BACKGROUND

The humanitarian situation in South Sudan has deteriorated significantly since 15 December 2013 when violence erupted in Juba, quickly spreading to Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states. So far, more than 2.3 million people have been forced from their homes including 1.66 million internally displaced people. The ongoing insecurity, in conjunction with an extremely poor transport infrastructure (river and road), has left the humanitarian sector with limited options to deliver lifesaving cargo to the displaced populations scattered across the country. Air assets and limited available river transport are currently the only means of delivering humanitarian cargo to remote locations cut off from any road access.

LOGISTICS GAPS AND BOTTLENECKS

The Logistics Cluster aims to facilitate, coordinate, and ensure delivery of life-saving humanitarian relief items reaches affected areas in South Sudan. However, the Logistics Cluster is facing a number of challenges, translating into severe gaps that continue to impede the ability of the humanitarian community to deliver an adequate response. The major challenges are as follows:

**Operational**

- **Advanced Pipeline Planning:** Organisations cannot always make available their advanced planning pipeline information and this limits the ability of the Logistics Cluster to match the available logistical assets with the existing need of the humanitarian community and advocate for funding. Advanced planning is also deemed necessary for pre-positioning activities during the dry season.

**Infrastructural**

- **Airstrip conditions:** Poor conditions of most airstrips in the country make them prone to weather adversities and therefore key operational areas are accessible only by helicopter.
- **Poor Road Infrastructure:** The road network in South Sudan is primarily comprised of unpaved roads and bush tracks; even during the dry season many of these roads are only accessible by 6x6 all-terrain vehicles, while during the rainy season many roads are impassable.
- **River barge conditions:** There are currently only two barge sets (capacity of 1,200 mt each) available to the humanitarian community. In addition, due to insecurity on the river, smaller boats only proceed part way to Malakal. Investments are needed to upgrade and increase current assets.
- **Fuel Shortages:** Due to the on-going conflict in some key response areas, a decrease in commercial fuel provision has been reported. Road transport of fuel to these locations is also hampered by the deteriorating road infrastructure and impassable bridges.

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.
South Sudan

Concept of Operations
8 August 2016

Political

- **Insecurity:** The security situation remains volatile restricting the movement of personnel and of humanitarian cargo. Several key operational areas are only accessible by air and some areas are completely inaccessible due to active hostilities.

Environmental

- **Seasonal Flooding:** Annual rains between May and November affect the majority of South Sudan’s underdeveloped road network, isolating communities in need and hampering humanitarian operations.
- **Vast Distances:** In addition to the volatile security situation and poor condition of the logistical infrastructure, there are demographic and geographic factors affecting humanitarian assistance. With a population of approximately 12 million (more than 80% living in the rural areas) spread across a vast area of 650,000 km², movement of humanitarian cargo from the major logistics hubs to the areas of operation is challenging, costly, and time consuming.

LOGISTICS CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

The following range of activities and services are **not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual organisations**, but rather to fill identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and supplement the response of the humanitarian community through the provision of common services, based on need. The following activities and services will be made available to the humanitarian community:

1. **Logistics Coordination:**

   The following coordination activities will be undertaken to minimise duplication of efforts and competition by the humanitarian community:

   - Regular national-level Logistics Cluster coordination meetings in Juba and regional-level cluster meetings held in Bor, Bentiu, Rumbek, Malakal and Wau
   - Coordination meetings in other key operational locations as deemed necessary
   - Participation in the Weekly Inter Cluster Working Group meetings
   - Support the Military & Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) weekly meetings
   - Dry season planning meeting
   - Access Working Group meetings

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.
2. **Information Management:**

The Logistics Cluster will make available Information Management products with the aim of supporting operational decision making to improve the efficiency of the logistics response:

- Consolidated information on the overall logistics situation including logistics gaps and bottlenecks;
- Updated information on operational data, such as road closures and entry points, through the publication of situation updates, meeting minutes, snapshots, flash news and briefings;
- Logistics infrastructure Geographic Information Systems/mapping tools and products;
- Other relevant information, such as customs and tax exemption procedures;
- All information will be promptly shared with organisations via the dedicated mailing list and/or through the Logistics Cluster website [http://logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a](http://logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a)

3. **Logistics Service Facilitation:**

The services made available by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of organisations, but rather to support the humanitarian community through common services. *Access permitting and depending on the availability of funds, the following services may be provided at no cost to the user (for more details see Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)).*

i. **Common Warehousing:** Currently, WFP, as the lead of the Logistics Cluster, has made available to the humanitarian community common storage warehouses in the following locations: Akobo, Aweil, Bentiu, Bor, Juba, Malakal, Melut, Minkgaman, Nyal, Pibor, Rumbek and Wau. Common storage in the dispatch hubs of Bor, Wau and Rumbek is for transit storage only. Where possible, the Logistics Cluster will continue to support organisations by facilitating the provision of MSUs for common storage and by providing trainings in building Mobile Storage Units.

**Guidance on how to request storage can be found in the SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) and on the Service Request Form (SRF). SRF Guidelines for Requesting Cargo Transport and Storage are also available on the Logistics Cluster website [http://www.logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a](http://www.logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a)**

As pre-positioning operations will remain a primary focus during the dry season, the Logistics Cluster will provide Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) for the strategic pre-positioning of relief items based on the needs of requesting organisations, as part of the advance preparedness measures. Priority will be given to
organisations willing to manage MSUs as common storage facilities versus individual use especially in the Inter Cluster Working Group (ICWG) prioritised areas for interventions.

ii. **Common Road Transport:** As a provider of last resort, WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, provides road transport on a cost-recovery basis to humanitarian organisations. This service is subject to availability, road conditions, security, and the changing nature of the humanitarian situation. Information on available commercial transporters will be circulated and updated throughout the year. The fragile road network poses further risk; therefore the Logistics Cluster will continue to collect and consolidate updates on road conditions to identify access constraints and alternative routes. All cargo movement requests are tasked and tracked by Logistics Cluster using the **Service Request Form (SRF)** and the **Consolidated SRF database.**

---

**Guidance on how to request Road Transport can be found in the Road Transport Guidelines – South Sudan - March 2015 on the Logistics Cluster website** [http://www.logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a](http://www.logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a)

---

iii. **Common Air Transport:** The Logistics Cluster facilitates air transport capacity through the use of dedicated air assets, made available by UNHAS. Depending on sufficient available funding, air transport is foreseen to be rendered free of charge for all 2016, excluding refugee operations, to locations identified by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT): Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei states. Should the funding fall to a level that cannot sustain the cost of air operations, a cost-recovery mechanism will be put in place. The Logistics Cluster will promptly inform organisations of any change.

a. Priority locations are decided by the HCT and the Inter Cluster Working Group; however, additional locations can receive support if the requested cargo is identified by the organisation to be critical for programme continuity.

b. The air assets will be positioned at the dispatch hubs (Bor, Rumbek, Wau) depending on operational requests, security and availability of parking. Cluster Coordinators are responsible for consolidating and endorsing priority needs for their cluster, whilst providing pipeline requirements to the Logistics Cluster to facilitate advanced matching of the logistical assets to the existing need within available funding.

---

**Guidance on how to request Air Transport Services can be found in the SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) and on the Service Request Form (SRF). SRF Guidelines for Requesting Cargo Transport and Storage are also available on the Logistics Cluster website.**

---

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.
iv. **Common River Transport**: The Logistics Cluster will facilitate river barge/boat movements to locations that are deemed accessible, on a free-to-user basis dependant on funding.

Guidance on how to request Common River Transport Services can be found in the **SOP (Standard Operating Procedures)** and on the **Service Request Form (SRF)**. **SRF Guidelines for Requesting Cargo Transport and Storage are also available** on the Logistics Cluster website.

v. **Cross border operations**: The Logistics Cluster can provide organisations guidance and support for cross border movements of NFIs from Sudan and Ethiopia.

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.