
Meeting Minutes, 20 December 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	20 December 2020
CHAIR	Logistics Cluster
PARTICIPANTS	Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Intersos, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Première Urgence Internationale (PUI), Triangle Generation Humanaire (TGH), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO).
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Logistics Cluster to share Cold Chain Preparedness Working Group minutes with all partners.• The cluster to publish airlift standard operating procedures (SOPs) on the website.• The cluster to share OCHA's Note Verbale with partners once finalised.• UNRWA to provide further details regarding fuel storage project proposal.• The cluster to share draft Fuel Provision SOPs with partners for review.• Partners to provide feedback on the Strategic Advisory Group Terms of Reference shared by the cluster.• Partners to fill in the end of year user satisfaction survey circulated by the Logistics Cluster.
AGENDA	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Operational Updates2. Logistics Gaps and Needs3. Fuel4. AOB

1. Operational Updates

Cold Chain Preparedness Working Group (WG)

- The Logistic Cluster is working with health partners and key counterparts at the national level to build long term pandemic logistics preparedness capacity before the COVID-19 vaccination campaign.
- To this end, the Logistics Cluster called for the creation of a "Cold Chain Preparedness WG" with the participation of UNICEF, WHO, UNDP and WFP.
- The WG will work to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current cold chain logistics capacity in Syria and identify all bottlenecks (transport, storage and handling) in-country.

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- The WG met on 16 December with UNICEF and OCHA.
- The WG is working on Terms of Reference (ToRs).
- The Logistics Cluster invites partners to take part in the WG if and where required.
- UNHCR requested to be kept informed on progress made by the WG as, once the vaccine is rolled out in-country, a big component of the UNHCR response will involve distribution to internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- The Logistics Cluster will therefore be sharing the WG weekly meeting minutes to all partners via the mailing list.

Airlift Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- SOPs for the airlift from Damascus to Qamishli have been finalised, reviewed by partners, and endorsed. These will be published to the website this week.
- It was advised that it is a live document and will be updated as the operational environment changes.

Note Verbale (NV) – Movement Approvals

- Partners were informed that OCHA is finalising a response to the NV sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) regarding import and movement approvals in Syria.
- The Logistics Cluster will share the NV with partners once finalised.

Transport and Warehouse Market Survey

- The Logistics Cluster suggested to partners to share with each other the cost of transport and warehousing incurred by each organisation operating inside Syria through a survey.
- This survey will allow partners to openly compare costs incurred in their logistics operations, and then discuss cost saving opportunities – such as the pooling of resources and assets.
- This would be a voluntary exercise, to be initiated in 2021 by the Logistics Cluster with the sharing of a template to collect information on costs.
- UNHCR, as lead of the Procurement WG, echoed the importance of such an exercise not only in logistics but also in procurement.
- As such, the Logistics Cluster and UNHCR will liaise to identify ways to save overall humanitarian supply chain costs.

2. Logistics Gaps and Needs

- The Logistics Cluster encourages partners to openly share operational challenges during meetings to allow for discussion to find shared solutions to common logistics challenges.
- Partners were informed that in 2021, the Logistics Cluster aims to meet with partners face to face to undertake a Gaps and Needs Assessment.
- The assessment would also inform the cluster on logistics training needs that may exist.

3. Fuel

- UNHCR informed participants that I/NGOs have raised concerns about difficulties in sourcing fuel.

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- Other organisations echoed this, reporting long queues at petrol stations, rising prices on the parallel markets and difficulties in obtaining good quality petrol and diesel.

Response

- The Logistics Cluster has reviewed various options which will be outlined in a Concept Note, including cost recovery, common fuel services, a revolving stock mechanism and fuel importation, in case of a total lack of availability to the humanitarian sector.
- The issue was raised by the cluster to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on 16 December.
- In addition, the cluster will share draft Fuel Provision SOPs for fuel provided under WFP Bilateral Service Provision with partners today for review and comments.

Fuel Storage

- UNRWA will share its fuel storage project proposal with the cluster and partners this week.
- A partner suggested the Logistics Cluster could provide a similar fuel storage service to UNRWA to strengthen partners' contingency stock and access to fuel in times of shortage.
- The Logistics Cluster will look into the possibility and liaise with UNRWA for further analysis.

4. AOB

End of year user satisfaction survey

- Only eight responses have been recorded for the end of year user satisfaction survey, shared by the Logistics Cluster through the mailing list.
- As such, the Logistics Cluster is extending the survey to 31 December.
- Partners are encouraged to take time and provide frank answers to the questions in the survey. The more feedback, the more tailored the services the cluster provides can be.

Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)

- During the last meeting, the Logistics Cluster suggested establishing a SAG for within Syria.
- The cluster shared a draft ToR for the SAG for partner comments and feedback.
- The SAG would act as a consultative body to the Logistics Cluster and, made up of technical experts in the field of humanitarian logistics, would represent the community of cluster partners in Syria.

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