

## Ebola Response Staging Area Europe

### Concept of Operations

7 November 2014

#### Background

The current outbreak of the Ebola Virus in West Africa, because of its magnitude and complexity, presents significant logistical and operational challenges for an effective humanitarian response. The United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) has been assigned the task of the overall planning and coordination, directing the efforts of the UN agencies, national governments, and other humanitarian actors to the areas where they are most needed. The Logistics Cluster, is operating in support of UNMEER and the humanitarian community offering coordination, information and common logistics services.

An Air Coordination Cell (ACC) has been created as part of the Logistics Cluster response to the Ebola affected countries, hosted by UNICEF's Supply Division in Copenhagen, to facilitate information on airfreight capacity to the humanitarian community. Information shared on a daily basis includes airfreight availability, agency charters, and agencies' pipeline in order to allow co-loading of flights to speed up the supply and lower the cost.

#### Gaps and bottlenecks

Following consultation with humanitarian actors at both the field, regional and global level, and based on the results of a survey about air transport to the Ebola affected countries, the following constraints are considered the most critical for the supply of relief items for the humanitarian response by air:

- Limited availability of scheduled airfreight services and regular scheduled flights with cargo capacity, resulting in frequent delays and increasing prices, especially to consignments less than a plane load;
- A lack of predictable points of flight departure in Europe, reducing options for planning supply deliveries and possibilities for co-loading, partly owed to commercial entities such as freight forwarders, chartering aircraft and selling the capacity to organizations, with less a full plane load;
- Capacities and ground handling at the airports in the affected region are limited, often including only one cargo plane at a time to be unloaded;
- No visibility for combined cargo transport on the upstream position of the relief pipeline, creates pipeline and supply chain instability.

Responding to the needs from partners of the Logistics Cluster, a staging area for consolidation of cargoes in Europe to facilitate co-loads and speed up the delivery of cargoes by air has therefore been established at Cologne Bonn Airport, Germany.

## Objectives of a staging area

- Provide a predictive location for cargo consolidation where agencies can send their supplies;
- Facilitate optimization and co-loading of flights between agencies from a single point of departure;
- Provide bonded storage for goods in transit in Europe;
- Avail a possible point of departure for flights to the affected countries when required;
- Contribute to reduced delivery time and air transport costs.

## Description of staging area services

In response to identified gaps, the Logistics Cluster contacted the private sector partners, through the Logistics Emergency Team (LET), for possible support with a cargo staging area in Europe.

UPS – as one of the Logistics Cluster private partners offered to support the initiative in cooperation with Cologne Bonn Airport in Germany. A bonded storage facility with 3,000m<sup>2</sup> has been made available for the Logistics Cluster.

The staging area is available free of charge and initially from 11 November 2014 until 31 January 2015, including the following services:

- Free storage of humanitarian items and operation support equipment consigned to a humanitarian actor for the Ebola response in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia in a designated bonded warehouse in the Cologne Bonn airport;
- Free handling and off-loading of cargoes from trucks;
- Daily stock reporting and cargo tracking and visibility during storage;
- The staging area will liaise and inform the participating partners with agencies on possibilities for a charter being facilitated by any of the partners through a donation/or on cost recovery to facilitate co-loading.

The services provided by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace existing air transport mechanisms of individual organizations but rather to fill identified gaps and to support and facilitate partners operations.

The above mentioned services provided by the Logistics Cluster will be free of charge to the users. In terms of air transport arrangements, the staging area cell will work together with the ACC to facilitate information on air freight available for the cargo in the staging area. The staging area/ACC will facilitate the information, however, it is up to the members to organise for payment of the transport arrangements with the freight forwarders or the agency responsible for the charter.

The staging area services will be provided on a free-to-user basis. In case a coordinated charter is facilitated, the respective freight forwarder, charter company or agency will invoice the organization directly, based on their payload usage.

## Liability

- Insurance of cargo is the responsibility of the individual organization;
- Donated or donor funded air transport capacity will be managed by the agency holding the funds and contracting the services, liabilities, terms and conditions including insurance coverage will be availed by the managing agency;
- The staging area is not involved with any external customs clearance processes;
- The staging area will not accept unsolicited bilateral donations.

## Contact

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