Last Mile Transport

Severe access constraints continue to hamper the delivery of aid in many affected areas. A strategy has been established to reach people living in the most remote locations. Using anywhere up to 20,000 porters managed by the Trekking Association of Nepal (TAAN) and the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), a common logistics supply chain is being established under the lead of WFP to reach approximately 45,000 people living in villages located above the altitude of road access. These skilled personnel will carry up to 30kg per person at a time in order to reach all affected communities. In some areas pack animals may be used to supplement this capacity, however many trails will not support mules or yaks.

The porters and mountaineers leading the interagency response will be augmented by five Mi8 cargo helicopters in unison with three smaller AS 350 helicopters up to an altitude of 3,500 meters. Cargo will be delivered to landing zones (LZ) at forward locations for onward movement. Mountainous areas without suitable LZs can also be served by sling load.

To reach the most remote communities based above cargo helicopter access, experienced mountaineers and porter teams will be used to deliver to villages or in some cases communicate to people in need of assistance to collect from the distribution point. This should not require villagers to travel more than a day to receive assistance. Approximately 5,000 people in high mountainous areas will be assisted.
Base camps will be established for receipt of relief items in Kintanbesi (Dhading District) by TAAN. NMA will establish base camps in Simigaun, Beding, and Lamabagar (Dolakha District). The base camps will either be fed by 4x4 trucks or helicopters. From here, porters will be engaged to transport the relief items up the mountain trails where camps/distribution points will be placed in strategic locations where communities from surrounding areas can pick-up their supplies. LoAs with the two entities have been already been signed and work on these two pilot trails will commence within the next two days.

**Trail Rehabilitation**

There are two types of trail through the most remote locations: Most districts have one or two trekking trails of about 1.5 metres wide which are generally accessible during the monsoon season, as well as community trails linking all the wards to the VDC. These are more often washed out by the rains. A large number of all these trails were damaged or blocked in the earthquake and remain subject to landslides. Helicopter flights are now underway to assess and map the trails and prioritise rehabilitation. This assessment process will be supplemented by teams of Sherpas. The trail rehabilitation itself, which will involve both clearing and major repairs, will be carried out by local workers designated by the wards. Repairs will begin first along the northern Dhading trail, which serves 13 VDCs.

**Interagency Services**

The goal of this programme is to provide all the aid requirements of remote communities in affected areas including shelter items, food and WASH. Close coordination between the Clusters, especially to standardize the kits, as well as a strong forward presence from Cluster partners will be key. The plan is to activate different trails at different times, which requires frontloading the appropriate hubs at the right moment. Given that the turnaround for porters on certain trails can be up to 12 days, the system will function on a “pull approach” to have all the required cargo ready at the specific day of departure per location. The first priority is to target the routes that get washed out during the monsoon season. The service will be provided at no cost to the users under the standard Logistics Cluster Service Request Procedures. This will ensure a coordinated relief effort between all agencies, INGOs, local NGOs and the Government in order to avoid duplication and to ensure that all the available humanitarian goods reach the most affected populations.

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