
Meeting Minutes, 20 August 2020

Beirut, Lebanon

LOCATION	Beirut, Lebanon - Online
DATE	20 August 2020
CHAIR	Logistics Sector
PARTICIPANTS	Atlas Logistique, CARE, Danish Refugee Council, DFID, HOPE Worldwide, Humanity & Inclusion, IFRC, INSEAD Humanitarian Research Group, International Medical Corps, Médecins du Monde, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Relief International, SCI, Tearfund, UN OCHA, UNFPA, We World – GVC, WHO, WFP, World Vision.
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partners are requested to share air waybills with the Logistics Sector 48 hours before cargo arrival.• Partners were requested to suggest services that might be valuable to map using the preparedness platform.• Partners are requested to share their upstream cargo needs on CHOCOLAT.
AGENDA	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Situation Update2. Customs Procedures3. Cargo Pipeline4. Presentation of the Joint Action Group5. AOB6. Questions

1. Situation Update

- Cyril Martin, Logistics Sector Coordinator welcomed participants to the fifth Sector Coordination Meeting.
- Bilateral interviews have been conducted with 13 partners to date to gather data on logistics gaps and bottlenecks hampering operations and to understand partners cargo pipeline and their plan for importing goods, findings so far:
 - Most partners continue to use local procurement.
 - A few partners are importing via air freight or sea.
 - Partners did not report a need for storage. For this reason, the Logistics Sector plan to provide common storage is on hold, this decision will be revised if the need changes.
- The Concept of Operations outlining the services facilitated to partners by the Logistics Sector will be shared for review.

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- The Logistics Sector will continue to compile relevant information on logistics services within Lebanon: warehousing, infrastructure, clearing agents, transporters, etc; This data will be updated on, and disseminated via, the [Lebanon Logistics Capacity Assessment](#).
- Partners were invited to share further updates and gaps through the Lebanon-logs@logcluster.org mailing list.

2. Customs Procedures

- A Customs WhatsApp group has been established, and a contact from the customs administration is part of the group to answer any customs related queries. Partners can register for the WhatsApp group by sending an email to Virginie Bohl from UN OCHA (bohl@un.org) with their mobile phone number.
- The Logistics Sector remains in discussion with OCHA and Lebanese custom officer, who should be appointed by High Council for Customs early next week as focal point for humanitarian organisation operating in Lebanon.
- The Customs Officer has sent letters to several ministries (Industry, Environment, Health, Agriculture and Commerce) to request the removal of restrictions for goods for the purpose of the humanitarian response. Feedback is expected early next week which will be presented in the next Sector Coordination meeting, if available.
- The Sector Coordinator confirmed that all reported custom concerns from partners had been raised with the Customs Officer who will revert back. The Custom Officers contacts details will be shared once the appointment is made official.
- It was hi-lighted from partners that other working groups were already active in-country tackling some of these concerns with a recommendation to harmonise efforts and share information:
 - The Joint Supply Forum chaired by WHO and UNICEF for the COVID-19 response, including UN Agencies and NGOs with meetings held every other Thursday, discussed in detail custom procedures and challenges. It includes a focal point from the Prime Minister's office to support and expedite cargo.
 - Common Logistics Group chaired by UNHCR and includes UN agencies.
- Partners voiced concern over the current clearance process of regular medical shipments for refugees. Clarification was sought as to whether these shipments will be considered for speedier processing within the emergency context. In addition, humanitarian shipments had arrived but are now stuck in regular clearance procedures, which is impeding operations.
- Concern was raised about the clearance of medical supplies in Tripoli, which requires inspection by Ministry of Public Health. The frequency of inspection was not sufficient to move cargo in a timely manner. The Sector Coordinate confirmed that this had been raised and passed to the customs officials, awaiting feedback in the next meeting.

3. Cargo Pipeline

- The Sector Coordinator met with airport officials to gain clarification and guidance on the arrival of partners cargo. If shipments arrive by military plane the cargo is seen as a bilateral donation for the Lebanese government and will be offloaded into military storage. If the cargo arrives via a commercial service, it will be handled using the normal clearance procedures.
- Partners were encouraged to share their air waybills 48 hours before cargo arrival via the mailing list Lebanon-logs@logcluster.org so the Logistics Sector can facilitate the cargo movement and prevent miss-handling.
- It was confirmed that the tax exemption decree is not yet signed. The decree will apply to humanitarian imports for a year period at implemented all points of entry.
- Questions were raised around using the correct consignee on shipments to facilitate handling on arrival by the military at the airport, further confirmation will be sought from OCHA/relevant focal points to clarify on this process.

4. Joint Action Group

- An update was shared on the Joint Action Group, active since 2018, which holds monthly meetings to share challenges and assess conditions that are impacting supply chains.
- A number of conflicting conditions, including COVID-19 and the recent explosion, have impacted local supply chains in Beirut. INGOS are finding suppliers from outside the city are operating successfully to support operations.
- Partners can join the group by emailing tarek.majzoub@drc.ngo and Wissam.Karam@rescue.org.
- Partners reported that local suppliers are operating successfully to fulfil operational needs including for medical supplies.
- In the coming lockdown medical suppliers will be exempt from restrictions, but clarification was sought as to whether other logistics service suppliers, reconstructions providers, will be able to operate. It was confirmed that reconstruction work will continue during lockdown.
- Access to financial services is reported to be affecting the market due to bank closures resulting in difficulties in paying for goods.
- CARE offered assistance with SOPs and guidance to partners faced with similar financial challenges. For assistance an email can be sent to: Chadi.abouraad@careliban.org.
- It was reported that the suppliers of medical goods were operating successfully.
- The Logistics Sector coordinator informed partners of the Logistics Cluster preparedness platform: log:ie; that can be used for mapping ATMs, damaged banks or other services required for partners operations. Partners were requested to provide suggestions as to which services might be valuable for this data gathering and mapping exercise.

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5. AOB

- Partners are requested to share their upstream cargo needs on the [CHOCOLAT](#) platform.
- The [Logistics Capacity Assessment](#) will be updated to with latest suppliers information and resources for partners to plan their operations. Partners are requested to share any information with the Logistics Sector using Lebanon-logs@logcluster.org.
- Partners can sign up for the Lebanon mailing list and find all relevant documents on the [Lebanon Sector page](#).

6. Questions

- Partners asked about the robustness of local supply chains and markets. The Sector Coordinator confirmed that the majority of business were reported as running well with no shortages of supplies required by organisations. However, the situation will have to be monitored closely in the coming months.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 25 August at 11:00 Beirut time.

Contacts

Logistics Sector

Lebanon-logs@logcluster.org

Cyril Martin

Logistics Cluster Officer

cyril.martin@wfp.org