BACKGROUND

On 7 July 2014, the Israeli army launched a military operation in the Gaza Strip, with the stated objective of stopping Palestinian rocket firing at southern Israel and destroying the military infrastructure of Hamas and other armed groups. The humanitarian impact of these hostilities comes against a backdrop of heightened vulnerability and instability in Gaza. On the same date, a humanitarian emergency was declared.

The lack of security continues to challenge humanitarian operations. The operating environment in Gaza is extremely dangerous, with significant implications on the protection of civilians, aid workers and on the assessment of needs and the delivery of assistance. Humanitarian space is needed to allow humanitarian workers to carry out life-saving activities, for example, through regular and meaningful humanitarian pauses or corridors.

Kerem Shalom Crossing, located in the southern Gaza Strip, near the Israeli-Palestinian-Egyptian border, 3.6 km from the Rafah crossing, is currently the only entry point for humanitarian goods from Israel into the Gaza Strip, and is currently operating under heavy security, and certain items such as spare parts for WASH infrastructure and medical equipment remain restricted and require sometimes lengthy coordination processes that are not adequate to respond to emergency needs in the scale that are emerging in Gaza right now.

The Egyptian Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip is currently closed. Since July 2013, the Rafah border crossing has been severely restricted by the Government of Egypt. A limited number of medical evacuations have taken place through Rafah crossing as well as evacuation of foreign nationals, dual nationals and Egyptian nationals and their families however, a more significant opening of Rafah crossing is needed to allow the movement of people and humanitarian supplies.

Of particular concern is the damage sustained by the Gaza Power Plant (GPP), which brought the operation of the plant to a halt. Consequently, electricity supply is very limited in Gaza City and unavailable in various localities in the Middle Area. This is expected to have a pervasive impact on the living conditions for several months, including in the functioning of water, sanitation and health facilities, as well as in food production, including the functioning of flour mills and bakeries.

LOGISTICS GAPS AND BOTTLENECKS

The Logistics Cluster has been formally activated and aims to facilitate, coordinate, and ensure delivery of life saving humanitarian assistance to the affected populations in the Gaza strip. The humanitarian logistics is facing a number...
of challenges, translating into severe gaps that continue to impede the timely deliveries of life saving aid cargo. The major challenges are as follows:

- **Safe and Secure transportation inside the Gaza Strip**: the ongoing shelling is making it difficult to find transporters willing to take the risk and continue working;
- **Warehousing**: military operations makes it difficult to plan distribution and it is hard to access existing warehouses in certain areas due to hostilities and finding the necessary labour forces;
- **Coordination with relevant authorities and organisations operating in the Gaza Strip**: coordinating proper humanitarian space to ensure safe passage, delivery and distribution of aid cargo;
- **Coordination and ensure prioritization of cargo from Israel into the Gaza Strip**: The increasing needs and deteriorating situation is forcing the humanitarian community to augment its pipelines, which increasingly will put pressure on the only border crossing into Gaza and at same time raise issues of prioritization.

**LOGISTICS CLUSTER ACTIVITIES**

The following range of activities and services are planned to be offered temporarily in order to fill the logistics gaps and ensure a well-coordinated and timely humanitarian response through the provision of common services, based on need:

1. **Logistics Coordination**: The following coordination services will be provided to mitigate any duplication of efforts by humanitarian actors and maximize the use of available logistics assets and resources:
   - Weekly coordination meetings in Jerusalem;
   - Coordination in key hot spot locations, such as Gaza and Rafah;
   - Coordination with other clusters, UNRWA, UNOCHA, UN Access Coordination Unit (ACU), as well as UNSCO and participation in the weekly Inter Cluster Working Group Meetings.

2. **Information Management**: The Logistics Cluster will provide information management services with the aim of supporting operational decision making to improve the efficiency of the logistics response. These services will include the following:
   - Rapid dissemination of logistics information related to customs and tax exemption, as well as guidance to partners;

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