Background

Since 1992, Cox’s Bazar continues to experience an intermittent influx of refugees from Myanmar, periodically escalating to life threatening levels when their movement, access to services and livelihoods are restricted. The recent escalation in violence between the Rohingya and the authorities in Myanmar and the new influx of Undocumented Myanmar Nationals (UMN) estimated at 410,000 in late August 2017, in addition to 130,000 people who arrived by mid-August 2016, has eroded already compromised resources in the existing makeshift settlements and refugee camps at Kutupalong and Balukhali. Mass gatherings of UMN (Palonkhal in Cox’s Bazar District, and Gundum and Naikonchari in Bandarban District) have formed along the border, and three spontaneous settlements are rapidly expanding in Bangladesh: Unchiprang in Teknaf, and Moiner Ghona and Thangkhali in Ukhia District, close to the existing Balukhali settlement.

The Government of Bangladesh’s (GOB) National Strategy on UMNs and Refugees will provide basic assistance, which is further complemented and supported by assistance from the humanitarian community in Bangladesh through immediate lifesaving emergency response across all sectors. The GOB is supporting the international organisations that are already present in Cox’s Bazar, which are playing a pivotal role in managing the refugee camps and makeshift sites; however, the size of operations requires a much more integrated inter-agency response. An integrated response is even more critical because the refugees are unlikely to return to Myanmar in the short-to-medium term and will require assistance in Bangladesh for a prolonged period, creating continuous supply requirements for the humanitarian community. The security situation remains stable, allowing the non-governmental sector to work without disturbance and targeted populations also benefit from enhanced emergency supply-chain support to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) in order to receive timely humanitarian assistance. In line with GOB’s National Strategy on Undocumented Myanmar Nationals and Refugees, the humanitarian community is scaling up its operation to support the national government’s response.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The major logistics constraints on the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to the emergency are the lack of available storage facilities and clear custom procedures as well as the ability to get prepared to respond to potential damage and impediments due to the upcoming Cyclone seasons. More specifically, the following logistics gaps have been identified:

- Limited storage capacity: Low available storage facilities and increased humanitarian activity have placed significant demands on common logistics storage in the area of Cox’s Bazar and the surrounding areas of the makeshift settlements.
- Increasing needs for logistics coordination and information management: although a Logistics Working Group has been active in Bangladesh for the past years, additional support in terms of coordination, information management services and GIS capacity is required.

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The road network in the country is generally favourable as no security issues have been reported so far and the transport services seem to be adequate and available in the local market. Roads are accessible and overall in good conditions with a suggested truck capacity of 5 - 10 mt maximum; the only constraint in terms of access is reported around the camps where roads seem to be heavily congested.

Objectives

Based on the needs identified and expressed by the humanitarian community, the Logistics Sector aims to facilitate access to sufficient and reliable logistics services and consolidated information related to logistics capacities, to enhance the capacity of the humanitarian community to deliver relief items to hard-to-reach locations, and to ensure the timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected populations.

This Concept of Operations aims to address the identified logistics gaps and bottlenecks through meeting the following objectives:

- Set up of common storage: A logistics hub will be established in Ukhiya in order to support the humanitarian community by facilitating access to common storage facilities. Mobile storage units (MSU) will be erected in Ukhiya, close to Kutuplaong makeshift camps. MSU numbers might vary as per needs and are already available in Cox’s Bazar.
- Coordination of incoming relief cargo: The Logistics Sector aims to put into place temporary storage to coordinate prepositioning and enable consolidation of cargo into the hub.
- Contingency planning: With the Cyclone season coming, the Logistics Sector aims at drafting a contingency planning for operation of warehousing in case of any constraints provoked by potential Cyclones and other event that might require a scale up of humanitarian operations.

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 supplement the response of the humanitarian community through the provision of common services, based on need.

To coordinate the supply chain of relief items, WFP, as the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, will support the government through the deployment of staff to augment logistics coordination and Information Management. Specifically, the following services shall be made available to the humanitarian community until the end of 2017, with the possibility for an extension if needed.

1. Coordination

- Facilitate regular Logistics Sector coordination meetings in Cox’s Bazar (and other locations as required).
- Support the MoDMR and facilitation of operations level liaison between humanitarian logistics actors and national military authorities.
• Coordinate with other sectors and organisations, including through participation in the Inter-Sector Working Group for incoming commodities and pipeline information for planning and scheduling.

• Liaise with authorities and relevant national and international parties on behalf of the humanitarian community to raise any logistics issues of common concern, including customs and logistics access constraints.

• Mobilise key expertise within the humanitarian logistics community, including the areas of: import and customs processes; warehouse management, and cargo tracking.

2. Information Management (IM)

• Consolidate and share information about the operating environment including available information on logistics capacity, such as suitable storage capacity as well as road accessibility and available commercial transport services;

• Produce and facilitate access to Geographic Information Systems/mapping tools and products.

• Maintain information sharing platforms including a common mailing list and a dedicated Bangladesh Operation webpage on the Logistics Cluster website to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistics information to the humanitarian community.

3. Logistics Services

The services made available through the Logistics Sector are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of the agencies, organisations or local markets, but rather to supplement them through the provision of multi-lateral services available to all humanitarian organisations. The following services may be provided at no cost to the user, or on a partial/full cost-recovery basis, depending on the availability of funds:

• Common Storage: Establish and maintain a Logistics Hub in Ukhiya (estimation of 14 MSUs with a total capacity of 2,350 m²) and additional warehouse space to reach available floor space of 5,000 m².

• Maintain a contingency stock of Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) and prefabricated offices to make available for loan to organisations requiring additional storage space for their own use.

As ‘Provider of Last Resort’ WFP, through the Logistics Sector, is responsible only to provide logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity and/or demanded by organisations operating in Bangladesh, 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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