
LOCATION	Beirut, Lebanon - Online
DATE	28 September 2020
CHAIR	Logistics Sector
PARTICIPANTS	Acción contra el Hambre (ACH), Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Médecins du Monde (MDM), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Relief International, Save the Children, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Oxfam, World Health Organization (WHO), World Vision.
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Logistics Sector to share the translated letter for custom clearances with partners.• The Sector Coordinator to collaborate with OCHA on introducing a letter requesting the inclusion of UN agencies in the tax exemption to the authorities.• The Logistics Sector to upload the final SOPs on the Lebanon Logistics Sector webpage.• Partners to share with the Logistics Sector information on their suppliers and transport service providers through the email: Lebanon-logs@logcluster.org
AGENDA	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Situation Update2. Questions/AOB

1. Update on Custom Procedures

- Since the start of this response, the main constraint faced by the partners has been the importation procedures, namely customs clearances.
- The Logistics Sector and OCHA presented a letter to the High Relief Commission (HRC) requesting blanket exemption for all the humanitarian partners involved in the Beirut blast response. Upon meeting with the new coordination officer from the HRC last week, they were informed that granting a blanket exemption will not be possible. It was further stated that any organisation wishing to import humanitarian cargo into Lebanon will have to submit a letter to the HRC requesting tax exemption according to Decree 6850, promulgated on 14 August.
- In addition to the letter, organisations must also submit:
 - The TIN number of the organisation

<https://logcluster.org/sector/lbn20a>

- The usual importation documents: Commercial invoice, Bill of lading, Certificate of origin.
- Organisations importing cargo can write directly to Mr. Elie Khoury (03 609 449; eliekhy@gmail.com), the focal point at the HRC, to submit their documents and facilitate tax exemptions for future incoming cargo.
- After receiving feedback from the customs focal point, the SOPs for custom clearances will be updated and uploaded to the Lebanon Logistics Sector webpage. It has been confirmed that there is no need to submit a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and no need for a certified translation or an appointment letter.
- For Health items, submitting documents prior to shipping is not obligatory. It is recommended to get started on the process in advance, but it is not a necessary to submit documents to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) before shipping.
- The Sector Coordinator and OCHA submitted a letter to the MoPH requesting facilitation and the withdrawal of all the controls and inspections in place for medical cargo, no feedback has been received yet.
- It has been confirmed by customs administration that the following are the procedures required:
 - Letter to HRC requesting tax exemption
 - The usual importation documents (Commercial invoice, Bill of lading, Certificate of origin)
 - Declaration form presented to customs.

2. Questions/ AOB

- One partner highlighted that after following the custom clearance procedures, their request for tax exemption on a shipment of dignity kits that arrived on 16 September was refused by the HRC. The reason for the refusal is that UN agencies are not included as part of the Decree 6850. The exemption granted by the decree only applies to national/international NGOs, ministries, and municipalities – only these entities can be consignees of incoming cargo.
- The partner also mentioned that the HRC suggested that OCHA/RCO submit a letter to the Council of Ministers asking for UN agencies to be included in the exemptions under decree 6850. The Sector Coordinator will follow-up bilaterally and inform OCHA.
- One partner shared their findings that the costs at the Tripoli port (handling, shipping, etc.) seem to be lower than at the Beirut port. If any partners have experience regarding this subject they are invited to inform the Logistics Sector.
- The map on available warehousing spaces in Lebanon has been published [here](#). Partners are encouraged to reach out if they would like to share their own warehouses or to request contact information and pricing for specific warehouses.
- The work on updating the online Lebanon Logistics Capacity Assessment is ongoing. The contact list for forwarding agents is being updated, if any partners have more information they would like to share please contact: Lebanon-logs@logcluster.org

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- The Sector Coordinator advised partners looking for storage services to utilise the services of private companies in Lebanon, who have both the skills and capacity to manage the goods for organisations and can assist in taking care of warehousing services such as security, hiring personnel, etc.

The next Logistics Sector coordination meeting will take place online on Thursday 8 October at 16:00 Beirut time.

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