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Situation Report - 20-26th February 2009

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HIGHLIGHT

- On 23 February, Logistics Cluster members endorsed the continuation of Logistics Cluster transportation services for at least one more month, on a cost recovery basis. The Humanitarian Community also requested continuation of Logistics Cluster coordination and advocacy services for access of humanitarian relief to Gaza.
- The United Arab Emirates with NGO 'Chain of Hope', succeeded in gaining clearance for nine trucks carrying pre-fabricated school buildings and 10,000 student kits. The cargo was transported through Egypt El Aouga border crossing and arrived in Gaza today.
- Three containers of water treatment equipment for a sewage station in north Gaza crossed through Kerem Shalom to Gaza today. Negotiation with Israeli Authorities for the transfer of this cargo has been ongoing for over two years.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN RELIEF TO GAZA

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- The Humanitarian Community to make full use of Logistics Cluster coordination channels for interaction with COGAT, to present a coherent and consistent approach for access for humanitarian cargo.
- Encourage a review of border crossing procedures for cargo with the aim of expediting delivery and increasing the amount of cargo to enter Gaza on a daily basis: Gain permission for the use of containers for the purpose of transportation of humanitarian items to Gaza and permission for the exit/return of empty containers.
- The Humanitarian Community to provide a weekly list of sector priorities to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief reflects the needs of conflict-affected populations in Gaza. This initiative has been welcomed by COGAT.
- Logistics Cluster staff member to go on mission to Gaza to improve interface between cluster stakeholders in the articulation of their priorities for delivery of humanitarian relief.
- Request COGAT to clearly define the policy-level process governing approval of relief items destined for Gaza (including so-called 'dual purpose' items). The objective is to increase predictability and avoid incurring additional charges for transportation and storage of rejected cargo.
- Advocate for the installation of better lighting at the Kerem Shalom crossing (Gaza side) to allow operations to continue after dark and thus increase the timeframe for cargo pick up.

LOGISTICS COORDINATION

- **El Arish Logistics Cluster:** The Logistics Cluster will transport 100 pallets of humanitarian aid donated by Saudi Arabia, to Gaza from El Arish as soon as customs clearance procedures are completed by UNRWA.
- At the weekly meeting in El Arish on 24 February, the Logistics Cluster provided NGOs and donors with guidance on procedures and documentation for meeting the minimum requirements to import humanitarian cargo to Gaza. Samples of the necessary documents were also shared with participants.
- There is an estimated total of 9000 MT of humanitarian cargo currently in El Arish, as a result of unsolicited bilateral donations from international and local donors. The Egyptian Government has mandated the Egyptian Red Crescent to take custody of these donations. This cargo is not moving into Gaza for a variety of reasons, including a lack of consignee in Gaza and lack of customs documentation. It has proved very difficult to predict the amount of amount of humanitarian donations still to arrive in El Arish.
- Jerusalem Logistics Cluster: At the meeting on 23 February, the Logistics Cluster provided a draft list of humanitarian items which have been prevented from entering Gaza by Israeli Authorities.

The Logistics Cluster has delivered the following cargo to Gaza, through Kerem Shalom, on behalf of 28 cluster members.

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INTERACTION WITH COGAT

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- In the past week 50 Early Childhood Development Kits and 57 boxes of children's toys (UNICEF) were prevented from being transported to Gaza by Israeli Authorities. The Logistics Cluster raised the issue with COGAT who stated that the toys were not a humanitarian priority. The Early Childhood Development Kits were not approved because the kit included a Mine Risk Education information leaflet.
- Logistics Cluster continued to request clearance from COGAT for transportation of UNICEF stationery items, UK MAP medical equipment and FAO veterinary supplies. Permission has not yet been received for temporary import of 9 UNMAC trucks from Lebanon to increase the capacity of the Logistics Cluster to transport cargo for cluster members.
- COGAT has lifted the recent suspension of import of macaroni, chick peas and lentils. 124 pallets of macaroni have been held up in El Arish since 16 January and 30 MT of chick peas have been delayed since 05 February.

Printed version attached

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