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<b>LOCATION</b>	Online/held remotely
<b>DATE</b>	01 September 2020
<b>CHAIR</b>	Logistics Cluster
<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	Catholic Relief Services (CRS), HALO Trust, International Medical Corps (IMC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH), Somali Humanitarian Organization (SHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP), World Vision
<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Logistics Cluster to consolidate partners' challenges in the customs clearance process to share with OCHA.</li><li>• OCHA to compile a second letter to send to the Office of the Prime Minister requesting to expedite the customs clearance process.</li><li>• Partners to inform the Logistics Cluster of any further requirements in documentation or procedures for specific types of cargo – that have not been covered under the customs clearance mapping</li><li>• The Logistics Cluster to share the Transportation Requirements document with partners for feedback.</li><li>• Partners to notify the Logistics Cluster of any cargo requirements for Dusmareb.</li><li>• Registered participants of the Logistics Cluster Induction Training to complete the pre-requisite e-learning course before 08 September.</li></ul>
<b>AGENDA</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Action points review</li><li>2. Customs clearance discussion (OCHA, WFP)</li><li>3. Customs clearance / tax exemptions - Documentation requirements (air, sea, road transport)</li><li>4. Situation Update - Flood Response and COVID-19</li><li>5. Preparedness planning and cargo consolidation discussion</li><li>6. AOB</li></ol>

## 1. Action Points Review

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- The Logistics Cluster to share the presentation given by Peris Muchiri, Hydrometeorologist, FAO Somalia Water and Land Information Management (FAO SWALIM), with participants via the mailing list – **completed**

- Based on feedback from the poll, the Logistics Cluster to follow up with partners bilaterally on interest in a Logistics Cluster-facilitated cargo consolidation service - **ongoing**
- Interested partners to register for the Logistics Cluster Induction Training by 01 September - **completed**

## 2. Customs Clearance Discussion (OCHA, WFP)

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- Edward Melotte, Head of Access and Civil-Military Coordination, OCHA Somalia, gave an overview of the general challenges in obtaining customs clearance and tax exemptions for humanitarian cargo and OCHA's role in advocating for the fast-tracking of this clearance. OCHA tracks these challenges through its access monitoring and reporting framework which is issued on a weekly basis.
- On 13 May 2020 the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) sent a letter to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to request that customs clearance (specifically tax exemption approvals) be expedited and the timeframe be reduced to 48 hours (currently it takes around 2-3 weeks on average) in response to the reported delays from key organizations. OCHA noted that it is keen to follow up again, however in order to optimise this opportunity, it would like to collect more detailed information from organizations affected by these delays.
- One organisation stated that it usually takes at least three weeks for tax exemption to be obtained. This was confirmed by another participant who also noted that the organization usually waits for three weeks. Documents are usually processed within 14-21 days when everything is operating as usual and when the Prime Minister is in the country. However, when the Prime Minister is out of the country or out of Mogadishu, document approval is delayed to three weeks. No other authority is able to sign the document on his behalf; there has been no delegation for Tax Exemption, it has to wait for the return of PM.
- It was noted that challenge is often encountered in terms of the bill of lading (i.e. when organisations try to import items), the authorities insist on an original bill of lading and if one is not submitted then documents will not be processed; however it's not possible to ship cargo without a bill of lading nor to receive the bill of lading prior to the loading/departure of the vessel and thus this can cause lengthy delays. It was noted that one way to solve this issue would be to request that the government authority accept Seaway Bills or draft shipping documents instead of original bills of lading – as the Seaway Bill is electronic and can be processed before the vessel arrives.
- An organisation noted that to avoid delays it has contracted a private company to facilitate the customs clearance process.
- The Logistics Cluster noted that it was to take the lead on consolidating these challenges faced by partners to communicate them to OCHA so that they may be captured in this next iteration of an expedition request letter from OCHA to the OPM on behalf of the humanitarian community.
- An organisation noted that carriers share shipping documents and then only give a three to four days window for tax exemption. OCHA confirmed that they are requesting a full shortening of the process.
- Another partner noted that it has created a standard operating procedure (SOP) for its shipments so that they can only be airlifted once tax exemption has been confirmed – this is partly to avoid excess demurrage charges (currently only the first 24 hours are free of charge for arrivals at Mogadishu airport).

Nonetheless, participants indicated this may not be applicable to all cases as flight schedule to Mogadishu is limited and transport opportunities are used as they are made available.

It was confirmed that currently this organisation is receiving free-to user flights into Mogadishu from WFP which are dispatched before obtaining customs clearance, resulting in demurrage charges. It was also noted that in the past some organisations have been able to customs clear airfreight cargo that has been shipped by DHL and use the DHL waybill as part of the customs clearance process.

- It was confirmed that the demurrage period is longer for sea transport arriving at ports in Somalia (e.g. free storage for the first 14 days). OCHA suggested that could ask that the free demurrage period for airport and port is extended if this would be helpful.

### 3. Customs Clearance / Tax Exemptions – Documentation Requirements (air, sea, road transport)

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- The Logistics Cluster gave an overview of the current customs clearance process, highlighting the various requirements and bottlenecks in the process. Essentially there are three main actors that are always involved – the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MoHADM), the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Ministry of Finance (MoF). It was also noted that organisations, based on their programmes, process their exemptions through relevant line ministries too.
- To begin the clearance process, the following documents are required (*this is dependent on the type of cargo*)
  - Letterhead request for tax exemption
  - Organization profile
  - Distribution plan – this can also be replaced by an operational forecast – the need is to demonstrate the use of the items
  - Original Commercial Invoices / Purchase Order
  - Original Packing List
  - Certificate of Origin / Certificate of Conformity (specific cargo)
  - Original Bill of Lading / Waybill
  - Delivery Order
- The Logistics Cluster asked participants whether this was indeed an accurate mapping of the process or whether any organisations had any other step that needed to be added (e.g. is there an additional step for those health partners who are moving medical cargo. IMC confirmed that for obtaining clearance for Health and Nutrition of cargo, it is necessary to start with the Ministry of Health and not MoHADM. WASH begins at the Ministry of Planning and Education through the Ministry of Education. It was noted that the timeframe is similar to that of securing the reference code through MoHADM – two to three days or up to one week.
- It was also noted that for armoured vehicles, additional approval is required from the Ministry of Security; For telecommunication equipment, additional approval is required from the Ministry of Security and the Ministry of Communication; and for specific equipment such as fishing machinery, chemicals and others

may require approval from relevant governmental counterparts. Partners were requested to communicate bilaterally to the Logistics Cluster if they face any additional issues or additional requirements for specific cargo.

- The Logistics Cluster explaining that the term **demurrage** refers to the charges of container/shipment by shipping line or port authority when the full container is not moved out of the port/terminal for unpacking within the allowed free days offered by the shipping line or port authority.
- It was additionally noted that for exports, the process is approved by the Director General of the Ministry of Finance and tends to be a faster process upon submission of the same documents. Movement by sea will require export clearance even if both ports are domestic - Port of arrival may require additional clearances that can take an additional two to three days.
- There is no applicable blanket clearance for import/export, all type of cargo and movements need to be cleared individually.
- The Logistics Cluster launched a poll seeking to find out at which point during the process flow organisations face the most challenges. The first question was: **Where in the Customs Clearance Process is the main bottleneck your organisation faces?** Most respondents noted that the main bottleneck is during the approval by the OPM.
- The second question asked: **What is the average timeframe it takes for your organisation to secure Customs Clearance or Tax Exemption for your cargo?** Most respondents confirmed this as three weeks with some in the four-week timeframe.
- The third question asked: **Which of the following is your organisation using to help facilitate this process?** The vast majority of respondents noted that they were using their own staff rather than a dedicated custom broker or supplier.

## 4. Situation Update – Flood Response and COVID-19

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- All airports in Somalia are open for local and international, passenger flights with the exception of Abudwak airport which is still closed for maintenance. The lockdown of Mogadishu Airport (AAIA) extended until **05 September**. WFP trucks continue to have access – access given on approval for WFP staff and contractors.
- UNHAS has resumed its weekly flight on route Mogadishu – Nairobi -Mogadishu as of 23 August 2020. All passenger travels are subject to both governments' COVID-19 guidelines. The latest UNHAS flight schedule up to 30 September has been published on the Logistics Cluster's Somalia Operation webpage [here](#).
- The Logistics Cluster is advocating for Somalia Humanitarian Funding (SHF) for the current flood response in order to support the rapid air and road transportation of humanitarian cargo to affected areas. It will keep partners informed accordingly.
- All ports remain operational. Partners to email [otavio.costa@wfp.org](mailto:otavio.costa@wfp.org) / [lucy.wambogo@wfp.org](mailto:lucy.wambogo@wfp.org) for enquiries regarding available space for bookings on Voyage 13 ex-Berbera. The latest schedule of the WFP time-chartered vessel MV Juist is available on the Logistics Cluster Somalia page and continues to be shared via the mailing list.

- Key roads in Somalia are accessible although subject to temporary closures. The latest [Logistics Cluster Flood Affected Roads Map](#) as of 06 July is available on the Somalia Logistics Cluster page. It was noted that the Marka road ex-Mogadishu had been affected temporarily due to flooding; however, the road is now open. The Logistics Cluster will monitor the situation and inform partners accordingly.
- It was noted that the Beletwyne runway is now reportedly open / no longer flooded and accessible for fixed-wing aircraft.
- Having been abruptly closed last week due to unrest in Ethiopia, the Somaliland – Ethiopia border has now been reopened. The Somaliland-Djibouti border remains open but strictly for commercial trade. The Kenya-South Somalia (Mandera) land borders remain closed for commercial entities.
- Central Somalia-Ethiopia (Dolow) also remains closed; however certain points may periodically be opened for trade, subject to bilateral agreements between local authorities of relevant border towns.
- The below crossing points of Somalia - Kenya border remain closed indefinitely:
  - Somalia – Beledhawa - Closed
  - Kenya – Doble - Closed
  - Ethiopia – Elbarde - Closed
  - Ethiopia – Beletweyne - closed
  - Ethiopia - Dollow – Closed

## 5. Preparedness Planning and Cargo Consolidation Discussion

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- In an effort to optimise available resources, the Logistics Cluster continues to inform partners of any possible space on aircraft flying to locations in Somalia. Partners were asked as to whether they had any cargo for Dhusmareb as there is an upcoming flight being chartered in the coming days. Partners were requested to inform the Logistics Cluster bilaterally of any additional cargo consolidation needs, especially for any flood preparedness requirements.
- The Logistics Cluster updated participants on a Transportation Requirements document – this is in tabular format and captures transportation requirements for cargo movement into / within Somalia from original location to final destination. This will be published on <https://logcluster.org/ops/som20a> in the coming days after being shared with partners via the mailing list for their feedback.

## 6. AOB

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- Participants were reminded that the Online Logistics Cluster Induction Training for Somalia Training is on 08 September 2020. The main objective of the Logistics Cluster Induction Training is to achieve a common understanding of the cluster approach and mandate, enabling their efficient and effective contribution to inter-agency logistics response.
- The training is now full, however interested partners may contact sign up to the waiting list. Registered partners were encouraged to complete the e-learning course before Training commences.

- A partner noted that customs clearance and tax exemption should be kept separate – customs clearance is easy once the tax exemption has been received.
- In a final poll, participants were asked to vote on a possible topic for discussion at the next meeting. The results showed that the main interest is on access challenges and sea transport options. Partners were encouraged to contact the Logistics Cluster bilaterally with any suggestions for further discussion topics.
- The next Logistics Cluster Meeting is tentatively scheduled for 15 September. There is also a Logistics Cluster WhatsApp group which partners may join by contacting Logistics Cluster focal points.

## Contacts

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