Background

Since March 2015, the conflict in Yemen has exacerbated the already precarious humanitarian situation and according to OCHA\(^1\), 18.8 million were in need of humanitarian assistance as of November 2016, of which 12 million were prioritized for humanitarian assistance\(^2\). The scale of the needs and the scope of the emergency response have required a large, multi-agency and multi-sector response to be undertaken. Therefore, additional logistical support has been required to ensure humanitarian organisations responding to the crisis can deliver efficient and effective assistance to affected people.

Against this backdrop, Yemen is currently facing a cholera epidemic of unprecedented scale and on 14 May 2017, the Ministry of Public Health and Population in Sana’a officially declared a state of emergency. The WHO reported over 396,000 suspected cases as of 25 July 2017\(^3\) across nearly every governorate, and OCHA reported on 16 July 2017\(^4\) that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased to 20.7 million, due mostly to the cholera outbreak. The disease has spread rapidly in a context with less than 45 per cent of all health facilities fully functional, where two-thirds of population does not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation\(^5\), and with widespread acute food insecurity and malnutrition.

The Logistics Cluster facilitates access to common logistics services (temporary storage; air, sea and overland transport; fuel distribution), as well as assuming a coordination and information management role to maximise the use of available resources in-country, and avoid duplication of efforts.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The major constraints on the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to the crisis in Yemen are: the lack of access due to insecurity, a rapidly changing security situation, and limited or much damaged infrastructure. Specifically, the following logistics gaps have been identified:

- Congestion at main entry points (POD – port of discharge);
- Unreliable and unpredictable access to sufficient quantities of fuel, as well as high volatility in its price;

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\(^1\) OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview, November 2016 [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/YEMEN%202017%20HNO_Final.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/YEMEN%202017%20HNO_Final.pdf)
\(^3\) [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Yemen_daily_epi_update_20170725.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Yemen_daily_epi_update_20170725.pdf)

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.
• Limited international transport options into Yemen, especially by air;
• Limited in-country storage capacity;
• Poor overland transport capacity from neighbouring countries;
• Limited cold chain capacity for the needs of the cholera response.

Objectives

Based on the needs expressed and identified by the humanitarian community, and in close alignment with the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), the Logistics Cluster aims to facilitate access to sufficient and reliable logistics services and operationally relevant information to ensure a timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected populations.

Planned Activities

The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations, but rather to fill identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and enhance the response of the humanitarian community through the provision of common services, based on needs expressed by all humanitarian organisations operating in Yemen.

1. Logistics Coordination: the following coordination activities will be undertaken to minimise duplication of efforts and competition by the humanitarian community:

   • Dedicated Logistics Cluster Coordination staff will be based in Sana’a, Aden, and Djibouti, where regular Logistics Cluster Coordination meetings will take place; a Logistics Cluster Coordinator will be based in Sana’a, with two Deputy Cluster Coordinators based in each Aden and Djibouti;
   • Coordination with other clusters, agencies and humanitarian organisations, including regular participation to Inter-Cluster Coordination Meetings (ICCM).

2. Information Management: to support operational decision making to improve the efficiency of the logistics response, a dedicated Information Management Officer (IMO) will be based in Djibouti (with relocation to Sana’a if possible) to:

   • Consolidate and share updated operational information, including Meeting Minutes, Operational Overviews, Situation Updates, UNHAS flights and sea Passenger schedules, forms and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs);
• Maintain information sharing platforms including a common mailing list, and a dedicated operation webpage on the Logistics Cluster website to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistics information to the humanitarian community: www.logcluster.org/ops/yem10a

• Produce and share logistics infrastructure Geographic Information Systems/mapping tools and products.

3. Logistics Services

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. Cholera supplies will be prioritized for transport based on the agreement between Clusters through the Inter-Cluster Coordination mechanism.

Access permitting and pending availability of resources, the following services will be provided at no cost to the user - for more details, see the relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Cargo Transport

The Logistics Cluster, will facilitate access to the following services provided by WFP, as a Provider of Last Resort:

Overland Transport

• Based on the organisations’ needs, access to overland transport will be facilitated. The Logistics Cluster will also facilitate the necessary permissions for the movement of cargo inside Yemen on behalf of the requesting organisation. Detailed SOPs on how to access road transport services are available here.

• For the cholera response, five reefer trucks are to be based in Sana’a to ensure cold chain and temperature-controlled cargo transport, as well as regular cargo. Additional capacity can be made available if required.

Sea cargo transport

• A dhow with a 400 -500 mt capacity is under contract and can be requested to transport cargo from the Port of Djibouti (Djibouti) to the Port of Hodeida (Yemen), and to other accessible ports in Yemen, on request;

• For sea transport from Djibouti to Aden port, the Logistics Cluster shares space availability on a WFP chartered vessel. This vessel operates on a weekly rotation, and to Aden only.
For the cholera response, a refrigerated container to provide cold chain will be established on board the VOS Apollo on a short-term basis (4-6 months). The provision of a second reefer container is planned to add temperature controlled cargo capacity.

**Air Transport:** The Logistics Cluster will facilitate:

- “Light cargo” transport on board the UNHAS passenger plane rotating three times a week between Djibouti and Sana’a;
- Combined chartered airlifts from Djibouti to Sana’a, on a frequency contingent upon needs and availability of funding. For the cholera response, this capacity will be significantly scaled up by increasing the number of airlifts for an initial period of one month; the higher number of flights will be put in place and maintained based on partners’ needs and as funding allows.

Detailed SOPs on how to access sea and air transport services are available [here](www.logcluster.org/ops/yem10a).

**Common Storage**

To support temporary storage of humanitarian cargo, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to the following storage facilities:

- Aden: 5,740 m²;
- Sana’a: 320 m²;
- Hodeidah: 3,640 m².

For the cholera response, the Logistics Cluster can potentially scale up the provision of mobile refrigerated containers for short term use in Aden, until longer term solutions can be established and based on requirements from partner organizations. Commercial capacity for climate controlled and cold chain storage in Djibouti is considered sufficient to meet all current and projected needs.

Detailed SOPs on how to access storage services are available [here](www.logcluster.org/ops/yem10a).

**Fuel Provision Service**

To enable organisations responding to the crisis to establish an uninterrupted supply chain that supports the delivery of humanitarian relief items to the affected population, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to WFP-
managed fuel distribution points in Aden, Hodeidah and Sana'a. This service is intended to fill identified gaps and provide a last resort option in case other service providers are not available, therefore it does not aim to compete with the commercial market nor replace the logistics activities of other organisations. The service will be provided on cost recovery.

Detailed SOPs on fuel provision are available here.

**Sea Passengers Service**

Due to the inaccessibility of the city of Aden via air, the Logistics Cluster facilitates access to passenger transport on board of a WFP-chartered vessel, at no cost to user. The vessel, which also serves as an emergency rescue and evacuation vessel, operates on a regular weekly schedule between Djibouti and Aden.

SOPs on how to access the service are available here.

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.
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