Background

The COVID-19 outbreak is happening at a time in Ethiopia when seven million people remain in need of humanitarian assistance (Humanitarian Response Plan, 2020). Internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and resident population all remain vulnerable. They require support from the government and the international community to meet their life-saving needs. 700,000 refugees are residing in Ethiopia, supported under the Refugee Response Plan.

The government and humanitarian partners are currently also dealing with flood preparedness and response activities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Close to 219,000 people are affected, and 107,000 people displaced due to floods in Somali, Afar, SNNP, Dire Dawa and Harari regions. Daawa zone and Somali region specifically show a higher severity of needs for its population due to the impact of floods on the regions (Humanitarian Response Plan, 2020).

Significant drivers of humanitarian need in Ethiopia include climate-induced disasters, conflict displacement and disease outbreaks. On top of this, the worst desert locust reported in 25 years hit Ethiopia and neighbouring countries in late 2019 and continues to affect many regions in 2020, including Somali, Amhara, Tigray, SNNP and Oromia regions, affecting 162 woredas (districts) and worsening the food security situation. If not contained, the desert locust will lead to substantial livelihood losses and food insecurity in many communities in Ethiopia.

The government has been implementing several measures to mitigate the impact of multiple shock disasters and hazards. Humanitarian partners are committed to supporting the government response to COVID-19, ensuring sustained critical activities. Following the recommendations from the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization (WHO), resources to the COVID-19 response are prioritised through a “phased approach”, following the scientific guidance to reduce the spread of the virus while continuing to support essential activities.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The economic growth in recent years has brought about a rapid increase in volume and type of Ethiopia’s import–export trade. The country’s logistics systems, however, are facing a number of logistics constraints to delivering an effective humanitarian response. In particular, challenges include high freight transit time, longer cargo dwell time as well as ships’ turnaround time in ports (source: National Logistics Strategy, 2018-2028).

COVID-19 could cause an additional strain on the logistics sector and disrupt supply chains. In Ethiopia, where the logistics sector was already impacted by congestion at the port of Djibouti, affecting timely delivery to Ethiopia, the impact of COVID-19 could be significant on logistics operations.

Import/export and port restrictions, reduced commercial aviation and shipping operations, and restrictions on movement to/from various countries or within the country result in direct consequences for the humanitarian community, including on the availability of humanitarian items, fuel, and other essential needs. Current constraints affecting supply chains could impact the continuation of critical services and programmes, limit the access to essential logistics services, and complicate efforts to adequately scale-up humanitarian operations.

This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.
Based on the Gaps and Needs Analysis (GNA), conducted with the government and humanitarian partners in-country, the Logistics Cluster has identified the following logistics gaps:

- Need for consolidated logistics coordination and information sharing to reduce duplication of efforts and ensure efficient logistics operations. Logistics coordination needed at federal and regional levels.
- Physical access constraints due to current floods, specifically in Somali region.
- Lack of common storage space in regions where partners have activities and in deep field locations.
- Lack of availability of cold storage capacity needed for COVID-19 supplies in central locations and in forward hubs.
- Lack of available transport capacity along the Djibouti corridor and in-region, combined with high competition from humanitarian partners due to the few transporters available in the country.

Objectives

Based on the identified needs expressed by the humanitarian community through the Gaps and Needs Analysis, the Logistics Cluster will deliver on its core functions within Ethiopia; to provide accurate and timely information management and coordination, and to facilitate access to reliable logistics services.

In doing so, the Logistics Cluster will augment the existing logistics capacity of its partners, ensuring the continuous delivery of life-saving relief items to affected populations.

Planned Activities

The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations, but rather to fill identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and supplement the response of the humanitarian community through the facilitation of access to common services, based on needs.

1. Coordination

To address identified logistics gaps, minimise duplication and bottlenecks, and ensure logistic efficiencies, the Logistics Cluster will undertake the following coordination activities in collaboration with partner organisations and key stakeholders across Ethiopia:

- Hold weekly Logistics Cluster coordination meetings, to strengthen coordination efforts amongst partners and to address common logistics challenges.
- Liaise with authorities and relevant national and international parties on behalf of the humanitarian community, to raise logistics issues of common concern, including customs clearance procedures and humanitarian physical access.
- Provide a forum to discuss sector-specific logistics operations, including the facilitation of medical logistics discussions in cooperation with the Health Sector and relevant stakeholders.
- Design and implement tailored capacity strengthening activities on core humanitarian logistics capabilities, focused on national actors, and provide technical advice to partners as and when required.
- Facilitate knowledge transfer through consolidation and dissemination of agreed best practices.
• For coordination at the federal level, dedicated Logistics Cluster staff will participate in Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) meetings.
• At the regional level, the cluster will facilitate logistics coordination meetings in strategic locations where many humanitarian organisations are present on an ad hoc basis when logistics gaps require to do so.

2. Information Management

To inform operational decision-making and improve the effectiveness of the logistics response, the Logistics Cluster will collect, analyse and disseminate information through dedicated tools and products, covering the following:
• Publish information products to inform partners on the changing operational landscape in the form of Situation Updates, Meeting Minutes and Snapshots.
• Consolidate and share key logistics information concerning gaps and bottlenecks, storage and transport capacity, borders and regulations.
• Provide updates on the WFP COVID-19 Common Services and free-to-user services for the consolidation of cargo and movement of passengers through the pre-established WFP Humanitarian Air Hubs.
• Collect physical road constraint data to produce Road Access Constraint Maps.
• Map logistics infrastructure through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services.
• Maintain information sharing platforms including a common mailing list (ethiopia-logs@logcluster.org) and a dedicated Ethiopia Operation webpage (https://logcluster.org/ops/eth20a) on the Logistics Cluster website to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistics information.
• Maintain and provide updates to the Logistics Capacity Assessment Platform for Ethiopia (https://dlca.logcluster.org/display/public/DLCA/Ethiopia).

3. Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of partner agencies, organisations or commercial services, but rather to supplement them through the access to common services. The provision of common services listed below will be conditional to the availability of funding necessary for their implementation. The provision and prioritisation of services will be dependent on the partners’ identified challenges and needs, and agreed with the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the government.

Where there is funding, the following free-to-user services can be made available:
• Storage services
• Road transport services
• Air transport services

Storage Services:
• Dry storage services can be made available in the form of Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) and will be installed at priority locations identified by partners and the Emergency Coordination Cell or through ICCG – government prioritisation plan.
• Dry storage service can be made available through permanent warehouses in Addis Ababa and in Adama.

This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.
The MSUs will be stored at central locations in Addis Ababa and Adama to be quickly deployable based on the needs of requesting organisations, as part of advance preparedness measures. Priority will be given to organisations willing to manage MSUs as common storage facilities on behalf of the entire humanitarian community rather than solely for individual use, especially in the ICCG-government response prioritised areas for interventions.

The installation will be provided through Engineering services or technical teams. Storage services include consolidation and storage of cargo on behalf of partners and will comprise of logistics support equipment such as pallets.

Cold storage services can be provided through the form of refrigerated containers, following the same procedures as the MSUs.

**Road Transport Services**

- Road transport services between key strategic and central locations is available upon request. Transport services include the consolidation of cargo, loading and offloading on behalf of partners.
- Dedicated fleet capacity can be made available if there is a considerable demand from humanitarian partners.
- The Logistics Cluster will set up departure schedules for transport services and consolidate cargo movements, saving assets and costs for partners, especially for smaller volume transportation.
- Temperature controlled transportation can be made available to partners from/to strategic locations.

**Air Transport Services**

- The Logistics Cluster facilitates access to common air transport for cargo using commercial airlines or dedicated air assets from WFP Aviation, depending on number and volume of requests.
- Air transport services can be provided to/from domestic airports in-country. Locations depend on the needs of the humanitarian community.
- Air transport services may be requested to support the rapid transportation of COVID-19 supplies and other life-saving assistance relief items if access constraints arise.

**Capacity Strengthening**

- Upon request, storage rehabilitation works can be provided to support the government response in relief and health operations, and to support the safe storage during the upcoming rainy season and accommodate the increased storage needs.
- Augmentation of staffing capacities can be provided to support the increase of operations from the government (desert locust, floods, COVID-19, food assistance).
- Capacity strengthening can be provided through trainings on the installation of MSUs and other supply chain trainings such as warehouse management. Capacity strengthening activities will also be provided to the government for greater cargo tracking and logistics visibility in-country.

As “Provider of Last Resort” (PoLR) WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is responsible only to provide logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity, where access and funding permit and where these gaps limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.

This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.
This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.