insofar as this could be measured. This triggered the question whether low human capital investment was a result of low perceived quality, and if this was the case, whether enhancing the quality of education might stimulate demand, or if additional incentives were needed.

6. Mr. Fabio Veras, Research Coordinator at the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, presented his experience of CCTs in Latin America, linking it to developments elsewhere. He stressed that Latin American CCT programmes did not constitute a blueprint to be applied in other contexts: solutions could differ even where challenges were similar. CCT schemes in Latin American countries were not identical, and CCTs should be considered a family of programmes rather than one distinct kind of programme. Cash transfers should be seen as one component of social protection systems, and though cash transfers focused on smoothing consumption—particularly of food—and thus on alleviating poverty, they could also generate a wider impact. Inequality in Latin America had receded during the last couple of decades. This was at least partly attributable to the implementation of large-scale cash transfer schemes, though other factors, notably labour market reforms, had also played a crucial role. Inequality levels were much lower in the Arab region than in Latin America.

7. The defining features of CCTs were cash, targeting and conditionality. Targeting methods had varied between countries and regions, ranging from community-based systems in many sub-Saharan contexts to highly technical methods in Latin American ones, and implementation of conditionality had also varied significantly. CCT programmes invariably had dual objectives: to alleviate poverty and to stop its intergenerational transmission. These objectives sometimes conflicted and the choice of priorities would determine the specific design of a programme.

8. There were three types of CCT programmes. The first focused on human capital accumulation, with strong conditionality. Children were the main focus and family means were not strictly verified. Such programmes could only be implemented if the public services required to meet the conditionality were actually

available to recipients. The second focused on alleviating poverty, with a more important role for the cash transfers than for the conditionality. The third type focused above all on eradicating extreme poverty through strong case management. This often meant involving social workers and seeking to provide holistic support for the beneficiary household. The Chilean programme was an example of the third type, and the CCT scheme in Egypt had drawn much inspiration from this.

9. Cash transfer programmes had a number of possible problems, notably dependency, misuse and inflation. To prevent or remedy these problems, policymakers could calibrate the benefit level carefully, limit the maximum duration of entitlement and devise strategies for moving people off the programme. Another problem was that cash transfers might discourage beneficiaries from taking up formal employment for fear of losing their benefits, and thus entice them to stay in the informal economy. Avenues towards overcoming this problem might include universal social assistance, or integrating cash transfer programmes with contributory social security schemes to bridge the gap between support for formal and informal workers.

10. Conditionality could arguably be needed to overcome market failures that prevented families from making investments in human capital. For example, families may lack information about the returns to education. Alternatively, there could be a divergence between private and social rates of return, so that society as whole would stand to benefit from additional human capital investment even if individuals making such investment would not (or not to the same extent). There was also an argument that conditionality could help to build political support from taxpayers for cash transfer schemes. Arguments against conditionality focused on the rights-based perspective, on evidence indicating that unconditional cash transfers were as—or even more—effective, and on the risk of stigmatizing beneficiaries.

11. In Latin America, CCT schemes had improved food security for beneficiary households, increased school attendance and reduced dropout rates, especially for pupils in secondary education. Challenges for the future included improving coordination between CCT schemes and other components of social protection systems.

12. Issues raised in the ensuing discussions included the possibility of making social protection responsive to food security shocks; whether universal rather than targeted schemes might be more efficient in some circumstances; the importance of considering the local cultural context in designing conditionality; whether conditionality was consistent with the rights-based approach, since if social services were not available the poor may be unable to comply with the conditions; the difficulties of creating and maintaining the registries needed for effective programme implementation; the concern that beneficiaries, especially women, might withdraw from the labour market; and the challenges of targeting the poorest of the poor in a context of widespread poverty. Participants also mentioned the importance of shifting public spending from universal subsidies to more equitable forms of social protection and incorporating a productivity component in cash transfer schemes so as to prevent dependency. It was also important not to overburden participants with conditions. The risk of certain poor groups or households being excluded for political reasons, and the possible trade-off between, on the one hand, immediate poverty alleviation and, on the other hand, the goal of breaking the intergenerational poverty cycle were finally tackled.

13. In his response, the speaker highlighted that Bolsa Familia in Brazil had been modified to aid drought victims, illustrating the potential of cash transfer programmes to be utilized in emergencies. Programmes had shown a clear impact on food security but not on improved nutrition. No adverse impact on labour market participation had been observed, but there had been some evidence of participants withdrawing from formal work. The main impediments to providing benefits on a universal basis were related to costs and to the need to reform tax and transfer systems to ensure that they would be progressive. On the matter of conditionality, policymakers could avoid undesirable outcomes through careful policy design. Indigenous groups in Brazil, for instance, had been exempted from the Bolsa Familia conditionality.

14. Registries could be maintained by obliging beneficiaries to update their personal information every second year and by suspending disbursements for beneficiaries failing to do so, as was done in Brazil. Some

30 per cent of beneficiaries in Brazil failed to update their information as required, but usually did so once their benefits had been withheld. Targeting and reaching the poorest implied considerable challenges in many contexts. In Yemen, the combination of a high level of poverty and a low level of inequality had rendered it difficult to deploy proxy means testing (PMT). A strong communications strategy was important for mitigating any stigma associated with receiving benefits. According to some observations, the regularity of payments seemed to be more important than their level.

15. Mr. Moulaye El Hacen, Social Advisor for the Economy and Finance Minister, Mauritania, and Mr. Mohamedou Mhaimid, Coordinator for the National Programme of Social Transfers, Mauritania, took the opportunity to inform the workshop participants about the CCT scheme set to be launched in their country. The conditionality of this programme was to be flexible, and 100,000 poor families stood to benefit. An evaluation methodology had been developed and participants would be more than welcome to provide feedback on it. It was important to develop a stronger evidence base for cash transfers in the region to justify such programmes.

B. CONDITIONS WHY AND HOW

16. The session was moderated by Ms. Nauk. It consisted of three presentations, one discussant's intervention and an open discussion.

17. Mr. Elhabib Kinani, Project Director of the Tayseer Programme at the Ministry of National Education, Morocco, began his presentation about the Moroccan CCT programme Tayseer by explaining that the word Tayseer meant "facilitating", and that this reflected the programme's objective: to facilitate poor children's access to school. Tayseer was a conditional cash transfer, with a maximum number of days a child or student may be absent from school without the cash transfer being suspended. Before launching Tayseer in 2008, policymakers in Morocco had learned from the experiences in other regions, such as Latin America. They had undertaken a field study in Morocco to identify constraints and challenges, especially with regard to school dropouts. Tayseer was part of an integrated system that also included, for example, a school fellowship programme.

18. Tayseer mainly targeted rural areas, since access to education in such areas was limited and poverty levels and school dropout rates were high. All children living in communities selected for participation in the programme were eligible, but families were given the choice whether to enrol. In order to discourage school dropout, the level of cash transfers had been set to gradually increase by educational level, from approximately \$6 per month for children in the lowest grades to larger amounts for those in higher ones. Tayseer had evolved incrementally over almost a decade, and the number of students benefiting from the programme now was about 828,000. Monitoring of participants' compliance with the conditions was done using a web application that allowed school heads to report attendance directly to the programme administrators. Schools were given a computer, modem and training in order to do this.

19. The Government had overcome a number of barriers in implementing the programme. Eligible families were required to produce documentation proving their identity in order to participate, but families in the areas targeted by Tayseer often did not possess identification cards. Other government institutions had therefore been engaged to provide such cards to families in rural areas for free. Early on, children had been observed to commute from districts that had not been selected for Tayseer to schools located in districts that had. For that reason, families were now required to be domiciled in the education district of the school attended by the children. There had been some confusion among teachers about whether or not the programme was conditional. The Government had worked towards resolving this issue by organizing training sessions.

20. An impact evaluation of the programme was carried out in 2008-2010. For the evaluation, beneficiaries were divided into different groups, with some receiving conditional transfers and others receiving unconditional ones. The evaluation had found hardly any difference in impact between the two types of cash transfers, though the unconditional ones had been more readily accepted in local communities and the

conditions sometimes had a deterring effect for certain households. One recommendation stemming from Morocco's experience with Tayseer was that monitoring of conditions should be as lenient as possible. This could serve to reduce administrative costs.

21. Ms. Khawla Abu Sarara, Head of the Programming and Analysis Division of the National Aid Fund (NAF), Jordan, opened her presentation with a brief introduction of the NAF, which was established in 1986. The Fund had initially been focused on specific causes of poverty, but then used a more comprehensive formula based on household data. These data were updated automatically from other government databases each year. The programme included aid to the elderly and transfers to poor households or households with unemployed or sick members. In addition, the NAF was seeking to broaden its assistance to include poor people able to work: earning an income from informal labour below the minimum wage did not disqualify a household from assistance. This was supplemented with a temporary assistance programme to deal with short-term shocks such as the illness of the main earner. There were also ongoing efforts in cooperation with the European Union and the World Bank to create a single registry for the whole country.

22. The NAF programmes included a number of conditions. These were related to school attendance, participation in vaccination schemes and domestic violence. Transfers to families were cut by 30 per cent if they failed to vaccinate their children. The impact appeared to have been positive. School dropouts, for example, had drastically declined in recent years. There were major challenges related to inflation, as transfers were not increased in line with price increases, and to the level of assistance, which was set at 60 per cent of the poverty line, compared with the international standard of 70 per cent.

23. Ms. Hania Sholkamy, Associate Professor at the American University in Cairo, explained that she had been asked by the Government of Egypt to present the country's CCT programme, Takaful, which she had designed. This programme, which was one of the biggest in the region, had been rolled out nationally from 2015. Though it was often assumed that CCT programmes followed a certain blueprint, there were many differences between the programme in Egypt and, for example, the one in Brazil, since the former had been devised to suit the Egyptian context. It was important to understand the social reality of a programme's setting and not to be too susceptible to global trends. For example, the Egyptian programme presented the requirements as responsibilities shared between the State and the household rather than as formal conditionalities.

24. Supply-side problems rather than dropout rates were the main challenges in Egypt. The country had an abundance of schools and doctors, but the quality of services was often low. Women preferred to give birth at privately operated hospitals rather than at public ones. There was a high rate of teacher absenteeism and an overall shortage of teachers, especially in rural parts of the country. Supply-side measures were therefore an important part of Takaful. Conditions were based on the availability of free services and the overall objective was to improve services for all, not only for programme beneficiaries.

25. The programme also had a gender focus, in recognition of women's role within the household. Participants in the programme had to meet a number of conditions relating to school attendance, growth monitoring, health check-ups for pregnant women and immunization. Information about conditions was widely distributed. It was important to ensure sustainability and accessibility of services and not to implement and analyse cash transfer programmes in too technical a manner. Social workers could play an important role as bridges between the State and beneficiaries. Other challenges related to data collection and verification.

26. Ms. Haneen Sayed, representing the World Bank, noted that whereas the general debate had previously revolved around whether cash transfers should at all be used, it had now progressed to concern whether cash transfers ought to be conditional. This debate was important, and it was crucial not to adopt a dogmatic stance either for or against conditionality, since circumstances differed between and within countries and shifted over time. There had been much more evaluation of conditional programmes than of unconditional ones, and more impact evaluations needed to be undertaken in the Arab region. A 2013 study – authored by S. Baird, F.H.G. Ferreira, B. Özler, and M. Woolcock – had reviewed the effectiveness of cash transfers and found that both

unconditional and conditional ones generally had a significant impact on school enrolment; that the side-effects of conditional programmes tended to be somewhat larger than those of unconditional ones; and that conditionality, if used, worked best if it was explicit, monitored and enforced. The last finding implied that conditionality, if it was to generate the desired outcome, had to be clearly communicated and applied.

27. Administrative capacity was often a concern. Jordan, for example had a strong knowledge infrastructure, but did not necessarily have the administrative capacity to monitor and enforce penalties. In Lebanon, the National Poverty Targeting Programme had initially envisaged a cash transfer component. Concerns that these might develop into a system of political favours had led to the decision that beneficiaries should instead receive in-kind assistance. Recently, however, cash transfers were again being considered as part of a programme to support refugees and host communities. With reference to the preceding presentations, the speaker asked how the conditionality of the programme in Jordan would be monitored, and whether the Takaful scheme in Egypt would be enough to resolve the problems with the supply of quality services.

28. In the ensuing discussion, participants mentioned that discussions about CCTs tended to be skewed towards conditionality on education and thus neglected conditionality relating to health care; that monitoring compliance was frequently complicated and expensive; and that there was a lack of evaluations systematically comparing conditional and unconditional transfers. Another issue raised was that cash transfer programmes had to incorporate an exit strategy for beneficiaries rather than be based on the presumption that the poor would indefinitely remain in need of social assistance.

29. Mr. Kinani explained that the Tayseer conditionality had been calibrated to take into consideration factors such as floods, illness and teacher absenteeism, and that it included a system for beneficiaries to lodge complaints and appeal for redress. Ms. Sholkamy stressed the importance of data availability for improving public services, and pointed to the potential for such data to be generated within the framework of CCT programmes. Ms. Abu Sarara emphasized the correlation in Jordan between CCTs and declining dropout rates.

C. BENEFICIARY SELECTION AND TARGETING

30. The session was moderated by Mr. Veras. It consisted of four presentations, two discussants' interventions and an open discussion.

31. Ms. Sholkamy stressed the importance of contextualising statistical data when considering targeting, and explained the advantages of PMT over geographic targeting. The form of PMT applied in Egypt took into account a combination of socioeconomic variables and relied on a formula based on household income, expenditure surveys and poverty maps. Implementation of the scheme had led to the creation of a unified database, which would maximize the benefit from the data collected. It was possible to add a gender dimension to targeting, for example by dispensing grants to women and prioritizing female-headed households, as with the Takaful and Karama programme.

32. Mr. Khalid Abukhattab, Deputy Director General for Poverty Reduction at the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), State of Palestine, gave a presentation about Palestine's cash transfer scheme. This programme was aimed at empowering households to meet their basic needs. It targeted poor, vulnerable and marginalized households, as well as people suffering from poor health, orphans, families living on the minimum wage and persons with disabilities. The programme was established in 2005 with support from the World Bank, but initially faced a number of challenges. The formula had favoured members of the Bedouin population, whether they were poor or not, and this had created a high error margin. Subsequently, PMT had been deployed to determine eligibility, and a national database had been developed under the supervision of MoSA.

33. The cash transfer programme relied on an element of self-targeting, as households had to apply for assistance. There were two stages of targeting and selection. First, officials evaluated individuals' eligibility to apply in a pre-selection stage. Secondly, documents were requested and data verified in a targeting stage. The pre-selection stage had been added to limit the number of applications. The new targeting formula had

been critiqued by some stakeholders for its perceived opaqueness. There had also been inclusion and exclusion errors, and targeting efforts had been complicated by the fact that poverty levels diverged between different areas. For these reasons, an oversight committee tasked with following up on targeting mechanisms had been established, and a grievance committee had been set up. MoSA intended to adopt a multidimensional conception of poverty. This would help establish a strategy of poverty alleviation and foster social development in Palestine.

34. Mr. Badr El-Din, representing the Central Bank of the Sudan, presented the country's experiences of cash transfers in the broader context of its social protection system. Initiatives to expand social assistance had begun with the establishment of social funds and voluntary organizations in the 1980s, and continued in the 1990s with rural development projects. As the economy was liberalized, social protection for vulnerable groups, including cash transfers, had grown in importance. The role of social protection remained central in the strategy to combat poverty. The current strategy had been conceived prior to the secession of South Sudan and had since been updated. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the strategy covered providing health care and drinking water, reducing maternal mortality and facilitating the return of Sudanese migrants.

35. In the Sudan, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security (MoWSS) ran the cash transfer programme and housed the Zakat Chamber, which provided social assistance to around 120,000 households and over 64,000 orphans. Other components of the Sudan's social protection system included the National Pension Fund, the National Social Insurance Fund and the National Health Insurance Fund – all operated by the MoWSS. Targeting of beneficiaries was carried out jointly by the Institute of Zakat Science and the Central Bureau of Statistics, which sent their results to the MoWSS. Benefits were issued by the Ministry of Finance. State governments helped channel grants to beneficiaries, and the MoWSS had put in place trained committees to ensure that the process functioned properly.

36. There were a number of remaining challenges, including unifying and regularly updating databases; coordinating and harmonizing the management of funding sources; and evaluating programmes through periodic reporting. Gaining access to beneficiaries across the country and developing electronic transfer mechanisms in the face of economic sanctions were also significant issues.

37. Mr. Karim Charfadi, Head of the General Department for Social Advancement at the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), Tunisia, presented the country's efforts to improve targeting methodologies. These reforms were aimed at ensuring support for vulnerable populations based on objective, transparent selection criteria, and reducing inclusion and exclusion errors. A recently set up and periodically updated central database of families in need was expected to help improve the targeting of social protection schemes and make interventions and outreach more efficient. The software would also help with collecting the data required. Preliminary exclusion parameters allowed for initial selection based on variables such as living conditions and the demographic features of households. This meant that field visits could be carried out more efficiently. Tunisia expected the database to enable synergies and to improve interaction between different social protection programmes. The data needed to include details on all household members in order to enable targeting of particularly vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities and elderly people. The Tunisian Human Rights League was participating actively in designing the programme.

38. Following these presentations, Mr. Fernando Filgueira, independent expert and senior consultant for the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), challenged the common approach of targeting by suggesting that targeting could be used to exclude the wealthiest rather than to include the poorest. It was important to consider the political dimension of targeting and local contextual factors. There were several ways to implement targeting: geographical targeting; direct means testing, using income as the criterion; and PMT, which relied on establishing a set of variables and dimensions deemed to be good indicators of poverty. PMT offered a good option to consider the specific context where the cash transfer programme was implemented, and could be combined with geographical targeting. Resources could be allocated between regions based on geographical targeting, and PMT could then be used to allocate

resources within each region. It was very important to clearly define and agree on the targeted population—i.e. whether the programme was to reach the extremely poor, the poor, or all vulnerable groups—and to reconcile the objectives with the availability of fiscal space.

39. It was important that parameters for type and level of cash transfers were very clear. Data should be seen not merely as a means to implement cash transfer programmes, but as a precondition for effective social policy more broadly. Collecting data should therefore be considered an investment in social policy rather than merely a cost associated with just one particular programme. Strong data systems could help to inform decision-making and to determine conditionality and graduation. Registration could start as a demand-driven programme and be complemented by supply-side interventions.

40. Mr. Bashir Osmat, Advisor for Social Development and Poverty at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Lebanon, contributed an intervention concerning the state of cash transfers in Lebanon. In-kind transfers had so far been the dominant means of direct social assistance in the country. As a way of responding to the massive influx of refugees to Lebanon, the Government had recently, in cooperation with a range of international actors, including the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank, sought to launch a programme providing food cards and cash transfers. The focus was nutrition, but the programme also included housing, health and education.

41. There was often some ambiguity and confusion with regard to institutional responsibility. Weak coordination between social protection funds and civil society was another issue meriting attention. The targeting formula used in Lebanon had previously tended to exclude elderly persons living on their own, for which reason measures had been taken to improve it. The number of recipient centres had also been increased. The Government aspired to more clearly delineate the social groups eligible for benefits, and to develop a system for monitoring and evaluation and one for processing grievances. A cash transfer programme with conditions related to education would hopefully be implemented in Lebanon in 2017.

42. In the ensuing discussion, participants tackled the links between employment and poverty, the role of Zakat in Arab countries and the issue of fiscal constraints, which may entail narrower targeting.

D. (CONDITIONAL) CASH TRANSFER SCHEMES RESPONDING TO THE SOCIAL PROTECTION NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND EMPOWERING WOMEN

43. The session was moderated by Ms. Nauk. It consisted of four presentations, one discussant’s intervention and an open discussion.

44. Mr. Mohammad Al-Hawri, Head of the General Department for Social Advancement at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Yemen, started his presentation with the challenges related to social protection that arise in conflict settings, including cessation of funding, rising poverty, economic decline, inflation, and complications deriving from insecurity and political instability. It was difficult to justify the exclusion of people who lived in poverty but who were nevertheless not deemed eligible for social protection schemes.

45. Cash transfers could accommodate the needs of youths and women, and programmes seeking to do so had been implemented in Yemen. One of these provided in-kind assistance in order to encourage girls’ enrolment in school. By targeting remote locations, where girls’ enrolment remained low, this programme had helped bridging the education gap between rural and urban areas. It was important to upgrade and expand the services that cash transfer beneficiaries were encouraged to use, for example by establishing school facilities for girls and employing female teachers. The second scheme focused on health-care services for mothers in rural areas. It had scaled up the access to such services through distributing coupons, which entitled beneficiaries to use them. Funding for the programme had been frozen, but negotiations to resume it were currently underway with the World Bank, possibly coupled with a reconstruction fund.

46. Mr. Abukhattab explained how the Palestinian scheme channelled money from the Ministry of Finance to the banking system. This allowed women to collect the cash from ATMs without any stigma and supported the view of cash transfers not as charity but as a right. The programme took a holistic approach, relying on trained social workers to identify households' needs and ensure they received the required support. Such support included training, access to education, food cards and school-fee payments. Endeavouring to meet households' needs, the Government also worked with other providers of support, such as religious groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

47. The Palestinian cash transfer scheme had lowered tensions within households, fostered a more positive relationship between the people and the Government, and reduced social exclusion. Impact studies had shown that women used the transfer to pay back debt or to apply for credit. The transfers also reduced the prevalence of early marriage, which was often a way of coping with poverty.

48. Ms. Maha Mezriou, Director of the Bureau of Studies, Planning and Programming at MoSA, Tunisia, presented an evaluation of school attendance among children from poor families in Tunisia conducted by the Government and UNICEF in 2013. The study clearly showed the positive impact of a cash transfer programme established in 2007. Dropouts and academic failure had decreased significantly among beneficiaries. However, the assistance schemes needed to be scaled up to cover all vulnerable children. The authorities were considering a universal cash transfer scheme for children. The cost of the scheme would be around 4 per cent of the total State budget, depending on the level of transfers. This would form part of the Government's planned social protection floor (SPF).

49. Ms. Sholkamy explained how Egypt's Takaful scheme supported women's empowerment. This was a key objective of the programme, which sought to recognize women's status as citizens. Most women in Egypt worked for low wages in the informal sector and/or performed household tasks, meaning that female employment generally was not recorded, and that women were not covered by social security, even though more than 30 per cent of households depended on women's labour. This applied across levels of educational attainment. Benefits in the Takaful programmes were set at a level close to the formal sector minimum wage and given directly to women as a way of recognizing their work in the household.

50. Giving women control of the funds was important, since women in Egypt were often seen as responsible for meeting households' costs of accessing public services. Since the Takaful programme had only been running for a year and a half, it was too soon to assess whether it had been successful in empowering women. A key success so far, however, had been the database of recipients. This would serve as the basis for a broader unified database and provide information on how to improve services.

51. Following these presentations, Mr. Arthur van Diesen, Regional Social Policy Advisor for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region at UNICEF, made an intervention in which he reported the conclusions of two studies: one reviewing the evidence of how cash transfer schemes in Africa affected children, and one evaluating schemes funded or assisted by UNICEF. These studies confirmed that cash transfers could have diverse effects on health, nutrition, economic empowerment and resilience. Well-designed programmes could have a long-term impact beyond short-term income smoothing, but if the transfers were set at too low a level, they may not generate the desired impacts. Eligibility criteria should be clear in order for beneficiaries to understand them and know what they could expect to receive. For the positive outcomes to materialize, payments had to be timely and regular, allowing households to plan effectively. Cash transfers had the biggest impact when combined with a broader package of support, including public service provision and effective, holistic management of each household's needs.

52. In the open discussion that followed, participants emphasized the importance of adopting a holistic support package including not only transfers but also, for example, provision of training. Covering remote areas was often a challenge. The discussion also addressed targeting mechanisms, the importance of soft skills in training components and social protection for people displaced by conflict. The Social Welfare Fund in

Yemen, for example, included a component that allowed internally displaced persons and refugees to access health-care services. Ensuring appropriate levels of transfers was regarded as challenging.

53. Mr. Dipayan Bhattacharyya, Regional Programme Advisor on Social Protection and Social Safety Nets at the WFP, warned that the levels of malnutrition were rising in North Africa and that cash transfers were not sufficiently addressing that problem. Conditionalities should not be overburdening, but more attention needed to be paid to the first 1,000 days of children's lives. Globally, the Philippines was emerging as a best practice case in adding life skills and livelihood aspects to the programmes and in requesting participants to attend monthly family development sessions.

E. CASH TRANSFERS IN RURAL AREAS

54. The session was moderated by Ms. Ursula Kulke, Senior Social Security Specialist at the Regional Office for Arab States of the International Labour Organization (ILO). It consisted of two presentations, two discussants' interventions and an open discussion.

55. Mr. Mohamed Al-Maswari, Assistant Deputy for Externally Funded Projects Sector, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Yemen, gave a presentation concerning efforts to improve the lot of the rural poor in his country. He explained the Social Development Fund's targeting method, which entailed that 44 per cent of spending went to areas where the poverty level exceeded 75 per cent. Yemen's cash-for-work scheme was aimed at providing income to poor households and create productive assets in rural areas. Between 2008 and 2014, almost 10 million days of work for the poor were created. There had been initiatives to extend financial infrastructure, such as banking and microcredit, to rural areas, and the microcredit schemes had generated a positive impact. A nutrition and school feeding programme was implemented in Yemen by the WFP.

56. Ms. Lobna Fatani, Programme Policy Officer at the WFP in Egypt, delivered a presentation about their school feeding programme, which was aimed at reducing short-term hunger and improving cognitive abilities; encouraging enrolment and attendance, especially among girls; reducing child labour; and supporting food security. The school feeding programme reached some 100,000 children and an additional 400,000 family members. In addition to daily snacks for children, it provided in-kind take-home rations and, since 2015, food vouchers distributed via e-card. The latter were dispensed through magnetic-strip cards by means of which beneficiaries could purchase food from selected retailers. Important considerations in designing the e-voucher system included ensuring the availability of markets able to support beneficiaries, and adjusting the programme in accordance with beneficiaries' preferences.

57. The e-voucher food-programme process included a number of stages and actors. First, NGOs collected attendance records and delivered these to the WFP. Secondly, the WFP, through its service providers, transferred e-vouchers, each worth 100 Egyptian Pounds, to eligible beneficiaries. Thirdly, beneficiaries redeemed their vouchers at selected retailers. Fourthly, retailers were reimbursed through NGOs or service providers. E-cards were issued in the names of beneficiary children rather than of their parents. This was partly in order to preserve the link to education, but also to prevent a bias against mothers, since it was often the case that only fathers' names were available. Thus, each household had as many cards as it had children participating in the programme. Participating retailers had to be located within two kilometres of a school in order to be accessible to women. A WFP hotline, furthermore, had been established for stakeholders.

58. Findings on the impact of using e-vouchers had been positive: food purchased with e-vouchers was apparently healthier than food provided in-kind, and the e-vouchers had had a highly positive impact on school enrolment and attendance. Additional advantages included that e-vouchers were relatively cheap and logistically easy to disburse compared with other means of food assistance, and that the dignity of beneficiaries was less compromised. The WFP intended to scale up its use of e-vouchers to encompass a higher proportion of school-feeding beneficiaries.

59. Mr. Kinani began his discussant's intervention by reiterating that Tayseer was a predominantly rural programme that targeted remote areas. This implied numerous challenges: the distance between schools and the nearest paved road could be large, which illustrated the difficulties of reaching programme beneficiaries. In rural areas, furthermore, schools frequently lacked infrastructure such as toilets and electricity. Demand for education was weak, and school classes often encompassed multiple levels. Families in these areas tended to be large, with an average targeted family size of 6.5, and the educational level low. Few households had bank accounts, and post offices were typically scarce and difficult to access.

60. The remoteness of many schools made it difficult to attract teachers and staff. The Government was now using auxiliary schools to increase availability of primary education, as these had been shown to reduce dropout rates. Awareness sessions were held in the beginning of each semester to inform students and parents about the Tayseer programme. Mobile units in fully equipped vehicles had been set up to function as mobile post offices in order to disburse cash. When beneficiaries were unable to collect their grants in time, the money was not forfeited, but instead given to the beneficiaries together with the next disbursement. A range of other programmes complemented Tayseer by furthering development among the poor, for instance a nationwide nutrition programme, which had been scientifically evaluated with the support of the FAO and the World Bank.

61. Mr. Maurice Saade, FAO country representative in Lebanon, shared some general thoughts relating to poverty and social assistance in rural areas. He set out by listing crucial factors that distinguished such areas from urban ones. One of these was that rural labour markets were almost entirely informal. Another characteristic of rural areas was that their populations, due to such factors as migration to urban areas and pastoralism, were frequently mobile. Furthermore, women had come to play a predominant role in rural economies due to the "feminization" of the agricultural sector, which had resulted from male migration to towns and cities. Such migration had also implied that the average age in rural areas was comparatively high, as migration was principally undertaken by the young.

62. Other features of rural areas included the economic uncertainty and hazardousness afflicting those living there, the related phenomenon of households moving between income brackets from one year to another, and the often blurred distinction between employees and employers. Universal subsidies, which were presently being reduced or abolished in many countries, had never much benefited the poor in rural areas, and had overall been regressive as they mostly benefited larger farms. Subsidies for cash crops had had a negative environmental impact. However, effective substitutes nevertheless had to be introduced prior to the abolition of subsidies. The experience of FAO of unconditional cash transfers in Africa had been positive, and cash transfers served not only to move people above the poverty line, but also provided them with the resilience needed to stay there. Farmers in a number of countries did not have legal status and were thus unable to participate in social insurance schemes.

63. The following discussion touched upon the variegated nature of programmes implemented in rural areas across the Arab region, the inequitable impact of universal subsidies, the detrimental effect on the agricultural sectors of international sanctions in some countries and the importance of recalling the particular needs of persons engaged in pastoral occupations.

F. COORDINATION BETWEEN IMPLEMENTING ACTORS

64. The session was moderated by Mr. Van Diesen. It consisted of two presentations, two discussants' interventions and an open discussion.

65. Ms. Sholkamy began her presentation by stating that coordination between actors was important for setting up and running any cash transfer programme, but that it was particularly crucial for CCT schemes. A variety of entities were involved in designing and implementing the Takaful programme, including the ministries of social solidarity, finance, interior, administrative development, electricity, health and education; the Health Insurance Organization (HIO); and a number of national councils and agencies. Parliament, in addition, had a supervisory role. All these actors needed to develop a common and unified understanding of

objectives and definitions. The HIO, for example, defined disability in a way that was not suitable for the programme.

66. Political will among stakeholders was indispensable. If they did not align their objectives, mandates and priorities, coordination would not happen. In Egypt, different institutions used different variables, sources and frequencies of data collection. Synchronising these data sets was problematic, as was establishing who should have access to what data. Other problematic issues of coordination included reporting mechanisms, determining who should have programme ownership, and getting all actors to work at the same pace. Monitoring compliance was difficult in a system with little trust. It would be advisable for the Takaful implementers to develop a common calendar and issue periodic reports in Arabic to show the public the quality of the programme. This required the programme leaders to be good communicators.

67. Mr. Filgueira commenced his presentation by noting that cash transfer programmes forced different institutions to communicate, coordinate and integrate their data sets. Coordination in front desks and back offices needed to be equally strong and to work in tandem. There were several different governance models, each implying different roles for stakeholders such as programme administrators, line ministries and municipalities. In Bolivia, for example, the ministries of health and education were the main drivers of the programme, with municipalities serving as the front desks. The characteristics of each governance model affected the implementation of CCT programmes.

68. Critical issues for coordination and authority included whether the design of a programme involved the relevant institutional players, whether those players who were to assume the role of front desk had agreed upon registration formats and procedures, and whether a command centre had been consolidated. It was thus very important to invest time and care in programme design in order to build common information systems including the metadata used for selecting the target population and standardized registration forms and procedures, which were a more crucial aspect of programme design than it might seem. Monitoring and managing new entries, continued eligibility, compliance with conditionality and programme exit also required coordination.

69. Mr. Abukhattab started his subsequent intervention by clarifying that there were two types of coordination, namely coordination between different ministries and field coordination between the Government and other actors. The relevant ministry should assume a leading coordinating role. Having a council established for the purpose of facilitating coordination, as Palestine did, was also beneficial. It was important that all stakeholders had access to the necessary data. Efforts had been made in Palestine to attain coordination with charity organizations that provided services. Trust between stakeholders was indispensable for coordination to be successful. Conflict and crisis situations posed a special challenge to coordination and cooperation.

70. Ms. Kulke next made an intervention in which she spoke about the SPF initiative, adopted in 2012 through ILO Recommendation 202, and its relevance for cash transfer schemes. The success of Bolsa Familia could in large part be attributed to its incorporating the four SPF guarantees, namely access to essential health care; basic income security for children, providing access to necessary goods and services; basic income security for persons in active age unable to earn sufficient income; and basic income security for older persons. This indicated the efficiency gains that could be secured through consolidation and coordination. For coordination to be successful, it was important to build political will and commitment among key decision makers and stakeholders. Additionally, coordination aiming to further provision of social protection needed to take place not only at the national level, but also within the United Nations system.

71. In the subsequent discussion, participants mentioned the importance of coordinating not only at the formal level but at the practical one too, and of involving, empowering and informing beneficiaries. Another issue raised during the discussion was whether coordination councils were sufficient. Some participants emphasized the importance of having in place an overarching authority to lead the effort.

G. MEASURING THE IMPACT OF CCTS

72. The session was moderated by Ms. Nauk. It consisted of two presentations and an open discussion.
73. Mr. Filgueira presented the fundamentals of cash transfer impact evaluations, emphasizing the need to consider evaluation during the programme design stage. It was important to establish baseline statistics, such as the poverty rate and the levels of school attendance, before the programme commenced, and to have goals against which progress and results could be measured. Programmes should undergo audits to monitor the actions being taken, and impact assessments should be carried out. There were a number of potential designs for impact evaluations. Randomized control trials were well suited for identifying the impact of the programme, but they were expensive and the results could be difficult to apply in other settings. Non-randomized and quasi-experimental evaluations could also have the potential to provide informative results, but worked best if the data could be observed over a longer period of time.
74. Evaluations from Latin America had found that transfers often led to a significant reduction in the severity of poverty, though they usually were not sufficiently generous to lift families out of poverty altogether. The impact on education was usually small, particularly if programme coverage was low and attendance or enrolment already high. Nevertheless, transfers supported other outcomes, such as improved nutrition and increased economic activity in the community. There had been almost no negative impact on labour market participation or employment for men or women, though there had been some examples of moves from formal to informal employment. Furthermore, there had been no observed impact on fertility, with the possible exception of the programme in Honduras.
75. The Philippines had done a randomized experiment to test the impact of the conditionality. It found that conditionality did improve school attendance, but the sanctioning for non-compliance had a negative impact on nutrition for example, so there seemed to be a trade-off between different objectives.
76. Mr. Kinani gave a presentation on how the Tayseer programme had been evaluated and about the evaluation outcomes. The findings of the Tayseer evaluation study had led to some changes being made to the programme's design. A second evaluation study was planned, since Tayseer had recently been modified to include a component for early childhood education. The first evaluation study had been conducted with the support of the World Bank and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab during a two-year experimental phase after the programme was launched in 2008. It had addressed three main issues: the impact of the programme on school dropouts, since reducing the level of dropouts was the main goal of Tayseer; the conditions and how compliance with these was verified; and whether transferring the grants to mothers instead of to fathers made the programme more efficient.
77. In the evaluation study, a sample consisting of 320 education sectors, each comprising one main school and a number of satellite schools, had been used. The sectors had been divided into five groups: one control group where cash transfers were not dispensed at all, and four treatment groups where cash transfers were either unconditional or conditional and given either to mothers or to fathers. The data used in the evaluation study had been compiled through a family survey and through school visits undertaken to control attendance. Stakeholders' awareness of the programme's conditionality had been evaluated through surveys carried out during field missions.
78. The results of the evaluation study had indicated that the cash transfers had a positive impact, as dropouts decreased within treatment groups, while levels of re-enrolment, attendance and completion increased. Dropout rates had decreased most drastically among students who cited low educational quality as their reason for leaving school. The average time spent by children on school-related activities, including homework, had increased by 1.5 hours a day as a result of Tayseer. The evaluation accordingly showed a reduction in child labour.

79. The main objective of Tayseer was not to increase attendance, which in Morocco was quite high from the outset already, but to reduce the level of dropouts. For this reason, the conditionality had been preserved even though the evaluation study had indicated an especially positive effect on attendance generated by the unconditional transfers.

80. Following this, other experiences related to evaluation were shared by participants. Mr. Al-Maswari told the workshop that the cash transfer scheme in Yemen had been evaluated on a quarterly basis, and that the results had indicated that families benefitting from cash transfers tended to have a better chance of improving their capital assets, for example by buying agricultural equipment. Impact assessments had also shown that families benefitting from cash transfers more often visited health clinics as compared to non-beneficiary families. The small size of the cash transfers in Yemen had implied little or no impact on poverty, which had grown more severe consequent to recent conflicts.

81. Mr. Abukhattab mentioned that impact assessments of the Palestinian cash transfer scheme had indicated that the level of transfers was crucial. He also mentioned that the World Bank had carried out a study in Palestine showing that cash transfer beneficiaries spent a large proportion of their grants on food, especially on meat.

H. CLOSING SESSION

82. Ms. Nauk concluded the workshop by thanking all participants for their efforts, and by re-emphasizing the importance and timeliness of the topic. She briefly discussed potential avenues for continued dialogue and cooperation, mentioning that ESCWA considered organizing a series of workshops about cash transfers. She also put forward for consideration the idea of creating an online community of practice for stakeholders in the region.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. VENUE AND DATE

83. The workshop on Conditional Cash Transfers in the Arab Region was held at the United Nations House in Beirut, on 19 and 20 July 2016.

B. OPENING

84. Mr. Abdallah Al Dardari, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCWA, opened the workshop, welcoming the participants and underlining the importance of the topic. He noted that CCTs were at the centre of a larger debate on social protection policies, particularly vital in the Arab region, where marginalization had proven a source of conflict. Social protection featured in a number of the Sustainable Development Goals and was key to the 2030 Agenda. The workshop should serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and views on how to build and improve SPFs.

85. Mr. Elhabib Kinani, Project Director of the Tayseer Programme at the Ministry of National Education, Morocco, mentioned his country's experience of CCTs and its partnerships with other countries in the region, including Jordan, Tunisia and Yemen. Morocco had taken the initiative to organize the workshop hoping that it might serve as a venue for sharing experiences and discussing challenges pertaining to CCT programmes.

86. Mr. Alfredo Impiglia, Coordinator at the Farmer Field School and Advisor at FAO, stressed that the Organization put great emphasis on social protection. FAO was trying to establish an agenda for overcoming the gap between social protection and rural development, and the present event constituted a timely opportunity for FAO to learn from countries' experiences how such an agenda ought to be shaped. CCT programmes had made inroads in the Arab region, but it was important to bear in mind that what worked in one context was not necessarily appropriate in others.

87. Ms. Ursula Kulke, Senior Social Security Specialist at the ILO Regional Office for Arab States, thanked the organizers for an important and timely workshop, and mentioned that social protection had always been at the core of the mandate and work of ILO. In the 1990s, it had become clear that cash transfers were an important tool for governments constructing SPFs. Though the Latin American countries had blazed the trail, cash transfer programmes had subsequently been implemented in Central and Eastern Europe and in Africa, and in some Arab countries. Cash transfers had a crucial role in protecting the poor when general subsidies were being scaled back, but they had to be coordinated with other components of social protection systems.

88. Mr. Arthur van Diesen, Regional Social Policy Adviser for the MENA Region at UNICEF, joined previous speakers in recognizing the criticalness of the workshop topic, and welcomed the range of assembled representatives, especially the practitioners. Countries in the region would benefit from a higher level of cooperation and experience-sharing. Children faced many obstacles, and exposure to such vulnerabilities could entail life-long consequences. Access to health care and education was indispensable for children's present and future welfare. Adolescents, furthermore, were susceptible to particular dangers, such as early marriage, which social protection could serve to prevent. UNICEF took a rather holistic approach to social protection, defining the concept as including not merely cash transfers and similar social assistance measures, but also access to social services, for example. UNICEF worked on social protection reform with several regional countries.

89. Mr. Oliver Smith, Coordination Officer at the UNHCR in Lebanon, stated that the UNHCR attended the workshop mainly to learn from other participants' experiences. Cash transfers had not featured prominently within the field of work of the UNHCR. Lebanon was a key country for the convergence of social protection and humanitarian work, and progress had been made in the past three years towards cash transfer provision for refugees. Cash transfers were relatively cost efficient, and a comparatively non-demeaning form of social assistance from the perspective of beneficiaries.

90. Mr. Dipayan Bhattacharyya, WFP Regional Programme Advisor, declared that the WFP was happy to be part of the discussion about CCTs. Social protection was a vital component of the support it provided to countries in the Arab region. Cash transfer schemes with which the WFP had been involved had mainly been unconditional ones, but it had recently also gained some experience in CCTs. The WFP recently published a major report on social protection in the Arab region.

C. PARTICIPANTS

91. More than 40 participants representing ESCWA member States, regional and international organizations and United Nations entities, academia and civil society organizations attended the workshop. The list of participants is contained in the annex to this report.

D. DOCUMENTS

92. Documents related to the meeting are available on the ESCWA website at <https://www.unescwa.org/events/conditional-cash-transfers-arab-region>.

Annex*

List of participants

A. ESCWA MEMBER STATES

Egypt

Ms. Mona Nasser Milad Moussa
Technical Director, Ministry of Finance

Iraq

Mr. Ghadeer Edwar Razouk
Senior Chief Researcher, Ministry of Planning

Jordan

Mr. Mohammad Al Mistarihi
Director, National Aid Fund

Ms. Khawla Abu Sarara
Head of the Programming and Analysis Division,
National Aid Fund (NAF)

Lebanon

Mr. Bashir Osmat
Minister Advisor for Social Development and
Poverty, Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Ramzi Fanous
Statistician, Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Morocco

Mr. Elhabib Kinani
Project Director of the Tayseer Programme,
Ministry of National Education

Mauritania

Mr. Moulaye El Hacem
Social Advisor for the Economic & Finance
Minister, Ministry of Economy and Finance

Mr. Mohamedou Mhaimid
Programme Coordinator, National Program of
Social Transfers/National Agency TADAMOUN

Palestine

Mr. Khalid Abukhattab
Deputy Director General for Poverty Reduction,
Ministry of Social Development

Sudan

Mr. Omer Mustafa Hassan Ahmed
Deputy Director, Ministry of Trade

Mr. Ahmad Othman Abdallah
Sudanese Working Abroad Bureau

Ms. Fatima El-Badawi
Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

Mr. Badr El-Din
Economist, Sudan Central Bank

Tunisia

Mr. Karim Charfadi
Head of the General Department for Social
Advancement, Ministry of Social Affairs

Ms. Maha Mezriou
Director, Bureau of Studies, Planning and
Programming, Ministry of Social Affairs

Yemen

Mr. Mohammed Al-Hawri
Deputy Minister of Planning, Ministry of Planning
and International Cooperation

Mr. Mohamed Al-Maswari
Assistant Deputy of Externally Funded Projects
Sector, Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

* Issued as submitted.

B. EXPERTS

Mr. Fabio Veras
Research coordinator, International Policy Centre
for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Ms. Hania Sholkamy
American University in Cairo

Mr. Fernando Filgueira
Independent expert, Senior Consultant for the
United Nations
Economic Commission for Latin America and the
Caribbean (ECLAC)

C. UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr. Maurice Saade
FAO Representative in Lebanon, FAO

Ms. Faten Adada
Social Protection Focal point, FAO Lebanon

Mr. Alfredo Impiglia
Delivery Manager, Regional Initiative on Small
Scale Agriculture, FAO Regional Office
for Near East

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Ms. Ursula Kulke
Senior Regional Social Security Specialist, ILO
Regional Office for Arab States

Ms. Hanin Al-Wazzan
Consultant, ILO-ROAS

Ms. Christine Rouhana
Research Assistant, ILO-ROAS

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Mr. Jamil El Khoury
Senior Research Officer, Lebanon Cash
Consortium – International Rescue Committee

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Mr. Jean-Marie Garelli
Acting Deputy Representative (Operations),
UNHCR

Mr. Oliver Smith
Coordination Officer, UNHCR Lebanon

Mr. Loreto Palmaera
Programme Officer (cash), UNHCR Lebanon

Mr. Khalil Dagher
Basic Assistance Sector Coordinator, UNHCR
Lebanon

Pablo Vizcaino
Senior Field Coordinator

Solidarités

Ms. Louise Guillaumant
Technical Management Lead

Ms. Dalia Sbeih
FSL Coordinator

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Mr. Arthur van Diesen
Regional Social Policy Adviser, UNICEF MENA
Regional Office

Ms. Violet Speck-Warnery
Chief of Field Operations, UNICEF Lebanon
Office

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Ms. Shereen Eldaly
Project Officer, Syria Crisis Response

World Bank

Ms. Haneen Sayed
Program Leader, Human Development, Poverty,
Jobs and Gender

World Food Programme (WFP)

Mr. Dipayan Bhattacharyya
Regional Programme Advisor, Social Protection
and Social Safety Net

Ms. Lobna Fatani
Programme Policy Officer, WFP Egypt

Mr. Issa Sanogo
Deputy Country Director, WFP Lebanon

Mr. Jordi Renart
Head of Programme, WFP Lebanon

Ms. Khatuna Epremidze
Regional Programme Advisor, WFP Egypt

Ms. Amber Savage
Head of Programme Innovation, Amman Liaison
Office for the Syria Crisis, WFP Jordan