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**Subject:**

Dear

With many thanks to

## DISTRIBUTIONS OCCURRED SO FAR

According to the programme, milk is to be delivered to schools across Syria as part of WFP's existing Fortified School Snacks Programme (FSSP). WFP is providing fortified date bars and UHT milk to over 500,000 vulnerable school children in areas affected by forced displacement. The programme covers 2 academic years (2016-2018).

The first batch of milk has arrived in Syria at the Lattakia port around 15 October 2016, followed by several batches arrived in the following months. As of 31 January, 4.484.889 metric tonnes of milk reached Syria. Out of this quantity, 33% was already distributed, the rest will be distributed in the coming weeks and months, depending on the expiring dates and other factors. This is an acceptable performance so far.

## CHALLENGES

During this period, WFP faced several issues and obstacles to the distribution, due to bureaucracy and lengthy negotiations with Syria authorities (please note that 6 ministers are involved and have to grant permissions). In particular, to avoid the destruction of a quantity due to expire in less than 2 week-time and that would not be allowed in the schools according to the Syrian regulations, WFP decided to distribute some milk through the General Food Distribution (GFA instead of through the School Feeding programme). As a matter of fact, 9% of the milk arrived in Syria so far has been distributed through GFA (for a volume of more than 405 metric tonnes). Milk, although through GFA, targeted children aged 5 to 12, mainly in Aleppo.

## OPERATIONAL JUSTIFICATION

Although a more timely information from WFP would have been appreciated, on strict operational grounds, we believe the approach taken is justified as the distribution through GFA by addressing needs of children was way better than the alternative solution, which would have been the destruction of the milk. We also consider that this action is a "premiere" for WFP (UHT procurement - shipment - clearance and distribution) and that the logistics/legal constraints are even more complex for the nature of the products (UHT as per EC requests instead of powder milk, for instance), therefore such operational challenges were potential risks.

## WAY FORWARD

- ➔ our general recommendation is that operational flexibility and adaptability (based on an open and sustained operational communication) should be shown vis a vis the partner. But better information flow should be ensured by the partner. After having consulted

- WPF

1. For the past : WFP will request a MR of the milk contract to retroactively record the changes in the modality of assistance through GFA for the one-off assistance.
  2. For the future: WFP will ask through the MR to reserve the use of GFA as a modality of assistance when required if deemed necessary during the school feeding implementation.
- Motivations: (1) the actual regulatory difficulties in the implementation of the action, as outlined in the report; (2) to avoid incurring in risks related to the (rather short) shelf life of the commodities (3) and related reputational risks associated with possible damages; (4) to avoid destruction of the product.

**- ECHO will**

- \* acknowledge the difficulty of implementation due to administrative / logistics impediments, and therefore
- \* agree with the modification request, to allow transfer of milk distribution to Fortified School Snacks Program (FSSP) to General Food distribution (GFD) under specific conditions (conditions deemed relevant for the partner to justify inability to distribute through schools; transparent and frequent reporting; target children; description of mitigation measures, etc.)
- \* regarding public communication on the project, it has been managed in a protective mode until now. As the project implementation progresses and WFP can provide evidence of impact on children nb IDPs , there should be material for possible stories/visibility (we'll follow up with [REDACTED])
- \* engage with WFP to understand the expectations for the coming months for the program (mitigation measures and negotiations outcomes)

At your disposal.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



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