Vanuatu – Meeting Minutes

LOCATION: Vanuatu
DATE: 31 March 2015
CHAIR: NDMO Logistics Cluster Coordinator


ACTION POINTS:
- Specific commodity customs clearance requirements to be confirmed;
- Organisations to share information on road status with MIPU;
- Organisations to share information on storage, fuel and transport with the Logistics Cluster;
- The Logistics Cluster to share the daily military asset tasking sheet;

AGENDA:
1. Storage
2. Road Update
3. Transport
4. AOB

1. Storage

Customs Clearance

- A draft Customs-Clearance Process document has been shared by the Logistics Cluster for organisations to provide feedback. Copies of this document can be obtained from aaron.holmes@wfp.org.

- For certain commodities (such as vehicles, radios and medicines) there may be additional customs requirements, which are expected to be clarified soon in an addendum. International organisations wanting to send humanitarian aid into the country should contact the relevant NDMO cluster-lead to confirm the needs and technical requirements, then contact the NDMO to obtain approval to import the supplies.

- Customs clearance can be initiated 24hrs before arrival of the cargo with the relevant cargo documents, and for each consignment organisations should obtain an NDMO Code 210 Approval Letter for the supplies to be qualified for exemption from duty. This approval letter can be obtained after arrival of the supplies.

- It was clarified that the current 15% VAT exemption on building goods for one month (14th March – 14th April) is not applicable to imported humanitarian relief items, as these are always exempted from duty, provided that an NDMO code 210 approval letter is obtained.

- UNICEF raised the issue that customs staff at the airport are not always present on Sundays, impeding the ability to clear humanitarian relief items. UNICEF was also concerned at a lack of segregation of cold-chain cargo and regular cargo at the customs-bonded store, resulting in delays that increase the risk of damage to cold chain supplies (vaccines). Customs representatives confirmed that customs staff at the airport work regular government office hours seven days/week and nights.
Vanuatu – Meeting Minutes

when planes are scheduled to arrive. They will share their emergency on-call contact list with the Logistics Cluster to prevent potential delays.

- The Logistics Cluster has two Mobile Storage Units (MSUs), one at Port Vila Bauerfield airport and one at Tanna Airport. There is no MSU at Tanna port. The Logistics Cluster is also providing short-term storage capacity for organisations at the port (Star Wharf) for cargo being shipped soon. Organisations are reminded to request common storage services, a Service Request Form (SRF) must be submitted. The Logistics Cluster will confirm available space, prior to organisations transferring commodities to WFP-managed storage.

- The Bauerfield MSU at is expected to be temporarily full today following the arrival of IFRC stocks. The MSU at Tanna is currently at 20-30% occupancy, so organisations are encouraged to make use of the available space to preposition stocks for Tanna.

- The MSUs are expected to be maintained for approx. 2-3 months. NDMO is negotiating with Efira to have storage on or close to the Star wharf.

- UNICEF stated they have long-term storage available near the airport which can be shared, useful for organisations planning to assist Vanuatu for a period of more than 2-3 months and during the recovery phase of operations.

2 Roads Update

- A representative from the Vanuatu Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities (MIPU) presented maps of Vanuatu island showing current road access constraints in red (impassable), yellow (restricted access) and green (passable) roads. MIPU updates the maps daily. They will be made available on the Logistics Cluster Vanuatu Operation webpage (http://logcluster.org/ops/van15a) and distributed via the mailing list.

- MIPU, as the leading organisation for the Infrastructure Cluster, requested the assistance of organisations with staff on the ground to provide updates (with GPS coordinates) on the status of roads.

- MIPU will provide a summary of the most pressing road-network infrastructure issues (access blockages/restrictions and timetables for repair), which will be circulated via the Logistics Cluster mailing list and the website.

- MIPU provided a brief summary for Efate, Epi and Erromango:
  - On Efate, the most critical issue is Khlems Hill area where the road has been blocked by a land slide, and there are concerns with its structural integrity. There are also issues with Teoma Bridge and the Mele beach road.
  - Roads in Epi are currently being surveyed by a team from New Zealand.
  - On Erromango, the road south from Dillon’s bay is blocked.
  - MIPU advised organisations to consult the road maps prior to visiting affected locations.

3. Transport
Vanuatu – Meeting Minutes

- To improve coordination of inter-island transport, ahead of the 2nd round of distributions, the Logistics Cluster is in the process of consolidating shipping schedules. This will include the vessels being contracted by NDMO and WFP for food transport that will have space available for other organisations.
- Organisations arranging their own transport are requested to communicate their transport planning with the Logistics Cluster so it can be included in the shipping schedule and shared.
- Organisations wishing to share vessels will need to contact the vessel’s agent or captain directly, to book space and pay for transport individually. These arrangements do not require an SRF, which are currently only required for requesting transport services by military assets and requesting common storage space. NDMO is contacting provincial government representatives on each island, to plan and collect information about distribution points, including potential constraints regarding transport, storage and fuel. Organisations with presence in the field are requested to assist by communicating any information on challenges with local transport, storage and fuel on the islands to the Logistics Cluster.
- The IFRC has issues distributing relief items to the Northern area of Tanna as there are few trucks available in Tanna. DG Bebe is looking into the possibility of making Government trucks available for Tanna. IMC has had difficulties shipping supplies to Ambrym. Anyone with information on availability of transport to Ambrym should communicate with the Logistics Cluster so it can be circulated.
- The MV Tobruk arrived today, 31-March, and is heading to Tanna as of 17h00 on 31 March, to assist the government with the island census being conducted on 1 and 2 April. The military explained that the plan had been made the previous evening, so they have had no time to notify organisations of the availability of the ship.
- The Logistics Cluster committed to sending the daily military asset tasking sheet to the mailing list so all members would be aware of usage and availability.

3. A.O.B.

- To address confusion around the different email addresses in use, a document clarifying the purpose of each was distributed yesterday (30-March). The key points are the ndmo.logistics@gmail.com is obsolete and should no longer be used.
- To SUBMIT information to the Logistics Cluster:
  - vanuatu.cargo@logcluster.org is for submitting requests for transport of cargo by military assets, and for the storage and release of commodities from the MSU. These forms are available on logcluster.org/ops/van15a.
  - ndmo.passenger.request@gmail.com is for the submitting requests of passenger movement by military assets. This service being provided by UNDAC, and is not responsibility of the Logistics Cluster.
  - vanuatu.stocks@gmail.com is for submitting pipeline and stock updates reported by the government.
- To RECEIVE information from the Logistics Cluster:
  - To receive and share logistics-related information, subscribe to vanuatu.logs@logcluster.org by following the link: at the lists.logcluster.org/mailman/listinfo/vanuatu.logs.
Vanuatu – Meeting Minutes

- The civil-military coordination processes have been improved, producing a daily report on the use of and plan for military assets. Meeting attendees stated that they wish to receive this report via the Logistics Cluster mailing list. While a similar system was requested for civilian assets, the Logistics Cluster clarified that this was not possible because those assets are privately contracted and controlled. Vanuatu Consulting is updating a commercial shipping schedule which will be circulated, along with the consolidated shipping schedule as discussed.

- IFRC advised it is likely that most Vanuatu nationals will not work on Good Friday and Monday due to the Easter holiday, but are likely to work Saturday and Sunday. The NDMO at the EOC morning briefing advised not to plan any distributions from 3 to 6 April, as village chiefs may decide that the local community are ‘off’. It is expected that commercial airport and seaport operations will be available but volunteers and daily laborers not.

- The Vanuatu customs (NEOC) representative, Harold Tarosa, advised that key customs staff will work over the Easter weekend, but stressed it is not recommended to plan international arrivals. Customs clearance will be working as usual: Sunday office hours are 7:30 – 12:00 and 13:00 – 16:30 but they have staff on standby in case of last-minute arrivals. These contacts will be shared with the Logistics Cluster.

- The next Logistics Cluster Meeting will take place on Thursday 2 April 2015, 11:00am at the UNICEF tent, NDMO office. Logistics Cluster meetings will take place every Tuesdays and Thursday.

*The next Logistics Cluster Meeting is scheduled for Monday 23 March 2015 at 11:00am in the UNICEF tent in front lawn of NDMO.*

Contacts:

Submit stock, pipeline updates & NDMO approval  
vanuatu.stocks@gmail.com

Submit cargo transport & storage requests  
vanuatu.cargo@gmail.com

Submit passenger transport requests  
ndmo.passenger.request@gmail.com

Receive regular logistics cluster updates  
vanuatu.lgs@logcluster.org

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