Meeting Minutes, 18 October 2023

Palestine Logistics Cluster (Gaza response), Egypt Logistics Cell (Cairo)

LOCATION	Cairo (in person and online)
DATE	18 October 2023
CHAIR	Egypt Logistics Cell Coordinator
PARTICIPANTS	ACTED, Action Against Hunger Spain (ACF), ActionAid, Airbus Foundation, Airlink, Alianza por la solidaridad, Americares Foundation, Cash Working Group, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Danish Church Aid (DCA), Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO), Food Security Cluster, Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Finnish Red Cross, Global Communities, Handicap International, HI/Atlas Logistique, Humedica International Aid, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Kuehne + Nagel, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Medair, Médecins Sans Frontières Belgium (MSF), Médecins Sans Frontières France (MSF), Médecins Sans Frontières Holland (MSF), Médecins Sans Frontières Spain (MSF), Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), Medicos del Mundo (MdM), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Oxfam, eace Winds Japan, Première Urgence Internationale (PUI), Project Hope, Save the Children, Secours Islamique France, Terre des hommes, The UPS Foundation, United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), United Palestinian Appeal (UPA), UPS, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organisation (WHO), World Vision (WVI).
ACTION POINTS	• Partners to provide input on their logistics requirements through the sign-up sheet to gather information and coordinate upstream pipeline • The logistics cell to clarify who should be the consignee for cargo arriving in El Arish (ERC or the sending organisation) and if this applies to registered and non-registered organisations (in Egypt). • The logistics cell to clarify whether the procedures to bring cargo via air or via sea are the same. • The logistics cell to share the results of the meeting with ERC and how the logistics cell will support ERC. • Partners advised to sign up receive the latest communications in addition to joining the dedicated WhatsApp group on customs.

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AGENDA

1. Logistics Updates
2. Egypt Logistics Coordination Cell updates
3. Partners' updates

1. Agenda item

- The Egypt Logistics Coordination cell of the Palestine Logistics Cluster provided situational updates on the coordination of logistics activities both in Egypt and to Palestine.
- The coordination cell informed partners of the official activation of the Palestine Logistics Cluster on 16 October 2023.
- Since the activation, the Logistics Cluster has strategized operational focus through two coordination cells:
    1) Focusing on access from Israel to Gaza and inside Gaza
    2) Egypt Logistics Coordination Cell that will focus on access to Gaza from Egypt
- The Egyptian Government has officially designated El-Arish airport for humanitarian cargo. However, only military, government and chartered flights can land. Due to the designation of only one airport, there are concerns about possible congestion.
- Despite a long queue of trucks at the border, as of yet, there is no movement of humanitarian cargo from Rafah border crossing.
- The Palestine Logistics Cluster is in the process of exploring more entry points into Gaza.

2. Egypt Logistics Coordination Cell updates

- There is ongoing advocacy for the opening of entry points into the Gaza Strip. All partners are asked to provide information on their cargo in El Arish in addition to the plate numbers of the trucks where their cargo is loaded. Partners to share this information with the Egypt Coordination Cell focal person (alessandra.piccolo@wfp.org)
- The Egypt Logistics Coordination Cell requested partners to urgently provide information on the humanitarian cargo currently in El Arish through the following form that will be circulated again to have updated information.
- Information on the upstream pipeline is currently unclear. A form was circulated to partners to fill out the incoming cargo as well as the cargo already in Egypt. This includes expected pipeline. The same form can be used for this purpose.
- Some donors are exploring the possibility of organising and supporting airlifts for consolidated cargo. The Global Logistics Cluster will support with gathering this information and share with interested

donors. The departure point for these airlifts will be communicated to interested partners as soon as available.

- The Logistics Coordination Cell is working to augment and support the capacity of the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC). A meeting is scheduled today to coordinate and see how the Logistics Cell can support Due to the lack of written guidance on custom procedures, the Logistics Cell has published the following guidance based on information shared by partners on the process followed to dispatch items to El-Arish airport. The 4 KM form can also be found here: Palestine - Customs Administration for Diplomatic/Consular Corps and UN Agencies. Partners to note that this document applies only to diplomatic and UN cargo.
- There is a dedicated Customs WhatsApp group for partners. To join, partners can select the option in the sign-up form or send an email toimpacct.2021@gmail.com
- The initial draft plan for the Palestine Logistics Cluster was shared with partners. The draft considers augmenting the storage capacity of El-Arish and possibly Ismailia.
- Custom bonded facilities are being explored.

3. Partners' Updates

- A partner asked about the procedures to follow to bring cargo by air from the USA and some questions were received on the procedures for local procurement of medicines for non-registered organisations (in Egypt). Partners were advised to fill the form to support coordination as well as to share their interest in the airlifts that donors are exploring. The Government of Egypt is strongly encouraging local procurement, and partners were also encouraged to reach out to the Health Cluster to get more information on procurement of health items.
- One partner asked about the consignee process as part of the documentation requirement for unregistered organisations. The Logistics Cell is trying to clarify through the IMPACCT Working Group if the consignee has to be the ERC or if, as reported by other partners, the sender organisations remain as the consignee but indicates ERC as the recipient in the proforma invoice and airwaybill.
- WHO shared that they are looking at supporting the health logistics response by ensuring close communication with the Palestine Logistics Cluster to ensure close collaboration and support to all health respondents. The system is being setup and more information will be provided in the coming days. Health partners are encouraged to reach out to the Health Cluster to know more about this.
- A partner working with the Health Cluster will provide information on health commodity processes on specific information on procurement. Partners are advised to liaise closely with their thematic Clusters.
- A partner asked about the capacity of the ERC in El-Arish to process incoming cargo. The Logistics Cell will offer support to ERC to avoid potential congestion. Some of the cargo in El Arish has been moved to Ismailia to support with the access and de-congestion. The logistics cell continues to explore all possible options in terms of entry points.
- A partner asked about the agreement with registered NGOs and whether ERC is willing to support with customs and clearance. Agencies are advised to agree with ERC whether they are willing to receive their cargo beforehand. Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs) are strongly discouraged.
- A partner asked about the challenge of accessing El Arish by road due to security-related restrictions.

- A partner shared that in addition to El-Arish, ERC is using their warehouse in Ismailia to support this response. One partner asked about the procurement of fuel through the local market in Egypt for transportation to Gaza and whether there were procedures to follow with the ERC. On the topic of fuel more information will be shared as it becomes available.
- A partner mentioned they are trying to bring fuel from Jordan, and they are facing some challenges. ERC has no special fuel storage facilities.
- A partner shared that they had heard information on non-registered organisations doing local procurement through identifying a registered local partner or through ERC.
- A partner inquired about the management of shipments into Gaza and who would be the recipient on the other side. The organization receiving the cargo is expected to pick up the cargo upon arrival at Rafah, as the Palestinian Red Crescent may not have the capacity to deal with all the incoming cargo. However, this information cannot be confirmed yet as no cargo has crossed the Rafah entry point yet. This was noted as one of the key points of the response, for partners to ensure their counterparts have the capacity to pick up the cargo once it crosses Rafah to avoid any congestion in the entry point.
- One partner in Gaza shared that despite having access to two trucks inside Gaza, the lack of fuel may probably impede the delivery of their supplies to the final destinations.
- Another partner shared their concern about their access to transportation inside Gaza.
- The Palestine Logistics Cluster shared that WFP, as lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, might explore the possibility to provide support to the transportation of cargo from Rafah border into Gaza if a gap is identified. In addition, the team will reach out to organisations in Gaza to assess the logistics capacity on the Gaza side.
- When asked about possible support of the Logistics Cluster and its logistics cell to do customs clearance on behalf of partners, the Logistics Cluster shared that this is not part of the Logistics Cluster mandate and in addition, WFP as the lead agency cannot be the consignee of partners' cargo.
- A partner shared the challenges they are facing (as non-registered organisation in Egypt) to do local procurement and that they will reach out to ERC to see if they can support with the process. The partner was advised to ensure that a plan is in place for the receiving end to avoid bottlenecks and congestion in ERC storage facilities.
- A partner asked about the logistics cell plan to support augmentation of ERC storage capacity and the need to consider the inclusion of 2 to 8° C storage capacity, as this will be key to ensure the medical response. The partner was already informed by ERC that at the moment they are rejecting temperature-controlled cargo as such capacity is currently overwhelmed. The logistics cell shared that the plans to support ERC through logistics augmentation are already considering the temperature-control component in the list of equipment that could be required. For partners with capacity to expand temperature-controlled assets and willingness to share their assets, they are encouraged to reach out to the logistics cell to share this information.
- Partners will be informed of the next coordination meeting.

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