APRIL HIGHLIGHTS:

- Total of 85,251 beneficiaries were reached during March distribution (82,404 Syrian and 2,847 Syrian Palestinian Refugees), meeting almost 99% of the target.
- March beneficiaries have been derived from results of the UNHCR biometric verification exercise (IRIS scan) and removal of closed cases and no-shows.
- Until vulnerability-based targeting criteria are finalized, the reduced voucher value will continue to be US$17 per person per month instead of planned US$24.2, applying 30% reduction.
- The joint WFP/UNCHCR Vulnerability Assessment of the Syrian refugees is on-going in Greater Cairo (Save the Children), Alexandria (Caritas) and Damietta (Resala) with close to 70% of household data collection done.
- Methodology to define four levels of vulnerability and eligibility to the food assistance was finalized for each of the four categories, households are classified into one out of the four vulnerability categories and then assigned a weight with being 1: low vulnerability; 2: mild vulnerability; 3: moderate/high vulnerability; and 4: severe vulnerability, whereby a as result only the two categories of moderate/high and severe vulnerability will be considered for further food assistance.
- WFP is in the process to introduce e-vouchers with Fathallah supermarket chains with a pilot testing planned in Alexandria for April distribution cycle. E-vouchers (electronic gift cards) will be distributed to WFP beneficiaries based in Alexandria and Marsa Matrouh. WFP is currently using Carrefour electronic shop gift cards in Greater Cairo to cover 60% of the caseload. Upon launch of cards with Fathallah, additional 25% of the caseload is planned to be reached by May. This would leave only 15% use of paper vouchers (Hyper supermarkets chain, in Damietta)

NEEDS ANALYSIS:

- Analysis of the post-distribution monitoring data collected in the 4th quarter compared to the 3rd quarter of 2014 showed deterioration of the over-all food consumption scores (FCS) amongst beneficiaries, from 96 to 89 percent. However, dietary diversity remained stabilized at 5.4, whereas there is a negative trend in the following consumption-based strategies: more beneficiaries decrease size of meals (from 19 to 31 percent) and restrict food consumption by adults in order for small children to eat (from 12 to 22 percent), as well as restriction consumption of females.
- Comparative analysis between the 3rd and 4th quarters showed that the main source income remains casual labor, followed by assistance from humanitarian organizations. These two variables experienced increase from 3rd to 4th quarter. Moreover, PDM monitoring results and beneficiaries feedback mechanisms showed that main geographic area of concern is Damietta governorate.
- Vegetable prices remain seasonally high while housing prices rise: Month-on-month inflation in food prices stayed around 2.5 percent during March, which is consistent with the seasonal pattern but indicates further increases in April. Annual inflation in the consumer price index and food price index rose to 11.8 percent and 9.4 percent respectively. Food insecurity in Egypt remains an issue of household access to food driven by diminishing purchasing power. The average Egyptian household spends more than 40 percent of their income on food, rising to more than 60 percent for the poorest families. Meanwhile, the housing price index saw a 3.7 percent jump in March, mainly attributed to a