Background

On Saturday 25 April 2015, an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter Scale was recorded in Nepal, 80 km to the North-West of Kathmandu and 68 km east of Pokhara. A second earthquake registering 7.3 magnitude was recorded southeast of Kodari (Sindhupalchowk District), 76 km northeast of Kathmandu, on Tuesday 12 May – an area already affected by the 25 April earthquake.

The Government of Nepal declared a state of emergency in the country and designated the following 14 districts as the most affected: Gorkha, Kavrepalanchok, Dhading, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Sindhupalchok, Dolakha, Ramechhap, Okhaldunga, Makwanpur, Sindhu, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur.

According to the Government of Nepal, close to 9,000 fatalities resulted from the 25 April and 12 May 2015 earthquakes that destroyed 602,592 and damaged 284,482 houses.

The Logistics Cluster has been activated to support the humanitarian community in their efforts to deliver life-saving relief items across affected areas in Nepal.

The country has been experiencing a severe fuel shortage since the end of September 2015 that is negatively impacting the whole humanitarian community, and hampering the distribution of relief items to beneficiaries.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The geographical area affected by the earthquake is mountainous and remote. Most of these areas can only be reached by small or off-road trucks, whilst others are only accessible by air or by porters and by pack animals. This creates extreme logistics challenges in implementing large scale operations.

The magnitude of the disaster and the number of people affected called for a coordinated and efficient response from the international community that is proportionate to the scope of the disaster to avoid bottlenecks and possible overlaps in efforts.

At the beginning of the response, Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) represented the sole international air entry point into Nepal that could accommodate commercial cargo freighters and experienced high congestion. By June, the situation at the airport greatly improved and TIA is now operating smoothly.

The volumes of relief items brought into the country, in conjunction with damaged infrastructure and limited capacity, required staging areas within and outside of Nepal, as well as a number of operations and logistics hubs to absorb the extra needs and allow a greater number beneficiaries in the affected areas to be reached.

The earthquake crisis has been compounded by the fuel shortage that has been affecting the country since the end of September 2015.

The volatile security situation in the south of the country is hampering the movement of trucks across the border with India. The fluidity of the situation requires constant monitoring and guidance from the Logistics Cluster.

Objectives

The foremost objective of the Logistics Cluster in Nepal is to support the Government-led response by coordinating with international and national NGOs, the UN System and the private sector, in order to optimise logistics efforts in the delivery of the extensive humanitarian assistance required.

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 objective has been met through execution of the following activities in response to the earthquake:

1. **Coordination**

In order to facilitate a unified response effort on behalf of the humanitarian community, the following coordination mechanisms have been provided to minimise duplication of logistics activities during the response:

Logistics Cluster Coordination Cells have been established in Kathmandu and in the four main regional operational areas, Gorkha, Dhading, Sindhupalchok and Dholaka districts, to support overall coordination of the Logistics Cluster operation in Nepal. Regular Logistics Cluster Coordination meetings have been held with the purpose of briefing on, updating, and revising operational plans as needed; information sharing; analysis of existing and emerging logistics gaps and bottlenecks.

A Civil / Military Liaison Officer has been operating in Kathmandu and common operational areas as required, providing assistance and guidance on custom clearance issues, in close coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs, that has a permanent presence inside the Kathmandu Humanitarian Staging Area.

2. **Information Management**

Information Management (IM) activities are undertaken by the Logistics Cluster in the interest of promoting and facilitating the sharing of logistics information among all organisations conducting response operations.

To ensure an efficient and effective response by the humanitarian community, the Logistics Cluster has been collecting, consolidating, and sharing information related to ongoing activities, key infrastructure, access constraints, available storage and transport capacity in the affected areas, as well as custom procedures and other important provisions such as eligibility to obtain WFP-procured fuel.

GIS capacity has been established to provide logistical decision-making support tools to the humanitarian community such as the mapping of road access constraints.

3. **Logistics Services**

The support provided by Logistics Cluster is not intended to replace the logistics capacities of other agencies or organisations, but rather to supplement them through the provision of common services. Due to the ongoing fuel shortage, many organisations had to delay their distributions and a considerable amount of relief items remains stored in the Logistics Cluster warehouses. It was therefore not possible to phase-out cluster activities at the end of December 2015, as initially envisaged. A four month extension, through April 2016, will grant time to the organisations to complete their distributions. The Logistics Cluster will continue to provide support and facilitate service provision.

**Storage and transport services in country**

**Storage**

- **KATHMANDU: The Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA)** was set-up as part of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan drafted in 2013, as a contingency plan in the event of a natural disaster. The HSA was established to avoid congestion at the main entry points of affected areas and ease the flow of life-saving commodities, where large-scale relief activities are being undertaken. A storage facility in Dhulikhel (Kavre District) has also been established to increase the HSA’s capacity, to help de-congest KTM and to offer storage capacity for international air shipments before onward movement.

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