

ACCELERATING IMPORT FOR RELIEF CONSIGNMENTS



A JOINT INITIATIVE

In his foreword to the Global Humanitarian Review 2018, Mark Lowcock, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, acknowledges that *“Although the world has become better at predicting and preparing for disasters, the most vulnerable people on the planet are still hit hard. Climate change will increase the number of extreme weather events and make drought in some regions chronic. The risk of droughts, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and typhoons and other seismic and meteorological events will remain high in 2018.”* With the support of its donors, OCHA can realize its mission to coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crisis.

To provide an overview of incoming relief consignments, OCHA developed an on-line database to record the reported international contributions of relief items (logIK). The objectives were to provide all stakeholders with an overview of in-kind contributions to facilitate the identification of outstanding needs, to identify what has been delivered, to support decision on what to donate but also to enhance the role of Customs Authorities in making the necessary arrangements to speed up the clearance and release of humanitarian relief consignments.

The main challenge of logIK was to receive reliable and complete information about relief contributions from donors and humanitarian agencies in a timely manner.

In this context and in line with OCHA’s vision of a *world that comes together to help crisis affected people rapidly get the humanitarian assistance they need*, OCHA & UNCTAD have

decided to join their efforts to promote simplified customs procedures for relief consignments and implement automated mechanism for prioritization and clearance of relief shipments.

WHAT IS ASYREC?

To adjust rapidly and constantly to ever-changing humanitarian challenges, it is more important than ever to build strong partnerships. By working together to strengthen humanitarian effectiveness, we will collectively be able to do more for the people we serve.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has an experience of more than 30 years in Customs reform and modernisation and has developed the computer-based customs management system, ASYCUDA, which is today used in nearly 100 countries.

To build on the experiences of both organizations, OCHA and UNCTAD have decided to enhance the ASYCUDA core system by adding a software module to ensure the full use of simplified Customs documents and procedures for humanitarian relief consignments and more expeditious customs treatment of consignments.

ASYREC will:

- Facilitate identification by Customs Administrations of humanitarian consignments and distinction from non-humanitarian shipments;
- Support prioritization of humanitarian consignments based on identified priority needs;
- Fast-track the Customs clearance of humanitarian consignments minimizing delays and reducing congestion at the border;
- Cover the entire range of transactions related to the online application for the importation of relief consignments;
- Allow the registration of eligible actors / trustworthy humanitarian donors into the system, prior to any emergencies, with the result that shipments from these agencies will be processed with priority in a “green lane” in emergencies;

- Ensure the processing of humanitarian reliefs according to the provisions of the national Customs law, enabling automated processing (e.g. exemption from import tax) and release of these goods by Customs Authorities without delays;
- Allow Customs and Disaster Management Agencies to perform post-clearance audit controls and assessments of humanitarian operators' compliance;
- Transferring data from ASY REC to logIK, thus providing an accurate overview of incoming relief to Member States and donors and serve as a basis for decision-making on what to donate and improve the planning of the international humanitarian response
- Interoperate with the logIK on-line system by retrieving information about international relief shipments automatically and directly from customs authorities of affected countries, which will result in more complete and accurate information about international relief;
- Be a multi-language application, allowing the implementation in the national language(s) and alphabet(s), similar to the ASYCUDA system;
- Be configurable to allow its implementation in any Member State, independent of the operational Customs IT system, as an online system or as a standalone system where the Customs IT system will not be operational.

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