1. Objective

The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of the performance of the Logistics Cluster’s response operation in Fiji; to reflect on its relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness in responding to identified needs, and to improve processes and procedures for future operations. Key findings and recommendations will assist the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in guiding discussions at the National Lessons Learnt Workshop in July 2016 and inform decision-making ahead of the planned review of the 1998 Natural Disaster Management Act. The information in this brief was consolidated through an online user survey and a workshop with national logistics operators.

2. Findings Overview

- Key findings reveal that the current National Logistics Cluster arrangement is inadequate to coordinate and synchronise an effective Government and multi-agency emergency logistical response.
- The existence of different national bodies devoted to logistical coordination and service provision, and confusion over their roles and responsibilities, have resulted in decreased efficiency of the Logistics Cluster. During TC Winston these included the Ministry of Finance, the Fiji Procurement Office, the NDMO, divisional, district and provincial authorities and the military-run Future Operations Cell.
- Furthermore, the lack of centralised reporting systems, relief tracking and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been detrimental to the quality and timeliness of information flows during the early stages of the response, thus impacting decision-making.
- There is overall agreement that to contribute effectively to the humanitarian response and support collective operational requirements, the National Logistics Cluster needs to reconfigure its existing coordination structure (i) to ensure clear leadership, predictability and accountability; (ii) to avoid duplication of roles and responsibilities and (iii) to ensure the implementation of a unified and well-coordinated response (see section 5 for a list of recommendations).

3. Background

On 20 and 21 February 2016, Tropical Cyclone Winston tore through the islands of Fiji, killing 44 people and affecting an estimated 350,000 - roughly 40 per cent of the country’s population. Packing wind gusts of up to 320 kilometres per hour, the Category 5 cyclone caused extensive damage to assets and destroyed livelihoods across Fiji’s Eastern, Northern and Western Divisions. The total monetary value of the effects of TC Winston is estimated at US$1.4 billion. On 21 February the Government of Fiji declared a State of Natural Disaster, which lasted 60 days, and called on the international community for assistance.

COORDINATION

- The emergency response was led by the Government of Fiji through the NDMO and divisional, provincial and district authorities. This was operationalised via the country’s National Cluster System - and its designated 8 line ministries - with the support of national and international partners, military forces, foreign military assets and the private sector.
• To avoid duplication, and ensure areas of need were prioritised, Inter-Cluster coordination was facilitated by the NDMO Permanent Secretary with the support of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) and OCHA.

LOGISTICS CLUSTER

• The Logistics Cluster was led by the Ministry of Finance through the Fiji Procurement Office (FPO), with the support of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), lead agency of the Global Logistics Cluster.
• To ensure the integration of the humanitarian community’s logistical requests and capacities into the overall national response plan, and ensure uninterrupted and maximised relief operations, the Logistics Cluster was tasked with reinforcing coordination mechanisms, and with providing technical advisory services and information management support during the initial stages of the response.
• As local market’s capacities were deemed adequate and accessible after the cyclone, and in light of the availability of a strong commercial sector and military assets, there were no identified gaps requiring the need for the Logistics Cluster to facilitate the provision of logistics services (i.e. transport and warehousing).
• Following the end of the State of Natural Disaster and the shift of response operations towards the early recovery and rehabilitation stage, the Logistics Cluster was phased-out on 20 April. Emergency preparedness meetings, hosted at the FPO and focusing on improving national logistics procedures and systems, continue on a monthly basis.

4. Summary

KEY INTERVENTIONS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND WHAT WENT WELL

• Adequate surge technical capacity deployment (WFP Logistics and Information Management Officers) to support the national logistics cluster.
• Timely establishment of regular Logistics Cluster Coordination meetings to facilitate exchange among actors and minimise duplication of logistics activities during the response.
• Timely, accessible and consistent sharing of information products including situation updates and meeting minutes.
• Timely sharing of operationally relevant information on sea, road and air transportation, storage and fuel when required.
• Deployment of 4 Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) to augment Government and partners’ capacity to sort, kit and store relief items and facilitation of training for specialised emergency units on setting up and maintaining the storage facilities.
• Establishment of Request for Assistance forms and procedures for the use of military assets.
• Streamlining of information and guidelines on import procedures for humanitarian relief items.
• Establishment of back-up system to track incoming cargo.
• Sharing of national logistics capacity information and service providers’ database, through the Fiji Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA).

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENTS

• Strengthen the role of the National Logistics Cluster by streamlining logistics coordination, of both Government and humanitarian community’s responses, into one structure.
• Clarify roles and responsibilities of key national logistical stakeholders to foster a more timely, cohesive and effective humanitarian response, and to boost collaboration between all sectors within logistics (including privately-owned assets and resources).
- Expand private sector engagement in emergency response procedures and requirements.
- Enhance coordination and information flow of logistics processes and procedures at the national and sub-national level.
- Ensure early dissemination of SOPs, requirements and frameworks for receiving international relief items (i.e. customs, sea freight, biosecurity, warehousing, goods handling, inventory management).
- Increase information sharing on logistics gaps and constraints; transport and storage availability, and tracking tools to enhance upstream and downstream pipeline visibility to better support decision-making and minimise duplication.

### 5. Recommendations

- Bolster the National Logistics Cluster role to assume greater humanitarian coordination functions and responsibilities by shifting its designated line ministry from the Minister of Finance/Fiji Procurement Office to the NDMO.
- This would entail the transferring of coordination responsibilities from a policy/procedural ministry (the Ministry of Finance) to an operational one (the NDMO) that is directly involved in strategizing and implementing the response, and with the technical oversight of all logistics sectors and operators.
- This reconfiguration would also foster sector/cluster standards and technical approaches aligned with other Pacific Island Countries, thus boosting regional capacities and cohesive responses in the event of disasters.
- Develop capacity at national, divisional, provincial and district level to mobilise dedicated resources, systems and focal points to take on emergency response logistical tasks, and in so doing help to (i) bridge the gap between national and sub-national level coordination; (ii) better support field-level humanitarian activities, and (iii) streamline reporting processes.
- Establish accessible cargo tracking systems and other operational frameworks, templates and guidelines, to formalise and standardise logistical procedures (including warehousing and transport) and ensure the timely and effective flow of communication to inform decision-making, monitor functions and assess performance.

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