SIERRA LEONE EBOLA RESPONSE – Meeting Minutes

LOCATION: UNICEF Office, Freetown
DATE: 29 September 2014
CHAIR: WFP Logistics

PARTICIPANTS: USAID OFDA, UNICEF, GOAL, World Vision International (WVI), DFID, IMC, National Pharmaceutical Unit, Elixir groups, UNFPA, BCC, Sierra Rutile, Sam King Services, Well Body Alliance.

ACTION POINTS:
- UNICEF agreed to provide contact details for the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and details regarding the clearance letter
- Partners were asked to provide feedback to the Logistics Cluster to ensure customs clearance procedure are up-to-date
- All agencies were asked to send planned and confirmed aircraft arrival information at Lungi airport to the Logistics Cluster Coordinator so that measures can be taken to avoid cargo congestion
- Logistics Cluster will report on options to facilitate coordination of incoming aircraft at Lungi airport
- The Logistics Cluster will liaise with the government to ensure information-sharing and possible participation in the meetings
- The Logistics Cluster will clarify with UNHAS about flight procedures and applicable costs

AGENDA:
1. Results of airport assessment 25 September
2. Transport
3. Customs clearance
4. Storage
5. Coordination
6. AOB

1. Results of airport assessment 25 September

- Cargo congestion at Lungi airport was identified by partners, due to insufficient storage space, the delayed arrival of trucks to pick up the cargo at the airport, and delayed import and clearance due to the standard fast-track process not being followed.

- Upon discussion with the airport staff and the cargo handling company, the Logistics Cluster Coordinator agreed with the handling company that all cargo stored outside will be covered with tarpaulin to avoid rain damage.

- To humanitarian organizations, the Logistics Cluster Coordinator advised to obtain airway-bills and start the fast-track clearance process before arrival.

- The importance of providing sufficient trucks and ensuring they are on time to load all cargo upon arrival was also stressed because the airport currently has very limited storage capacity. Upon experience, A B747 plane requires about 12-14 20 MT trucks.

- The Logistics Cluster Coordinator noted that WFP is preparing to provide free storage at the airport (with 4 MSUs) and primary transport to Freetown; organisations remain responsible for import and clearance process on arrival of the cargo.

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• It was noted in addition, that on 26 September at UNICEF’s cargo arrival a fuel shortage delayed cargo handling, which has been resolved.
• It was further stressed that no exceptions are made for organisations to pay the landing and cargo handling fees.
• To avoid further congestion, the Logistics Cluster Coordinator shared that on Thursday a UNICEF B747, on Friday a DFID C-17 and on Saturday a DFID B747 are scheduled to arrive.
• Partners were asked to email planned and confirmed aircraft arrival information to the Logistics Cluster Coordinator (information noted below), so that feedback can be provided, should there be a risk of congestion.

2. Transport

• **Airport**: WVI clarified the situation of their cargo received on 23 September and the delayed cargo clearance. WVI staff will follow up on the situation.
• **Seaport**: No constraints were identified and shipping lines are still sailing to Freetown as normal.
• **Road transport**: Transport to Port Loko from the airport is possible only from 9am-5pm; outside these hours the quarantine check points are closed. For trucks going to the airport, the passage of trucks through check points will be facilitated by providing drivers with a copy of the cargo clearance request letter, signed by the Ebola Operations Centre (EOC).
• **UNHAS**: Starting this week UNHAS will start with a regular passenger and 2MT capacity cargo service from Dakar to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, 3 times a week. Details will be announced as soon as the schedule is confirmed. The Logistics Cluster will confirm whether or not this is free of charge or on a cost recovery basis.

3. Customs clearance

• The fast-track clearance process of air cargo through the takes up to 24 hours. Partners were advised to staff to ensure the swift handling of requests. Airway bill numbers are needed for the clearance letter and should be obtained before the aircraft is fully loaded. 5 copies of the clearance request letter need to be given for signature to the EOC.
• UNICEF was asked to provide contact details of the EOC and details regarding the destination of the 5 copies needed of the clearance request letter; the Logistics Cluster agreed to include the EOC clearance in the customs clearance procedure.
• Partners were reminded to provide feedback to the draft customs clearance procedures to ensure that the document is up-to-date and useful to humanitarian organisations.

4. Storage

• It was shared that NPPU assessed a storage space in Wellington with better storage conditions than CMS Kingdom storage that is available for rent. Interested organisations should contact NPPU.
It was advised that DFID has three flights with supplies for the new-to-build Kerry Town treatment centre (tents, vehicles, generators, etc.), tentatively scheduled for 3, 4 and 11 October. The supplies will be moved directly to Kerry Town. If storage is required DFID plans to use Save the Children’s storage facility.

5. Coordination

- UNICEF asked for organisations to share their pipeline information, to help avoid gaps and overlaps. A new ‘dashboard’ supply monitoring system of district medical stores has been implemented.
- A meeting with private sector was organised on 25 September by the Irish Embassy to enable the local private sector supporting the Ebola Emergency response and engage humanitarian partners. More detailed information about services and organisations has been shared via the dedicated Logistic Cluster mailing list.
- Cluster Participants agreed on the need for improved coordination. The UN humanitarian cluster system can help to ensure that inter-cluster coordination takes place and there are no gaps in sectors that are currently not covered by clusters (such as Logistics, emergency telecommunications cluster and WASH).
- Participants also agreed that government participation was desirable and the Logistics Cluster Coordinator agreed to follow up with government authorities on this point.

6. AOB

- The Logistics Cluster Coordinator informed participants that discussion was ongoing with OCHA to coordinate possible endorsement of the customs clearance procedure by the Government of Sierra Leone.

*The next Logistics Cluster meeting is scheduled for Monday 6 October 2014, 2:30pm at the UNICEF Office, Freetown*

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