Meeting Minutes, 15 November 2022
Syria Operation, Damascus

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LOCATION
Damascus (In-person and online)

DATE
15 November 2022

CHAIR
Logistics Cluster Coordinator

PARTICIPANTS
Action Against Hunger (ACF), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), CARE International, Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee (EPDC), German Red Cross, Gruppo Di Volontariato Civile (GVC) Italia, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), OXFAM, Premiere Urgence Internationale (PUI), Secours Islamique France, Solidarites International, Terre des Hommes Italy (TDH-IT), United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), ZOA International

ACTION POINTS
- Logistics Cluster team to follow up on fuel trends and explore possible mitigation measures.
- Logistics Cluster team to contact partners to form a WhatsApp group.
- Logistics Cluster team to follow up with partners (UN and NGOs) to clarify on the procedures needed and liaise with relevant actors.

AGENDA
1. Logistics Cluster Updates
2. Partners Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks
3. WFP Bilateral Service Provision
4. UNHAS services
5. AOB

1. Logistics Cluster Updates

COMMON SERVICES
- During October, a new consignment was accepted, and storage services were provided for 25 m³ of health items on behalf of WHO in the Logistics Cluster Qamishly warehouse.
- Moreover, 123.7 M³ of health and wash items were released from the Qamishly common warehouse on behalf of UNFPA and WHO.
- Storage space is available in Qamishly to all humanitarian actors, including national and international NGOs, till the end of this year.
• To request storage services, contact syria.clustercargo@wfp.org

• Note: The Logistics Cluster has discontinued free-to-user common storage services in Aleppo, Kiswa and Homs warehouses.

• Storage services SOPs can be accessed from here.

CROSSLINE MISSIONS TO NORTHWEST SYRIA

• Preparations are ongoing for the Sarmada 9th Inter-Agency crossline convoy from Aleppo to the WFP warehouse in Sarmada/Idleb, planned for the second half of November 2022.

• On 23 October 2022, an Inter-Agency crossline convoy of 18 trucks (Sarmada 8th) took place with the facilitation of the Logistics Cluster, including food and NFIs (food, nutrition, and health items) on behalf of 4 UN agencies (UNHCR, WHO, UNICEF, and WFP).

CROSS BORDER OPERATIONS

Cross-border operations from the Bab al-Hawa (BAH) border crossing into Northwest Syria

• In October, the Logistics Cluster team facilitated the transhipment of 566 trucks in the UN transhipment hub in Reyhanli on behalf of WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA with health supplies; IOM with Shelter items; and WFP with food assistance. Over half of the shipments were transported to Idlib Governorate, and around 30 per cent to Aleppo governorate.

• All details of the transshipment operations can be found on the Logistics Cluster infographic, regularly updated here.

• An increase in operations is expected over the coming months in light of prepositioning efforts under the current UNSCR, expiring on 10 January 2023.

2. Partners Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

• Partners raised the issue of getting the facilitation letter from Syrian authorities for their movement and operational requirements, as new regulations are in place now, which results in longer approval procedures. In addition to submitting a monthly activity and movement plan, organisations have to present additional requests, including all truck details, even for trucks/dispatches inside the country, to the Ministry of Local Administration (MOLA). This additional security approval has impacted the approval time, that can take between two to four weeks and up to 45 days for North East Syria.

• One of the partners raised an issue that even though they got the facilitation letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they were denied the cargo release. The partner raised this issue to the Logistics Cluster to identify partners facing similar challenges and to liaise with OCHA in this regard.
3. WFP Bilateral Service Provision:

- Partners continued to highlight the issue of scarcity and the bad quality of fuel inside Syria, and asked about the possibility of importing fuel from Jordan. WFP has been discussing this possibility with all relevant authorities, but no final confirmation has been received yet.

- WFP has been supporting humanitarian organisations’ critical fuel operational requests and not regular requirements and will continue to do so as soon as the emergency stock is replenished.

- For fuel requests and to request support with other logistics services provided on a cost-recovery basis, partners can contact the Bilateral Service Provision unit for further information: co_syr_bsp_logistics@wfp.org

4. UNHAS SERVICES

- UNHAS representative gave a presentation on their services in the Syria operation, providing figures of last year’s achievements and the challenges they encountered, especially the closure of the Damascus and Aleppo airports.

- A partner mentioned having issues with UNHAS booking system, and it was reminded that organisations need to be registered as users with UNHAS to be able to request services.

- Regarding the costs of the services for both passenger and light cargo, as well as security relocation services, UNAHS confirmed that they remain free of charge for registered humanitarian organisations.

- More details about booking, flight timeline, SOPs, and the contacts of the UNHAS team can be accessed from here.

5. AOB

- To make coordination and information sharing more effective, it was suggested to create a WhatsApp group for the Logistics Cluster partners. Preferable to add a general number of the partner organisation, in case of staff rotation. The admin of the group/Logistics cluster coordinator shall respond promptly to partners' requests and questions. All attendees/partners present in the coordination meeting agreed to be added to the WhatsApp group.

Contacts

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