South Sudan – Meeting Minutes

LOCATION: OCHA, Juba
DATE: 02 December 2014
CHAIR: Logistics Cluster Coordinator


AGENDA:
1. Challenges faced by partners in 2014
2. Challenges faced by the Logistics Cluster in 2014
3. Looking forward to 2015

1. Challenges faced by partners in 2014

- The Logistics Cluster Coordinator opened the discussion by asking participants what challenges they were faced with in 2014 and what they found the Logistics Cluster’s strengths and weaknesses to be. The following feedback was received:
  - Generally the performance of the Logistics Cluster in South-Sudan is rated as very good and services are highly appreciated.
  - A more transparent way to track cargo that is being transported by the Logistics Cluster would be highly appreciated. Once a Service Request Form (SRF) is submitted, participants would like more clarity on how long it would be before cargo is transported.
  - Participants do agree that the delivery of operational support items was a challenge as the Logistics Cluster predominately transported life-saving cargo.
  - Constraints of local air transportation capacities requires the accountability of Logistics Cluster assets.
  - Participants are requesting a modification to the SRF template, which will allow a greater number to be inserted into the ‘pieces’ column.
  - One partner thanked the Logistics Cluster for adding additional helicopters to the fleet when they were direly needed.
  - One partner requests a system to be established to see when other organisations have any spare capacity on their chartered aircraft.
  - Procedures on clearance of airlift requests are recapitulated. The current procedure on clearance by each respective Cluster Coordinator is highlighted and analysed in this discussion.
  - Participants request the creation of a database to keep track of available commercial transporters (river, road, air) in South Sudan.
  - Participants request that as of January 2015, Logistics Cluster Coordination Meetings should be held twice a month. Updates in between the meetings will continue to be shared through the mailing list.
  - The priority locations derived from the OCHA-led Operational Working Group should be shared with logistics focal points within organisations.

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2. Challenges faced by Logistics Cluster in 2014

- Due to revised procedures, old versions of the SRF can’t be accepted anymore; only the 4.4 version (available on the website) will be accepted.
- Detailed descriptions on items listed in SRFs (i.e. Weights, Volumes, Destinations, Consignee) are essential. In some cases room for improvement was identified. The Logistics Cluster will offer a training for interested participants on weights and measures and also on how to accurately fill out SRFs.
- Amendments to submit SRFs were frequently requested; amendments can’t be accepted in 2015 – new SRFs will need to be submitted.
- Duplication of SRFs from organisations for the same response (i.e. WASH in Bentiu) should be avoided.
- Participants are encouraged to submit SRFs only when the cargo is in country.
- Packaging and labelling of cargo could be improved, especially for items like timber, hoes, jerry cans, kits, etc. The Logistics Cluster is kindly asking participants to adjust procedures.
- The use of space in warehouses should be limited to a short period. Participants are encouraged to keep track of their consignments to ensure there is enough space for other users.
- The Logistics Cluster has had to cancel/postpone rotations when receiving organisations in deep field locations failed to call UNHAS prior to scheduled flight departure time.
- A significant improvement in communications between the Logistics Cluster and partners would be supported by an assignment of one or two dedicated focal points in each organisation.
- The Logistics Cluster kindly asks its’ partners to avoid last minute changes of team deployments as it results in flight cancellations and delayed deliveries to other locations.
- Offloading in field locations continue to be a challenge; organisations are encouraged to ensure they have enough casual staff ready.
- The timely submission of estimated needs for transportation of cargo of organisations in advance would be highly appreciated as late or no communication on cargo transportation planning resulted in a delayed scale-up by the Logistics Cluster in 2014.

3. Looking forward to 2015

- WFP conducted a security risk analysis on pre-conflict preposition sites where approximately 50 locations in three conflict states were classified in three categories (high, medium, low). A total of 21 sites were identified as low risk; this list has been circulated to participants as potential pre-po sites.
- The selection criteria for the 21 sites, apart from the security risks for staff and assets, were based on:
  - Accessibility in the dry season
  - Proximity to targeted populations
  - Logistics capacity to deliver (storage, transport, etc)
- The integrated logistics-prepositioning plan is based on a “fall forward” concept that entails expanding and establishing multiple strategic hubs closer to the targeted populations. Currently, the only strategic and main hub is located in Juba and Rumbek. Apart from the limited logistics capacity of this hub (already overstretched), the supply lines to key response areas in the three conflict states is long (in both time and distance) and vulnerable. The hubs and spokes system will provide the necessary flexibility in the uncertain environment. The fall forward locations are the hubs from which spokes run to the final delivery point and act at the same time act as fall back positions for the preposition and final delivery sites. This system will allow for shorter response times and mitigate some of the risks involved in prepositioning.
The fall forward positions are planned in Bor, Rumbek, Wunrok, Malakal, and a to be defined hub in or near Eastern Jonglei/Upper Nile.

As the preposition concept does not cover all the necessary locations based on programmatic needs, due to security and logistics constraints, there will still be a need for air transportation in 2015, albeit less than the current scenario. The fall forward hubs will also act as air hubs for cargo and mobile teams.

The logistics coordination center, and interaction with humanitarian organisations and governmental actors, will be in Juba.

Air operations will continue until roads progressively open in the dry season; prepo and delivery will then convert to overland transport.

One-two helicopters will remain in country for areas that remain inaccessible by road.

The Logistics Cluster plans to support convoy coordination.

The Logistics Cluster will be increasing storage capacity in Rumbek and Bor and also as per any other prepo requests received from partners.

The Logistics Cluster is currently working closely with IOM to determine the locations for the CTS fleet.

The main dispatch hubs will be Bor, Rumbek, Malakal; the hub in western Jonglei site is yet to be determined.

Hubs in Bor, Rumbek, Bentiu will be staffed by Logistics Cluster; sub-cluster meetings and trainings will be held.

There will be a Roving Logistics Officer to hold ad-hoc meetings and liaise with partners who are managing common storage in other locations.

IOM, on behalf of the Logistics Cluster, will manage the common stores in Malakal; the Logistics Cluster will deploy additional staff to support air operations.

The Bor hub will serve southern Jonglei; Rumbek hub will serve Unity; and Malakal will serve Northern Jonglei Upper Nile.

WFP is planning to preposition Jet A-1 fuel in some locations, allowing delivery of cargo by fixed wing and shuttling by helicopters.

During the dry season, the Logistics Cluster will trial the online tracking system of RITA. This will enable users to track their cargo online. If successful, users will be trained on how to use RITA. If this model isn't successful, a basic excel sheet will be used to give more clarity on delivery plans.

The Logistics Cluster will be reviewing all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure they are in line with 2015 plans.

WFP is planning to acquire over 70 additional trucks which may be available to the Logistics Cluster on a cost recovery basis.

In 2015, the Logistics Cluster staff will remain the same; no major changes are expected.

The team will consist of five Logistics Officers based in Bentiu, Bor, Rumbe, and Malakal (when/if the helicopter is based there). A Roving Logistics Officer will be deployed to cover R&Rs and visit operations where partners support the common storage.

The overall plan is to increase support to organisations in the field and extend the Logistics Cluster footprint for support purposes.

The annual Logistics Cluster survey will be circulated to all participants during this weekend of 01 December.
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