
Meeting Minutes, 23 April 2020

Syria Operation, Damascus



This is an unofficial UN meeting record and should not be considered as a verbatim account of the UN meeting or position.

LOCATION	Damascus, Syria
DATE	23 April 2020
CHAIR	Logistics Cluster
PARTICIPANTS	Action Against Hunger (AAH), Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), Danish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Intersos, ONG Rescate, Oxfam, Première Urgence Internationale (PUI), Triangle Generation Humanitaire (TGH), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), ZOA International.
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Logistics Cluster will compile a list of prohibited and restricted items.• The Procurement Working Group (PWG) and the Damascus-based INGOs to share their lists of PPE suppliers with the Logistics Cluster. The cluster to compile and share via the mailing list.• The PWG to share their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) information gathering template and PPE specifications with the Logistics Cluster and partners.• The Logistics Cluster to update the suppliers list based on these.• UNFPA will explore the possibility of conducting the bidding process for the common procurement of standard PPE (nine types) including bid receipt, opening and evaluation.• The Logistics Cluster to explore the option of WFP procuring PPE on behalf of INGOs.• The cluster to share with PWG list INGOs inquiries regarding procurement of PPE.• Explore possibility of recording next cluster meeting.
AGENDA	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Syria Humanitarian Fund - Logistics2. COVID-193. Operational Updates4. AOB

1. Syria Humanitarian Fund - Logistics

- The Syria Humanitarian Fund (SHF) first Reserve Allocation of USD 23 million is issued to respond to new emergency lifesaving needs emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- Five main priorities were identified in the allocation strategy of the fund, including the following point on logistics: “address immediate gaps in logistics and transportation for humanitarian programming due to access restrictions”. The fund has allocated USD 400,000 to the logistics sector.
- The deadline for submission is 24 April 2020, and WFP will submit a proposal for the full amount allocated to logistics.
- The proposal is split into two main components: road transport and air cargo transport.
- **Road transport:** the proposal allocates USD 200,000 to the deployment of a dedicated fleet of trucks at each of the four Logistics Cluster warehouse hubs (Rural Damascus, Homs, Aleppo and Al-Hassakeh). Each of the four fleets will be composed of three trucks at a capacity of 10-12mt and kept on standby and available on a free-to-user basis ready to respond to COVID-19 related transport requests for organisations working in all sectors.
- **Air transport:** the remaining USD 200,000 will be allocated to a free-to-user air cargo transport service from Damascus to Qamishli. WFP will charter a commercial aircraft on an ad-hoc basis in response to organisations’ requests for transport. Any cargo prioritisation for this service will be made at the Humanitarian Country Team level in conjunction with the Inter-Sector Coordination (ISC) group.
- The proposal will allow for flexibility on the modality of transport depending on need.

2. COVID-19

Questionnaire results

- The Logistics Cluster sent out a short questionnaire to partners via the mailing list to gather feedback on the impact COVID-19 has had or will potentially have on humanitarian logistics operations inside Syria.
- Five responses were submitted at the meeting date, and a quick review of these was presented.
- The key takeaways were the following:
 - Movement restrictions of staff and sub-contractors impacting operations.
 - Lack of availability of raw materials inflating prices on the local market.
 - A diminished supplier capacity, especially transporter availability.
 - Lengthy customs clearance processes delaying implementation of programmes.
 - There are no additional warehousing needs.
 - Responses regarding increased transportation needs were mixed.
- The Logistics Cluster will compile a list of prohibited and restricted items in coordination with customs authorities.

COVID-19 Global Response

- The UN has convened a Supply Chain Task Force, with the aim of establishing a global COVID-19 supply chain system (CSCS) to provide countries with the essential medical supplies required to respond to the outbreak.
- The Task Force is chaired by WHO and WFP and there will be participation from other UN agencies.

- Globally, WHO will identify needs and lead the prioritisation and destination of supplies. Syria has been identified as a priority country. At the national level, WHO will also take the lead in logging demand and requirements of medical items and relay it to the CSCS.
- WFP's Service Provision Operational Plan will be used for the global distribution to the WHO-identified priority countries. It will leverage its logistics capacity at the national level to deliver to NGOs and other "frontline responders", who in turn will be responsible for distribution at the local level.
- The whole system will be held together by coordination and information management services.
- WHO through the Health Sector has taken the lead in mapping health-related needs of medical supplies, inclusive of PPE.

Non-health related PPE requirement

Procurement Working Group (PWG)

- For non-health related requirements of PPE, the PWG will launch an Invitation to Bid (ITB) for procurement of PPE. The ITB is expected to be published on 26 April.
- The PWG has asked UN agencies to share the outcome of their PPE tenders. Agencies were able to proceed on the back of the outcome of the tenders.

Damascus-based INGOs

- In parallel, Damascus-based INGOs have also begun mapping INGO PPE requirements inside Syria.
- INGOs also asked to what extent they can also benefit from the PWG exercise and the economy of scale.

Agreed way forward

- The PWG and the Damascus-based INGOs both agreed to share their consolidated list of PPE suppliers with the Logistics Cluster. The cluster will compile this list and share it via the mailing list to all partners.
- The PWG has agreed to share the PPE specifications drafted by WHO with the Logistics Cluster and partners.
- The outcome of the PWG tender will be shared with agencies and INGOs along with an SOP on how to use the outcome. UNFPA will explore the possibility of conducting the bidding process for the common procurement of standard PPE (9 types) including bid receipt, opening and evaluation.
- In parallel, the Logistics Cluster will explore a second option whereby WFP will procure PPE on behalf of I/NGOs. This mechanism would be separate from the PWG tender. It would also allow INGOs to take advantage of the economy of scale. INGOs can then buy the PPE from WFP.
- The cluster will also compile and share with the PWG a list of inquiries made by INGOs during the meeting regarding procurement of PPE.

3. Operational Updates

- The last border update was presented to partners.
- OCHA informed that reportedly Damascus airport will soon become operational for international cargo flights. The cluster will inform partners via the mailing list once confirmation that it is running is obtained.

Convoy to Rukban

- The convoy to Rukban was cancelled and trucks have been offloaded.

Convoy to Atareb

- The SARC branch in Atareb has officially been activated.
- ICRC, OCHA and SARC are discussing different possible delivery modalities, while also monitoring how COVID-19 may impact operations. The convoy is currently on hold until further analysis has been done.
- Several meetings with OCHA, SARC, ICRC and the Logistics Cluster were held to discuss initial steps and items that would be sent. Once the technicalities are finalised, the Logistics Cluster will contact UN agencies for their lists of items.

4. AOB

- Organisations who wish to have more information on Logistics Cluster services and how to access these can consult the website at: <https://logcluster.org/ops/syr12a>
- The Logistics Cluster has begun posting all Information Management Products and Meeting Minutes to the website, to make information more readily available.
- The cluster will check to see if the next coordination meeting can be recorded.

The next Logistics Cluster coordination meeting will take place in two weeks by teleconference. Details will be communicated at a later date.

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