SIERRA LEONE LOGISTICS PILLAR MEETING MINUTES

LOCATION: National Disaster Management Agency office and on-line meeting

DATE: 29 September 2022

LEADS: National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and World Food Programme (WFP)

PARTICIPANTS: Action Against Hunger (AAH), Care Sierra Leone (CSL), Emergency (E), Freetown City Council (FCC), Health Alert (HA), Medicines San Frontières (MSF), Navy (RSLAF), National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), Save the Children International (SCI), Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), World Health Organization (WHO)

AGENDA:

1. Action items from last meeting
2. Update on windstorm and flooding disaster
3. Planned training of regional coordinators and first line responders in Bo and Makeni
5. AOB
6. Next meeting

OUTCOMES/ ACTIONS

- NDMA to provide a slide on coordination that borders on their activity for the workshops in Bo and Makeni.
- NDMA to prepare concept paper on mitigation measures to lessen the impacts on disaster prone areas.
- NDMA to create templates on rapid assessment, situation reporting and stock reporting template.
- International Trade Service to be engaged by partners to gain clarity on the levied tax.
- NDMA to provide a list of participants for the Bo and Makeni training
- Simulation exercise to be organized for a large-scale emergency (Internal)
- NDMA to support the regional coordinators with internet connectivity for frequent coordination
- Next logistics Pillar meeting is scheduled for 27 October 2022

USEFUL LINKS

- Logistics pillar Google link here
- Inter-pillar google link here
- Sierra Leone Log.ie site https://logie.logcluster.org/?op=sle
- Logistics Cluster – online basic logistics training registration here

1. Welcome and Action items
The monthly logistics pillar meeting was held on Thursday, 29 September 2022, at the National Disaster Management Agency Headquarter Office, Aberdeen Road, Freetown. It was chaired by the Director of Relief and Response in the absence of the deputy head of the institution who later joined the meeting. This meeting was attended by humanitarian agencies and the government institutions.

Action items from last meeting were discussed. Early warning signs are being sent by the meteorological agency to disaster prone communities to inform and educate them on impending disaster. In line with the warehouse management workshop that will be held in Bo and Makeni, the NDMA is working on the list of participants that will be taking part in the training. Additionally, NDMA have met with the International Federation of the Red Cross to discuss fund sourcing initiatives as was planned three months ago to aid response activities. FCC have explored another option by working with the Ministry of Finance in line with the ‘Request for Proposal’ regarding waste management so they will not be engaging NDMA for contact details any longer. Updated list for flooding is yet to be provided due to the absence of the focal point. NDMA does not have an excel sheet displaying relief items received. According to them, all relief items are handed over to the beneficiaries directly from donor organisations.

2. Update on windstorm and flooding disaster

The NDMA reported series of incidents across the nation due to flooding. Reference was made to the 28 August disaster in Freetown that recorded a total of seven fatalities. Many areas (Culvert, Wellington, Looking Town, Lumley, Kango, Kamayama) were affected by the flooding due to poor drainage systems, sand mining and river banking for reclaiming land.

Following the assessment of the affected areas, it was reported during the coordination meeting that over 1,000 households were impacted by this incident. Humanitarian agencies pledged their support to the affected people by donating food and cash.

WFP, Caritas, Save the Children and Care SL are among the humanitarian agencies that provided cash-based transfers, wet feeding, and school items to the affected communities. This support will last for a little over two months.

Rapt attention is paid especially to the disable, pregnant women, and children as they are considered as highly vulnerable in society.

There are challenges faced by humanitarian partners in administering the aid packages to the affected communities due to poor planning and the high-risk environment.

In September, another disaster occurred killing seven within the Freetown Municipality.

There are areas along the district town of Bonthe where houses were submerged and plantations damaged due to heavy flooding.

It was noted that thorough logistics planning is needed in these areas considering recent events and the negative impacts flooding is having in these communities.

The NDMA attendees were keen to know more about the way forward considering all that NDMA have learned in recent times regarding the disaster and lives lost. NDMA updated that they have engaged other organisations especially those that have projects in Bonthe to assist in working together to find solution in alleviating these issues.
• NDMA were advised to focus on the geospatial mapping of the communities that are considered high risk and find ways to mitigate the occurrences of flooding and landslide.

• In some parts of these districts, school going children use boats to cross the flooded areas. Some flooded areas have water up to shoulder height and in most cases the affected people move to a higher ground to protect their lives.

• Some affected persons must walk for miles to receive relief items and other support due to last mile inaccessibility and flooding.

• It was suggested that coordination and capacity strengthening should be a focus area for partners and the government.

**ACTION POINT**

**NDMA to prepare a concept paper on mitigation measures to lessen the impacts on disaster prone areas**

3. **Planned training of regional coordinators and first line responders in Bo and Makeni**

• It was noted that the Field Based Preparedness Project (FBPP) will be organizing two workshops in Bo and Makeni for NDMA regional coordinators and first line responders in these districts. These workshops will be part of the prepositioning strategy for both the wet season and daily coordination through information sharing and recording of all donations and supplies received from humanitarian actors. The training will be a replica of the training that was organized in June 2022 for NDMA Freetown personnel.

• The workshops are planned for the second and third weeks of October 2022 in Bo and Makeni respectively. The focus will be on three fundamental areas namely: theoretical, practical, and strategic. Participants will learn key warehouse principles and how they relate to daily tasks and response activities.

• Outstanding participants from the last training in June will serve as facilitators in a training of trainer’s mode of knowledge sharing in the upcoming workshops.

• It was reported that NDMA has more than 20 mobile storage units in Port Loko that should be relocated to other areas where they are needed. Most of these MSUs are empty and not creating the desired impact of storing goods for response or long-term projects.

• A question was asked if the workshop was for all pillar members, however, it was communicated that it is for NDMA and the regional personnel.

**ACTION POINT**

**NDMA to prepare a list of participants for the Bo and Makeni training sessions.**

4. **National Preparedness Action Plan review**

• In line with the National Preparedness Action Plans, coordination and information sharing, the first action plan on the list, is presently ongoing. The Google drive and WhatsApp group have been created to aid partner coordination and the sharing of information.

• MIRA (Multi - Sector Initial Rapid Assessment) Tool is a standard assessment tool, has been reviewed to match the Sierra Leone disaster context.

• The logistics pillar has a contact list for all partners within the pillar which is referenced for calls and emails.

• It was suggested that NDMA liaise with health logistics institutions for knowledge sharing regarding collation of donated items for best practice.
• It was noted that, while much work has been done to improve coordination and information sharing, there is still more to be done in finalizing all areas within this action plan.

• On the second action plan – Relief Items Tracking and Storage – it was stated that much has been done to adequately prepare for the wet season through the assembly of the mobile storage units in the three districts and the Port Loko facility that was handed over to NDMA in April last year. In addition, a warehouse management training was organized to capacitate NDMA in executing tasks related to the receipts and dispatches of goods bearing in mind one of the objectives of the FBPP, is empowering national responders with the tools to be better prepared to face disasters.

• It was suggested that all mobile storage units assembled under the FBPP should be mapped on the NDMA geographical information system for visibility.

• It was stated that partners should pass on the responsibility of delivering donated items to affected persons to the NDMA as they are the agency responsible for all disaster related activities. Distribution can be done together with the partners for visibility and transparency if required.

• NDMA was urged to reach out to partners to assist with funds to stockpile the installed facilities.

• NDMA has completed the donation management/distribution methodology worksheet to be used for distribution of items to the affected people. The document is with parliament awaiting approval.

• On the third action point, Logistics Constraint and Road Access, humanitarian partners’ assets have been collated even though there is more to be done. Partners need to give the green light for their assets to be added to the existing list for future reference.

• Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between NDMA and partners for the use of their assets when needed.

• In line with medical logistics, Crown Agents and the Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation built a drone to carry medical supplies to the interior. The test was successful, however, the downside to this was that huge consignments of supplies cannot be transported using the drone because of its size and capacity.

• On the fourth action plan, Import Clearance and Local Procurement, emphasis was placed on the engagement with the National Revenue Authority and other line ministries to come up with a quick solution to alleviate the delays and cost incurred by humanitarian agencies through demurrage and storage charges.

• Humanitarian organisations that provided Tax Identification Numbers now have visibility on their cargo movement from one stage of the process to the other.

• It was mentioned that the Integrated Trade Services (ITS) are levying a one percent tax on all humanitarian shipments in Sierra Leone and this has created an additional challenge for the humanitarian partners. ITS is a Sierra Leonean owned and managed business engaged in various trade services. They provide verification and facilitation services for cross border trade. This tax is mandatory for all shipments entering the port of Sierra Leone.

• On the fifth action plan, NDMA were urged to reach out to the private sectors for support in terms of ample warehouse space usage within Freetown and logistics support when needed.

• A question was asked referring to the project’s closure and the sustainability measures taken so far to continue the methodology and National Preparedness Action Plans. In answering the question, it was suggested that NDMA should focus on extensive engagements with partners to encourage sustainability of the pillar’s procedures and the finalization of the action plans.
ACTION POINTS

NDMA to create a logistics rapid assessment and situation report template
Stock reporting template to be created for visibility
Simulation exercise to be organized for a large-scale emergency (Internal)
NDMA to support the regional coordinators with internet connectivity for frequent coordination
International Trade Service to be engaged by partners to gain clarity on the levied tax

5. AOB

- Next logistics pillar meeting will be held on 27 October 2022

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