1.   Foreword

The international community has been facing an increasing amount of emergencies – natural disasters, conflicts, chronic humanitarian situations – leading to unprecedented strains on the humanitarian system. The number of people affected by humanitarian crises has almost doubled over the past decade and is expected to keep rising. The cost of international humanitarian aid has more than tripled in the last 10 years[1], with ongoing protracted and complex crises. Modalities of disaster response are changing to accommodate new circumstances and to make use of new technologies.

> **Humanitarian Logistics Response in the future**
> 1. Effective coordinated first response by local stakeholders saving lives and minimizing the need for international intervention.
> 2. Quick deployment and set up of cluster operations harnessing existing capacity of locally active actors from different sectors.
> 3. Standard commodities and processes that allow interoperability.
> 4. Local and regional actors cooperate in cross border response using existing networks.

The Logistics Cluster supported an unprecedented number of operations, during 2014, thirteen, five of which were large scale responses, serving 170 organisations on the ground.

The 2016-2018 Logistics Cluster strategy is addressing the challenges the humanitarian community is expected to face, by strengthening partnerships and building networks that prepare for an effective emergency response, relying on each other strengths, and by providing a platform for disseminating best practices and solutions among participating organisations.

1.1.   Vision

Fast and predictable humanitarian logistics operations that provide the right inputs for saving lives and for the delivery of humanitarian relief to affected populations.

1.2.   Mission

Ensure the humanitarian community has the ability to save lives through timely and reliable logistical service support and information.

1.3.   Values

- **Accountability**- the Logistics Cluster is committed and accountable to the affected populations through the cluster community. The Logistics Cluster strategic decisions are guided by the humanitarian community, and elements such as planning, progress, resources allocated and results achieved are reported on regularly, and available to all stakeholders.

- **Partnership**- the Logistics Cluster is a partnership of the humanitarian community, and as such should strive to include a wide variety of humanitarian actors on the global, regional and local levels in steering its strategic direction and allow true involvement and ownership.

- **Professionalism**- the Logistics Cluster is committed to serve the humanitarian community, and to continuous learning and improvement to ensure that cluster operations are fit for purpose in a changing humanitarian environment.

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[1] Saving Lives Today and Tomorrow, OCHA Policy Paper
https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OCHA%20SLTT%20Web%20Final%20Single.PDF

1.4. Goals and core pillars

1.4.1. Prepare

> **Aim:**
> Strengthen the immediate response capacity of national and regional actors, and identify best capacities for potential humanitarian response.

The benefits of strengthening disaster preparedness include saving lives and improving cost effectiveness in disaster response. Adequate preparedness on the national level can improve first response and reduce the need for international mobilisation.

Objectives:
1. Strengthen and build logistics capacity on global regional and local levels.
2. Standardise response protocols including methodologies, commodities and tools.
3. Stimulate active participation and task taking of the Logistics Cluster organisations involving other sectors such as civil protection, public and private sector.

1.4.2. Operate

> **Aim:**
> Provide crucial operational services and information in a timely way, to support the humanitarian community.

Emergency logistics support and information management are at the core of the Logistics Cluster work. The operations should continually improve to provide professional and fit for purpose response in all operations.

Objectives:
1. Ensure the timely deployment of qualified staff to Logistics Cluster operations.
2. Adapt to ensure that logistics services and tools remain relevant.
3. Promote interoperability and sharing of information and resources.

1.4.3. Network and Advocate

> **Aim**
> Engage with various actors on the global, regional and local levels to understand needs of stakeholders and advocate for humanitarian logistics role and requirements.

Extending the Logistics Cluster network to the local and regional levels is identified as a strategic priority to ensure awareness, partnership and preparedness. Examples such as the ASEAN regional partnership allow for better disaster response on the national, cross border and regional levels.

Objectives:
1. Foster regional and intercountry networks, encourage partnerships with regional and local actors.
2. Create awareness on the importance of logistics and of Logistics Cluster activities, responsibilities and performance in national, regional and global contingency planning and programming.
3. Advocate for resolution of issues that impact the humanitarian supply chain such as access issues, customs regulations, or limitations on the availability of necessary inputs.

1.4.4.   Learn and Implement

> **Aim:**
> Continuously improve humanitarian logistics operations through learning from past operations, identifying gaps and sharing best practices within the Logistics Cluster.

The Logistics Cluster engages in standardising and disseminating its lessons learnt to ensure continued improvement. The biannual Global Logistics Cluster Meetings have increasingly become a forum for relevant actors to raise humanitarian logistics gaps, and introduce suggested solutions. The changing operating environment and the introduction of new operation modalities, such as based interventions, require continued review of the logistics role in humanitarian operations and development of new skills and knowledge.

Objectives:
1.   Capture and disseminate lessons learnt.
2.   Measure the performance of the Logistics Cluster, and improvements made based on its learnt lessons.
3.   Identify gaps on national/regional/global levels and raise to the humanitarian community.

2.   Background

2.1.   Logistics Cluster Mandate

The cluster approach aims to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by ensuring that there is predictable leadership and accountability in all the main sectors or areas of humanitarian response[2].

The Global Logistics Cluster, hosted by the World Food Programme and steered by the participating organisations, aims to provide logistics surge capacity to the humanitarian community and to support the staff on the ground with operations assistance, information management and coordination. The Global Logistics Cluster also provides normative, strategic, and policy guidance to broaden knowledge and improve decision-making in humanitarian logistics and it works with local governments and actors on system-wide preparedness and contingency planning.

2.2.   Strategy Formulation

A joint evaluation was conducted by the WFP Office of Evaluation, UNICEF, and the Government of the Netherlands in 2012 (see box below). Based on the results of this exercise, the 2012-2015 Logistics Cluster Strategy focused on three objectives: improved operations, increased accountability, and advocacy for the role of the Logistics Cluster in emergency planning and response. During the following three years, the organisations participating to the

> **Logistics Cluster Joint Evaluation 2012**
> *"Overall, GLC operations were relevant, effective and provided value to participating organizations. Logistics Cluster activities undertaken at the global and country levels from 2005 to 2011 resulted in better logistics approaches, which increased the effects on beneficiaries by enhancing partners' programme delivery".*

Logistics Cluster have met biannually and received progress reports against agreed targets reviewed the strategy, and annually decided on priority activities for the coming year.

Discussions over the Logistics Cluster 2016-2018 Strategy started in mid-2015. A working group comprised

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[2] IASC Guidance Note on Cluster Approach 2006

of representatives from thirteen member organisations met in Rome in October 2015, and reviewed potential scenarios of humanitarian response in 2020. Based on those scenarios, and on earlier discussions, the working group decided on four strategic goals that serve as the basis for this strategy document. The goals were then translated by the Logistics Cluster team into suggested objectives subsequently endorsed by the working group. The final step of the process is the endorsement of the proposed strategy by the participating organisations and the definition of activities within each objective.

2.3.   Developments in the humanitarian system

Climate change has the potential to increase the number and intensity of natural disasters, leading to increased conflicts over arable land, access to water, settlement areas and population movements. Increasing population densities and ease of national and international travel, might also result in a growing risk of cross border pandemics. The increasing frequency of natural disasters and protracted conflicts can lead to increased demands upon funding, and government support for international aid per crisis might be reduced, either due to domestic issues, such as reductions in food-producing land, or refugee influx, or due to donor fatigue.

A humanitarian logistics think tank convened by the Humanitarian Logistics Association[3] suggests strategies for mitigating these risks:

1.   Focusing strongly on preparedness, through a range of activities to ensure a planned rather than reactive response a ;
2.   Ensuring the supply chain is optimised by involving supply chain management in all stages of programmatic planning and execution;
3.   Making the supply chain more agile and responsive to change through analysis and monitoring, and the continuous development of contingency plans;
4.   Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of staff through professionalisation activities, networking opportunities, and through joint training exercises;
5.   Mobilising local and regional supply chains before, during and after the response.

2.4.   Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are intergovenmentally agreed set of targets for the 2030 Development Agenda[4]. While these goals represent the priorities for the development sector, it is important that humanitarian response does not operate in vacuum, and that it contributes to the attainment of the sustainable development goals where possible. Goal 17, the final goal of the SDGs, calls for enhanced capacity building multi-stakeholder partnerships and shared knowledge, expertise and resources. The strategic focus on networking and preparedness aligns with this goal. Goal 9 of the sustainable development goals aims to build resilient infrastructure to support economic development through financial and technical support. This could be relevant for instance with the transport and storage capacities created during an emergency response and handed over to local actors.

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[3] Emergency Supply Chains: What Price is Right written in preparation for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit
[4] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015