Nepal Flood 2017: Humanitarian Context

Heavy monsoon rainfall during 10-13 August 2017 triggered severe flash floods and landslides in 36 out of 77 districts in Nepal. An assessment conducted in 18 severely affected districts revealed that floods and landslides claimed 161\(^1\) lives of which 51 were female, injured 22 persons, displaced 1688,474 people, and left 29 missing. Damage to houses, infrastructure, and productive resources was severe; approximately 41,626 houses were completely destroyed and 158,758 houses were partially damaged\(^2\).

The Government of Nepal held a coordination meeting on 13\(^{th}\) August 2017 and activated all National clusters and called upon the National Logistics Cluster to support the flood response in South Nepal by providing information management and coordination support to the humanitarian community. To support the Government-led Flood Response, the National Logistics Cluster was activated from 13 August 2017 until 19 September 2017.

National Logistics Cluster Response

1. Coordination
   To facilitate a unified response effort and minimize gaps and duplication of logistics activities during the humanitarian response:
   - National Logistics Cluster coordination cell was established in Kathmandu to support overall coordination of the logistics cluster operation in flood affected areas, supported by logistics staff in Nepalgunj and Biratnagar.
   - Regular National Logistics Cluster coordination meetings with partners were carried out to share information on road access constraints and analysis of existing and emerging logistics gaps and bottlenecks.

2. Logistics Services
   - There were no major gaps and constraint in storage, transportation and fuel supply. The private sector capacity of storage, transportation and fuel was sufficient. Therefore, National Logistics Cluster support was not required for logistics services.

3. Information Management (IM)
   To promote and facilitate sharing information and support operational planning of humanitarian actors:
   - The national logistics cluster collected, consolidated and shared relevant information including GIS maps related to road access constraints, key infrastructure, logistics activities, important procedures such as customs clearance and available storage and transport capacity in the affected areas.

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\(^1\) MoHA, Report on human casualties and infrastructure damages due to Floods, landslide and Inundation 2017, 12 September 2017

National Logistics Cluster Response Timeline

Lessons Learned

The National Logistics Cluster commissioned a Lessons Learned exercise in December 2017 with the objective of assessing the relevance/appropriateness, efficiency, and effectiveness of the National Logistics Cluster response and learning what may be improved in future operations. The findings will inform the future National Logistics Clusters operations and contribute to the development of post-2017 National Logistics Cluster strategy.

The Lessons Learned exercise found that the National Logistics Cluster response was well-executed and supporting organizations to deliver relief materials to the affected population. The support was relevant, appropriate, and efficient. In terms of appropriateness, the support provided was limited due to the scale of the emergency and the fact that no major logistics gaps and constraints were found.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) will carry out a lesson learning process on behalf of the Government of Nepal (GoN). The UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC), chair of the HCT, has invited MoHA to present its findings to the HCT to strengthen its partnership with the MoHA on disaster preparedness and response.

Findings

1. The National Logistics Cluster successfully managed to set up its first co-ordination meeting a day after the Government activated all National clusters.
2. The main activity of the National Logistics Cluster was to support coordination and information management, as there were no major logistics gaps and constrains.
3. 90% of the cluster participants were satisfied with the support provided.
4. National capacity built and retained during the 2015/16 Logistics Cluster operations expedited coordination and information management support.
5. Limited road access information was found to be one of the main constraints, which the Logistics Cluster resolved by issuing regular updated road access constraint maps of the affected area. Preparing the first maps was a challenge due to a lack of real-time information and a need to update a network of field sources.

6. Supplies stockpiled at the Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA) in Kathmandu by the Ministry of Home Affairs, UNICEF and WHO were quickly dispatched to the affected area, demonstrating the value of having supplies prepositioned for preparedness.

7. The List of relief items stockpiled by cluster members was updated pre-emergency. However, during immediate response this information was used only partially: Relief items were dispatched by air from Kathmandu that may have been available locally.

8. No fast-track process for customs clearance, or waiver of duties was implemented, which contributed to limiting the response of one humanitarian organization.

9. Humanitarian organizations operating in the affected area were affected by local private transporters and warehouses raising their rates, in response to increased demand.

**Overview of User Satisfaction Survey**

The user satisfaction survey was sent to 54 recipients of which 11 replied (20%). Respondents were mainly staff of INGO’s and UN organizations, responsible for logistics or managing operations. They represent all sectors but in particular Shelter, WASH and Health, and their organizations were present throughout the affected districts.

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3 Cluster members suggested for future emergencies the national logistics cluster could support with negotiations with vendors to continue supply at standardized rates during emergencies. However, the cluster does not have negotiation power to affect the market, instead an exchange of rate information between cluster members could be facilitated.
**Recommendations**

1. Contact list and partnership agreements to be created to standardize collection of road access information, based on field sources.
2. List of relief items stockpiled by cluster members to be collated and updated bi-annually: before monsoon season and before winter cold-wave.
3. Initiate discussion with Ministry of Home Affairs on including local level stockpile information and how to effectively share stockpile data with district & local level. Coordinate with UNRCO to strengthen approach to stockpiling.
4. Organize regular ‘briefing meetings’ providing introductory information to new cluster members on the role of the Logistics Cluster, its services and Logistics Capacity Assessment information of Nepal available on the Logistics Cluster website.
5. The services and logistics capacity of the Humanitarian Staging Area should be clearly and proactively communicated to all cluster stakeholders.

**Methodology**

The National Logistics Cluster Flood Response Lessons Learned exercise was conducted according to a standardized methodology. The findings are based on a combination of quantitative data on the operation and qualitative data on respondent’s perception of the performance of the logistics cluster. Data collected was used to assess the performance of the response in terms of appropriateness and relevance in identifying and responding the needs and efficiency and effectiveness of the response and resources converted into results. The data was collected through:

4 [http://dlca.logcluster.org/display/public/DLCA/Nepal;jsessionid=742351CD56EFF554F950B7EC2BA4DA62](http://dlca.logcluster.org/display/public/DLCA/Nepal;jsessionid=742351CD56EFF554F950B7EC2BA4DA62)
1. Focus group discussion: A discussion was conducted in 14 December 2017 with 16 National Logistics partners - representatives of the Government of Nepal, Government Security Forces, other UN Agencies, INGOs, Private Sector and WFP staffs (see Annex 1 for overview of the people and organizations consulted).
2. User survey: A survey was shared with participants during the meeting on 14 December 2017 and shared through the Logistics Cluster mailing list.

The team conducting the lessons learned exercise was composed of three key members:
1. Shankar Hari Acharya, Under Secretary, Chief of NEOC, Ministry of Home Affairs,
2. Ratindra Khatri, EPR Logistics Coordination Officer, WFP Nepal,

Quality Assurance

To ensure the validity of findings, the following Quality Assurance measures have been implemented:
1. Presentation of key findings to WFP Country Office;
2. Presentation of key findings to National Logistics Cluster partners;
3. Presentation of key findings to Ministry of Home Affairs;

Annex: 1 - Organizations Consulted
Ministry of Home Affairs,
ADRA Nepal,
Care Nepal,
IFRC,
IOM,
Nepal Armed Police Force,
Nepal Army,
Nepal Police,
The Lutheran World Federation,
Kathmandu Living Labs,
UNICEF,
WFP,
WHO,
World Vision Nepal.