Background

Somalia’s current context is marked by the transition from extreme drought to the rainy season. Between mid-2021 and the beginning of 2023, the country faced severe drought conditions, leading to humanitarian crises, and leaving millions of people in need of assistance. In 2022 the situation worsened, with skyrocketing prices and volatile market conditions have resulted in a 160 per cent increase in people facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity, starvation and disease (Humanitarian Response Plan Somalia, 2023). Responding to the crisis, the humanitarian sector scaled up its assistance to avert famine, with crucial support from the Logistics Cluster ensuring access to vital logistics resources during the drought response. However, the onset of the Gu rainy season in March 2023 has brought its own set of challenges. The early and erratic start to the rainy season triggered riverine and flash floods, causing extensive damage to the properties and livelihoods of around 175,000 individuals. An additional 140,000 people have been temporarily displaced in regions such as Hirshabelle, Jubaland, and Southwest States (OCHA, 2023). The situation remains precarious, and if heavy rainfall continues in Somalia and the upper catchments of the Shabelle and Juba rivers in south-eastern Ethiopia, the risk of flooding could affect up to 1.6 million people, with over 600,000 at risk of displacement (OCHA, 2023). The forecasts of El Niño increase the likelihood of riverine and flash floods with frequent shocks expected in communities alongside the Shabelle and Juba rivers with likely exacerbation of humanitarian needs as a result and above-average precipitation expected (FAO, 2023).

Besides the climate-related threats mentioned above, conflict remains a main antecedent of humanitarian needs with 470,000 people displaced between January and May 2023 (OCHA June 2023) and the anticipated military operation against non-state armed forces increases the likelihood of significant displacement and humanitarian needs. Both floods and conflict displacement have a significant geographical overlap in Galmudug, Southwest State and Jubaland where the need for common logistics services and particularly air transport capacity is prevalent, therefore there is an urgent need for a sustained augmentation of logistics capacity in Somalia. The humanitarian community requires coordinated efforts and common services to effectively respond to the challenges posed by both the drought and the floods. The Logistics Cluster in Somalia is instrumental in providing essential logistics support to address various crises, including drought, floods, COVID-19, forced displacement, and locust infestations. Without future shocks expected, sustained humanitarian needs call for a greater and sustained logistical effort to effectively meet the operational requirements and address the ongoing challenges faced by the vulnerable populations in the country. It is crucial for humanitarian organizations and stakeholders to work together to ensure a coordinated and efficient response to the evolving humanitarian situation in Somalia.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The operating environment in Somalia remains one of the most challenging in the world and no major positive change in accessibility and logistics capacity was systematically observed in country over the past year. Regular and sustained access to the most affected areas is a challenge due to conflict, insecurity and deteriorating infrastructure, hampering the ability of the humanitarian community to deliver humanitarian relief efficiently and effectively to vulnerable populations. The following logistic gaps have been identified:

- About 90 per cent of the primary roads require extensive rehabilitation: only 2,860 kilometres (13 per cent) of the total 11,434 kilometres of roads are paved and those remaining are earthen or gravel impeding roads in 42 districts. Seasonal flooding often results in road accessibility challenges. Inter-state transport is limited due to insecurity and conflict and in some cases, only possible by sea or by air.
• Road access, especially in South-Central, remains a significant challenge, forcing a heavy reliance on expensive air services to reach remote areas. Routes typically used by commercial entities have volatile security conditions with rapidly changing checkpoints and controls. The occurrence of floods adds to the existing access challenges, exacerbating the difficulties faced by humanitarian actors.

• Before the civil war, Somalia boasted 15 operational ports and facilities but in recent years only four ports were actively used (Mogadishu, Kismayo, Bossaso and Berbera). In the past months, Garad Port became operational but with limited use by the humanitarian community due to road infrastructure connecting the port. Even though Somalia saw a significant improvement in sea transport security and a decrease in piracy, there are still limited reliable commercial options connecting the horn and WFP Time Chartered Vessel remains the only continuous operating asset connecting all ports in Somalia.

• Airstrips and airports also present varying accessibility with important areas facing blockages due to physical and security constraints. Security incidents impacted accessibility of fixed-wing aircraft and forced the humanitarian community to use capital-intensive rotary wings to reach key locations such as Maxaas and Qansadhere.

• Despite an initial positive evolution seen in 2022 and 2023, customs remains a major challenge with organisations reporting delays and rapid changes in procedures that affect the ability of organisations. Recently, several new regulations have decreased the clarity and predictability of customs clearance processes.

• The deterioration of infrastructure further complicates the humanitarian community’s efforts to deliver aid efficiently to vulnerable populations. Insecurity within the country, marked by shifting dynamics, poses additional obstacles to access and delivery of humanitarian assistance.

• Partners involved in humanitarian efforts face capacity constraints (training and resources), impacting their ability to effectively respond to the needs on the ground due to resource and capacity limitations.

Objectives
The compounding effect of multiple shocks in Somalia, including expected conflict and floods, demands operational readiness. The Logistics Cluster aims to maintain operational readiness and facilitate access to sufficient and reliable logistics services as well as consolidated information related to logistics capacities, to enhance the capacity of the humanitarian community to deliver relief items to hard-to-reach locations in a coordinated and efficient manner, hence ensuring timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected.

Planned Activities
The following activities and services offered are designed to complement and support the existing logistics capacities of individual agencies and organizations within the humanitarian community. These initiatives aim to address specific gaps in the supply chain, advocate for the community’s requirements, and enhance the overall response by providing essential common services based on identified needs. It is important to note that these efforts are not meant to replace the logistics capabilities of individual entities, but rather to strengthen and augment the collective response to humanitarian challenges.

1. Coordination
To address identified logistics gaps, minimise duplication of efforts, and ensure logistics efficiencies, the Logistics Cluster will undertake the following coordination activities in collaboration with partner organisations and key
stakeholders across Somalia:

- Hold regular and ad-hoc national and subnational Logistics Cluster coordination meetings to strengthen the flood-response coordination among organizations, harmonize response efforts and discuss common supply chain challenges.
- Maintain a dedicated Customs Taskforce to enable dedicated discussions concerning tax exemption and customs clearances.
- Liaise with authorities and relevant national and international parties on behalf of the humanitarian community to raise logistics issues of common concern, including customs clearance procedures and humanitarian access.
- Facilitate discussions around emergency preparedness activities to mitigate disruption of existing supply chains and anticipate mitigation measures, including capacity strengthening activities whenever required to alleviate operational needs.
- Provide a forum to discuss sector-specific logistics operations, including the facilitation of medical logistics discussions in cooperation with the Health Sector and relevant stakeholders.
- Advocate for improvement of operational conditions and mainstreaming logistics requirements in inter-cluster discussions to ensure organisations can reach people in need efficiently.

2. Information Management

To support operational decision-making and improve the efficiency of the overall logistics flood response, the Logistics Cluster will collect, analyse, and disseminate information management products to:

- Consolidation and dissemination of information on the overall logistics situation including logistics gaps and bottlenecks, local supply chain capacities, storage and transport capacity and vulnerabilities, existing regulations, and health supply chain information, where possible.
- Analyse logistics operational context and generate support structures to support decision-making. This includes mapping the logistics infrastructure through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services to determine warehouse capacity in Somalia for the flood response and contribute to monitoring preposition requirements and stock levels of life-saving supplies.
- Inform decision-making with operational updates through the publication of access constraint maps for border crossings, roads, sea, and air, situation updates, meeting minutes, snapshots and briefings on relevant topics whenever required.
- Maintain information sharing platforms including a common mailing list and a dedicated Somalia Operation webpage on the Logistics Cluster website to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistics information.
- Maintain evidence generation efforts to support advocacy initiatives including those arising from customs clearance and access.

3. Logistics Services

The Logistics Cluster common services are designed to complement the logistics capacities of the agencies or organisations rather than replace them. The Logistics Cluster is facilitating access to common services when a capacity gap is identified through market capacity assessments, considering partners’ current capabilities and emerging needs for accessing logistics service providers.

Depending on the availability of funds, the following services may be coordinated at no cost to the user or referred on a partial/full cost-recovery basis. These services will be provided either by available service providers or by WFP, as the provider of last resort. Partner organizations can access the services through the Service Market Place webpage.
and all inquiries shall be directed to somalia.clustercargo@wfp.org email. The following services are available to the humanitarian community:

- **Storage**: Based on storage capacity assessment, storage is not identified as a major gap except when related to the last-mile preposition of supplies to support distributions and transit. As such, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to short-term storage support in main dispatching hubs, including at the airport in Mogadishu, on a case-by-case, no cost basis whenever storage is required to facilitate last-mile delivery of lifesaving supplies. If storage is required for long-term storage, the Logistics Cluster will refer partners to services with full cost recovery.

- **Air transport**: Air transport will continue to be available using Mogadishu as the main dispatch hub for locations throughout Somalia. Other dispatching hubs, such as Garowe and Baidoa may be activated on a temporary basis whenever a need arises for significant cargo movements. The Logistics Cluster facilitates air transport on a no cost basis to hard-to-reach locations primarily through fixed-wing aircraft and rotary-wing assets based on requirements and funding availability.

- **Road transport**: Road transportation services between key strategic locations for the flood response are available on a no cost basis, subject to requirements and funding availability, to enable the preposition of supplies and last-mile delivery whenever access is available. Particularly, cross-border movement between Kenya and Somalia is critical to relieve the pressure on air operations in southern areas of the country.

- **Sea transport**: Internal transfers by sea are available at a no cost basis to Mogadishu, Kismayo, Berbera and Bossaso, subject to requirements and funding availability, using the WFP Time Charter vessel to facilitate the preposition of supplies.

All service requests will be analyzed and assigned the most cost-effective means of transport available that enable delivery within the required lead-time. As such, the Logistics Cluster will endeavor to maximize the use of sea and road transport and resort to air transport only when essential. Moreover, whether a high volume of needs is presented, locations with the highest need – as defined by inter-cluster discussions – will be prioritized.

### 4. Trainings

In line with the aim to strengthen logistics capacity and based on recent survey results with the humanitarian community, there is an identified need to conduct tailored training programs and exercises for humanitarian actors to ensure preparedness and operational readiness of humanitarian staff. These initiatives aim to enhance preparedness and skills, enabling partners to effectively respond to ongoing shocks including droughts, floods, and other emergencies. The Logistics Cluster aim to facilitate the Basic Humanitarian Logistics Course in Mogadishu and other field locations targeting entry and mid-level operational staff.