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UNITED NATIONS JOINT LOGISTICS CENTRE

DRC - DRC Operation

Bulletin no.1, October 1st,2005

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1. Introduction

Humanitarian needs in DRC remain high despite long-standing efforts to alleviate and eradicate them. These needs are a legacy of years of political and military turmoil, and are currently aggravated by a number of compounding factors.

A generalized lack of infrastructure constitutes the main obstacle to aid delivery. The country's sparse and rarely maintained transport network is poorly suited to the country's expanse and leads to a difficult and costly relief supply chain.

At the request of the HC (Humanitarian Coordinator) a UNJLC has been deployed in the country. Its tasks cover most of the logistics issues humanitarians are faced with. This first bulletin focuses on aviation safety which is currently a major concern in DRC. It also introduces the GIS (Geographic information systems) project which is being implemented by UNJLC. General information on the establishment of a satellite UNJLC in Goma are also

included in this bulletin.

2. Air

Aviation update within the DRC

Background

The DRC is the third largest country on the African continent. Limited road access exists within the DRC. This is mainly restricted to the main central and around rural towns. The Congo River does allow barge operations although this is also restricted due to insecurity as well as limited functional barges being available.

In line with above the majority of staff and commodities are being transported by Air.

Apart from commercial air carriers, the United Nations Mission to DRC (MONUC) operates a number of aircraft within the DRC borders. These aircraft vary from IL76, B727 to helicopters including Mi 26. The MONUC fleet is being increased to approximately 85 aircraft. The MONUC mandate is for peace keeping and election support. Support to the humanitarian community is on a space available basis and rather limited.

Aviation structure within DRC

The aviation structure, including safety oversight and general aviation procedures do not seem to be well organised and function in a hap hazard way. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) of DRC has lately banned a number of Companies to fly after a spate of accidents that tarnished the image of the authorities. Flight Following including Search and Rescue is extremely limited. Ground facilities and support equipment is limited and in most locations MONUC assist the humanitarian community where possible.

Aviation Safety Audit

The UNJLC is in process to coordinate an audit team, as requested by the DSRSG that will evaluate various commercial companies operating in the DRC. The main aim of this audit is to advise Senior Management as to which Companies are deemed safe to transport staff in the DRC. This audit team will be made up from various Donor Countries as well as UN aviation staff. This mission is seen as a priority to the humanitarian community. This guidance will govern the humanitarian approach to aviation operations in future within the DRC.

Aviation Safety coordination

The UNJLC facilitated coordination between all the Humanitarian Air Transport Operators (HATO) and MONUC Aviation safety. In this regard the HATO will now participate in the periodic Aviation Safety forum arranged by MONUC. This gesture has been welcomed by all concerned in enhancing aviation coordination and safety in general.

Humanitarian Air Transport Operators (HATO)

UN WFP (WFP-HAS) WFP-HAS operates a fleet of four aircraft, 2 x BE 1900 and 2 x C208 aircraft in the DRC. These aircraft are mainly used for passenger transport and are accessible to the entire humanitarian community in the DRC. UN WFP operates two of the four aircraft on behalf of UNHCR and UNDP. Further information can be obtained from unhas.drc@wfp.org

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) has two C208 Caravan aircraft operating out of Kinshasa and Entebbe. A further 4 light aircraft (C206/207) operate from various locations in DRC. MAF operates for various humanitarian agencies in the DRC. Additional information can be obtained from flights@rdc.maf.net

Airserv (AS) operates a number of aircraft (7) including King Air, C208 and Twin Otter. They operate into the major central area of the DRC and are mainly used for passenger transport. AS supports a number of humanitarian Agencies and is in the process to increase their fleet. Additional information can be obtained from acarney@airserv.org

Aviation sans Frontieres (ASF) They operate two C208 on behalf of the NGO Coopi as well as ECHO. These aircraft are based in Boende and Mbuji-Mayi. Additional information can be obtained from headofmissionasfcongo@yahoo.com

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) The ICRC operates a DC3-TP from Lubumbashi and a BE 1900C out of Kinshasa. Additional information can be obtained from Log.kin@icrc.org

3. GIS (Geographic Information System)

GIS is utilised to enable the humanitarian community to assess the transport network and the modal shift in DRC. It is also envisaged to be used as a tool to determine the most cost-efficient routes, as well as identify the most important transport corridors and routes for rehabilitation.

The requirements for a good GIS coordination and management are not yet fully met and UNJLC will work on synergising the existing structures and set up a functioning coordination system.

Transport network assessment: a sparse transport network.

DRC multi-modal transport network combines river, roads, railway, air and maritime transport. The Congo River which is the main domestic surface corridor is complemented by a road and air network which is neither maintained nor safe.

GIS conditions and possibility to create GIS Working Group.

The existing data to support GIS is various and constituted by diverse types of documents with different dates and references:

Available topographic maps at different scales and imagery from the 60's in scanned paper format are not completely geo-referenced.

Satellites imagery (Landsat, Aster, Modis, Ikonos from the 80's to the beginning of the year 2000) are available under copyright regulations but not yet completely geo-referenced.

Recent GIS databases created by UN agencies (MONUC, OCHA, WFP, UNHCR, MACC : Mine Action Coordination Center...), NGOs or DRC Institutions and Universities exist but are neither comprehensive nor updated. MONUC and CARPE : Central African Regional Program Environment have currently the best developed GIS ability and pool.

Recents data base

All these databases and maps deal with basic geographic information and data with relevant for humanitarian logistics.

Nevertheless, despite this important potential, reliability and capability in using GIS is not sufficiently effective due to the following problems: GIS activities coordination, legibility and control, data access (data control, responsibility, sensitivity, reliability and copyright) and inventory, Harmonization and standardisation (geo-references, classification and codification, files and software updating), communication and file ex-changes (raster/ vectorial format, second hand files), information updates, missing and not standardized parameters.

GIS, GPS and Data Base training is poor (software used too diverse and licences not standardised, lack of knowledge in using GIS software and computing equipments) and thereby limiting GIS possibilities and abilities.

Currently, all these problems are causing an ineffective and unreliable GIS use. They are also limiting the production of an optimisation network model production. The creation of a GIS Working Group and subsequent better coordination to bring forth a formidable and helpful transport network management support tool is essential.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE EAST

Lake and river transport

Lake and river transport have been the main focus, since the establishment of the UNJLC satellite office in Goma during the last two weeks.

Collection of information on river / lake transport in the east and especially North Kivu has commenced through interviews and meetings with humanitarian logistics officers and transport companies/organizations.

Even if this information is no yet processed, a first estimate of potential bottlenecks can be made.

For the coming weeks the focus will be on the transport sector and road network.

It is foreseen to establish a regular logistics meeting which met the interest of the humanitarian logistics community.

Transport sector and road network

The poor condition of the road network in the east of the DRC doesn't, for the time being, constitute a source of economic development for the trucking companies.

The insecurity in the region is one of the hampering factors to the expansion of this sector.

The road network in this region is only a small part of the multimodal network used in this area.

This network is rarely and badly maintained and as a result, the road transports are mainly used for short distance and linking purpose rather than long distance trips, except for transport coming from neighbouring countries.

Among the three provinces in the east of the country, only Katanga in the south has a decent road network. The main road found in the North Kivu goes from the north of the province and remains accessible all the way to Goma; however the lack of security in the region doesn't allow movement on the entire stretch. From Goma the road section towards Masisi ends in Walikale. Air, river and rail transport are the remaining and functioning modes of transport allowing cargo and passenger movement.

5. INSTALLATION OF UNJLC OFFICE IN GOMA

The office was established the 16th of September 2005

The office is co-located with the OCHA office

The set up of the office is still under progress until the administrative and financial procedures are established.