In 2019, the destruction caused by cyclones Idai and Kenneth provided another brutal reminder that sudden-onset, climate-related disasters will continue to necessitate robust, timely and coordinated logistics support for humanitarian operations. In response to partners’ needs in the affected areas, Logistics Cluster operations were activated and the LET provided invaluable support by acting as a catalyst for local private sector mobilization, demonstrating yet again the relevance and impact of the LET partnership to humanitarian logistics. Thanks to the LET, crucial and time-critical information from its private sector network as well as resources and services were made available to fill urgent logistics gaps to support humanitarian operations targeting two million people.

While we must remain ready to respond to natural disasters such as these, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the majority of Logistics Cluster operations in 2019 were in response to complex and protracted crises. This year more than 500 Logistics Cluster partners worked together to find and implement logistics solutions to support humanitarian operations in Bangladesh, Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Haiti, Iraq, Libya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe. As a community we shall need to remain agile and responsive if we are to provide effective responses to the new decade’s emergencies driven by changes in climate, demographic and employment patterns, urbanisation, as well as conflict and pandemics. The scale and duration of both sudden-onset, protracted and complex emergencies are too much for the humanitarian sector to respond to alone. Only through a strategic, predictable and sustainable cooperation with a variety of actors and crucially, the private sector, can these challenges be addressed.

Investment in preparedness activities such as capacity building, creation of networks and mitigating logistics bottlenecks ahead of time continue to play a key role in Logistics Cluster strategy as we strive to mitigate the impact of crises. The private sector is critical to this process and the LET’s expertise and capacity increase their impact. The innovative and inclusive spirit of the LET partnership provided a pioneering model for humanitarian and private sector collaboration. With a clear trend towards an increase in the number and duration of humanitarian crises this partnership will be essential to the Logistics Cluster as, together, we seek to ensure that we are ready for the challenges ahead of us.

A word of thanks

Athalie Mayo
Global Logistics Cluster Coordinator
The Logistics Emergency Teams (LET) comprises four global logistics and transportation companies: UPS, A.P. Moller – Maersk (Maersk), Agility and DP World. In 2005, the World Economic Forum facilitated the creation of the LET partnership, with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) as lead of the Global Logistics Cluster (GLC). The Logistics Cluster is part of the humanitarian cluster system and provides coordination, information management and shares assets through common logistics services that help to ensure an efficient and effective humanitarian logistics response in emergencies. In 2019, the Logistics Cluster cooperated with and supported more than 500 unique partners and stakeholders in emergency response.

The LET partnership is now entering its fourteenth year. Since its creation, it has responded to 22 natural disasters and global crises. It has also provided key information to Logistics Capacity Assessments (LCAs) to assist humanitarian organizations in preparing for and responding to emergencies. The Logistics Cluster can request the LET companies for support. The companies meet the request by providing logistics assets and services, including information, expertise, and key contacts based on their already existing networks and operations in the emergency location.

Scope of LET support
In view of significant changes in the global humanitarian context over the past few decades, in 2017 the Logistics Cluster asked to expand the scope of the LET partnership. Prior to the expansion, the LET only responded to emergencies that were the result of large-scale natural disasters impacting more than 500,000 people. At the request of the Logistics Cluster, today the LET engages to expand its support from the sudden-onset natural disaster responses to responses in complex emergencies, health emergencies, slow onset emergencies and even the provision of support ahead of an emergency.

With this expansion, the LET partnership seeks to remain reliable, relevant, and impactful, providing continued support to the humanitarian sector as global humanitarian demand evolves in scope and increases in duration. The expansion entails that there are more regular requests for support. These requests are often smaller in scale and visibility, but high in impact. As part of its support to activities ahead of potential crises, the LET has provided logistics information on in-country logistics capacities and has facilitated cross-sector collaboration between the private sector and local authorities on risk identification and mitigation.
LET disaster responses

In its 14 years of operations, the LET has provided humanitarian assistance to 22 major natural disasters and complex emergencies.

2019
Cyclones Idai and Kenneth (both Mozambique)

2007
Earthquakes (Indonesia)

2008
Tropical storms Fay, Gustav, Hanna and Ike (all Haiti), cyclone Nargis (Myanmar)

2009
Earthquake (Indonesia) and typhoon (Philippines)

2018
Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami (both Indonesia), refugee support (Bangladesh) and conflict in Yemen, Syria and Iraq

2015
Gorkha earthquake (Nepal)

2016
Hurricane Matthew (Haiti)

2014
Typhoon Koppu/Landa (Philippines) and EBOLA (West Africa)

2013
Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda (Philippines)

2012
Typhoon Guchol/Butchoy (Philippines)

2011
Famine (Horn of Africa) and Tohoku earthquake and tsunami (Japan)

2010
Earthquake (Haiti) and flooding (Pakistan)
Mozambique: Cyclones Idai and Kenneth

On March 15 and April 25, two of the deadliest tropical cyclones ever recorded in the South West Indian Ocean—Idai and Kenneth—brought unprecedented flooding and catastrophic destruction to Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi and other surrounding areas. The infrastructure damages are estimated to have cost billions of dollars, with loss of life estimated to be in the thousands.

Efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance to those in need were challenged by the storms’ massive impact on logistics infrastructure. As the storms passed, stagnant water and flooding created further complications for responders on the ground. With normal transport routes impassable and affected communities cut off from road transport, there was a critical need for information on the hardest-hit areas, populations impacted, and how to ensure the quick delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Providing up-to-date information on infrastructure availability

The LET companies provided key humanitarian support in Mozambique and the surrounding region. At first, LET partners assisted by providing up-to-date insight on infrastructure capacity and availability, customs clearance process information, access constraints, and ocean transit times.

Addressing the lack of warehousing

Another challenge faced on the ground was the lack of storage solutions due to the destruction of existing warehouse space. The LET partners supported the humanitarian response with pro bono storage solutions, lending out containers and moving them between the airport and port. Refrigerated containers (reefers) were also made available for temperature-control of crucial relief items. At the request of the Cluster, the LET partners also identified warehouse storage solutions. However, these were eventually determined to be unnecessary.

Outside of the request from the Logistics Cluster, LET companies independently and bilaterally delivered additional humanitarian support. Maersk arranged pro bono the diversion of a Safmarine feeder vessel to make the first large deliveries of humanitarian aid into the hardest hit areas around Beira, Mozambique. More than 2,000 tonnes of basic food, off-road vehicles, shelters, tents and other relief goods arrived by air and sea in the first few days. To access cut-off regions, communities and individuals, WFP mobilized an air bridge which utilized Mi-8 helicopters provided by UNHAS for the last-mile transfer of cargo. To complement the helicopters, UPS airlifted two amphibious transport vehicles called SHERPs from Ukraine to Mozambique that allowed WFP to deliver food and supplies to communities where roads were inaccessible or destroyed.

The Cluster was then able to share important details with partners on road conditions, vehicle tonnage, and expected transportation times. Knowledge on infrastructure availability is especially critical in the initial hours, days and weeks of a humanitarian response. In the case of Cyclone Idai, this was even more important because Beira—a city which functions as a logistics hub and entryway not only for Mozambique but for several countries in the region—was completely cut off by road. Being able to access information through the LET partnership on logistics capacity and bottlenecks such as road access constraints was crucial in the first phase of the response.
The Bahamas: 
Hurricane Dorian

On September 1, Hurricane Dorian hit the Abaco Islands in the Bahamas and on September 2 the Grand Bahamas Island as a powerful Category 5. With winds of over 270 km/h and a surge of 5-7m above normal tide, the storm caused severe devastation throughout the 40 hours it spent directly above the island. 70 people died as a consequence of the storm and the Red Cross estimated that 13,000 homes were destroyed or severely damaged.

Although there was no official activation of the Logistics Cluster, the LET partners convened regular operations planning calls with the Global Logistics Cluster to share information and determine if LET resources were required to support the humanitarian response operations. LET companies Maersk and UPS independently and bilaterally delivered key humanitarian supply chain support directly to NGOs operating in the Bahamas without Cluster request. Similar to the case in Mozambique, efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance were challenged by the storm’s impact on island infrastructure, especially the lack of storage solutions. To address the shortage of warehousing, Maersk temporarily released 40 containers as a local pro bono donation to assist in the distribution of aid and transit storage serving relief organizations. UPS provided free delivery of relief supplies for UN and government agencies and international NGO’s providing humanitarian services.

During a period of two months, a Maersk 20’ container was used to distribute freshwater for the local community. To make this happen, a team from IsraAid mounted a reverse-osmosis water purification machine inside the containers and made rounds on Grand Bahamas to deliver fresh water to communities in need. The use of the container for these two months allowed time for local authorities to restore local water sources.
In 2016, the Logistics Cluster included a specific focus on preparedness activities in its strategy. Following this, the LET companies have stepped up in providing support to a variety of activities in this scope. Ahead of potential emergencies, preparedness activities contribute to the strengthening of emergency response mechanisms and thus reduce the impact of the next disaster.

Local actors’ knowledge and assets are crucial for humanitarian operational planning both ahead of and during emergencies and so is engaging the local private sector to take an active role in identifying local obstacles, prioritizing actions and contributing to an emergency response. In turn, preparedness activities can help the private sector build more resilient supply chains which are less impacted by the disruption caused by disasters. LET partners help the Logistics Cluster by leveraging their local networks, connecting the local private sector with the humanitarian sector and creating networks of responders.

**Logistics Cluster preparedness activities**

The Logistics Cluster acknowledges the need to reinforce response mechanisms ahead of crises. It has elaborated a series of activities and a preparedness project which aim to create and strengthen networks of responders locally and internationally focusing on identifying logistics capacity and bottlenecks in countries which are at high risk for emergencies. Rollout is planned in several countries over the next two years. A thorough preparedness approach will create a local cross-sector supply community which can identify emergency scenarios in a country—as well as response requirements, bottlenecks (for example airport capacity), and community actions, both in the short and long term.

**Logistics information platform**

Because timely and accurate supply related information is key in emergencies, a global platform for facilitating easy access to updated, analyzed and relevant logistics information is being developed. In the development and initial data population of this platform, key stakeholders are consulted and engaged with in a variety of workshops. In 2019, the LET participated in two of these workshops.

1 dollar spent reducing people’s vulnerability to disaster saves around 7 dollars in disaster response and reconstruction

Source: UNDP 2015

Disaster preparedness reduces time, money and complexity in humanitarian response and lessens the need for international mobilization. Studies show that supply chain accounts for an average of 73% of humanitarian response costs

Source: HELP Logistics & Kuehne Logistics University
South Sudan
As part of the cluster’s efforts to build the national logistics capacity in South Sudan, Agility’s Tristar company provided warehouse safety training to humanitarian logisticians to enable a safer and more efficient warehousing and distribution operation. More than 100 national staff working in storage facilities (warehouse assistants, storekeepers, tally clerks) from 53 humanitarian organisations took part in this training in three locations (Bentiu, Juba and Rumbek) across the country.

The objective of this one-day course was to educate learners about managing the risks of working in a warehouse to help prevent accidents and injuries.

Bangladesh
Agility and UPS participated in a Logistics Gap Analysis workshop in Bangladesh to help the national disaster management authorities and humanitarian actors prepare for emergencies alongside private sector partners. This supports the Logistics Cluster’s goal to build local networks and resilience through partnership and preparedness activities.

The workshop was hosted by the national Disaster Management Authority with co-facilitation by WFP and technical support from the Global Logistics Cluster. It followed a two-fold approach, firstly to stress-test the current response system using a realistic emergency scenario. A subsequent workshop with the same subject matter expert groups worked on encountered gaps/bottlenecks in emergency logistics and humanitarian supply chain. The groups worked towards identifying potential solutions of identified gaps to be addressed in the field preparedness project through a commonly drafted and agreed road map and preparedness action plan.
Logistics Capacity Assessments

To perform a proper operational logistics plan a solid knowledge of the existing logistics infrastructure and stakeholders is a requirement. The Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) is an online public tool created by WFP, initially to prepare for its own operations but now used across the humanitarian community. With over 750,000 page views in 2019 it is a highly used information resource. The LCA is a tool used to collect information in advance which can be used to plan and prepare operations. It contains information on the logistics environment including customs, port, transport, roads, etc.

The LCA is done for more than 100 countries. For the past 10 years, the LET companies have supported by contributing information from their operations in various countries to the Global Logistics Cluster. In 2019, the LET partners used their intrinsic strengths and knowledge bases and initiated a process of continuous and in depth updates of the Logistics Capacity Assessments (LCA). A well-prepared LCA contributes to overall emergency response strategy and execution, and ensures the following objectives can be met by humanitarian organizations:

1. Support for contingency planning activities
2. Preparation of Emergency Response operation plans
3. Improve resource requirement assessments at planning stage of an emergency response
4. Reduce overall response time and accessibility in the delivery of humanitarian aid
5. Decrease cost of transportation at the onset and over the course of the operation
6. Facilitate the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development
7. Provide detail briefing material for relief staff unfamiliar to the region

LCA Workshops

Logistics Capacity Assessments must be regularly maintained and updated for all identified countries in order to optimally prepare for possible future emergency responses. In 2019, the LET partners engaged in a process of continuous and in-depth updating of LCAs and organized a new format for LCA workshops held at the country level. Workshops not only prompt the completion of the LCAs, but also bring together key country stakeholders to contribute to the assessment. Completing the LCA through this approach builds networks of UN and non-profit organizations, government entities and a cross-functional group of logistics professionals that are committed to strengthen humanitarian emergency response. They work together to ensure that the LCA is accurately and fully completed, and to create a local network of professionals that the Logistics Cluster can connect to in case of an emergency.

In 2019 the LET worked with the Logistics Cluster, using specific criteria and the current geographical locations of the trained Logistics Emergency Teams members, to identify the countries, listed below, where LET will deliver LCA workshops going forward.

LCAs supported in 2019

LCAs are conducted across a range of countries, on the basis of humanitarian risk indices and logistics performance indices. Some limited LCAs are also conducted for key corridor or neighbouring countries not themselves at risk.

South Africa
The South Africa LCA was last updated in July 2015. Limited in scope, it complemented information in the Zimbabwe LCA. Being an important corridor for logistics operations in southern Africa, the country needs up-to-date LCA.

Mali
The Mali LCA was last updated in March 2014. There is an ongoing emergency humanitarian response in the country – 3.9 million people in Mali were in need of humanitarian assistance as of November 2019 (OCHA News – November 2019).

Burkina Faso
The Burkina Faso LCA was last updated in March 2012. There is an ongoing humanitarian emergency response in the country – by November 2019, 1.5 million people in Burkina Faso were in need of humanitarian assistance and 486,000 had been internally displaced (OCHA Situation Report).

Rwanda
The Rwanda LCA was last updated in March 2016. There is not an ongoing emergency response in Rwanda. The country is often impacted by flooding and drought, and over 175,000 Congolese and Burundian refugees are present in the country, mostly in refugee camps. (WFP Homepage – January 2019)
Localization

Emergency responses are a joint initiative of a wide range of stakeholders and actors. Preparing for responses requires ongoing effort and collaboration at global, national and community levels. The Logistics Cluster aims to support or create sustainable and knowledgeable networks of actors, prepared to respond. Through the support of a dedicated, in-country Logistics Cluster staff member, localization and capacity strengthening is a key approach of preparedness activities. It focuses on enhancing coordination, collaboration and knowledge sharing. Activities include the delivery of trainings and simulations to identify logistics challenges and vulnerabilities, the development of key documents, as well as integrating data and mapping technology into disaster planning. The LET supports these training sessions and workshops.

The LET also organises training sessions and response simulation exercises in which LET employees receive training in a range of areas, such as health & safety, security, communication and team building. Additionally, LET companies also facilitate training for humanitarian actors to improve their response in face of an emergency. In 2019, three main training sessions were held.

Fundamentals of Terminal Operation in Turkey (29-30 April 2019)

DP World was asked to support humanitarian agencies working in Syria to further build their logistics expertise. As a result, Ahmed Abu Safia from DP World Hub (Training and Development team) volunteered his time conducting a Fundamentals of Terminal Operation training with the Logistics Cluster for partners operating in Syria.

The training was attended by 25 staff members from 14 humanitarian organizations, among which were WHO, WFP, UOSSM, UNHCR, IOM, Islamic Relief Worldwide and Big Heart. The condensed two-day training was designed to illustrate how different kinds of terminals work and aimed at strengthening Logistic Cluster partners’ specific technical capacity. The first day of training consisted of discussing aspects of trade and logistics supply chain followed by an in-depth explanation of “Terminal Operations” and the major components of modern container terminals (i.e. Quay, Vessel, Yard and Gate operations). Day one was concluded with an activity focused on teamwork and the importance of effective communication and trust to succeed as a group. The second day involved discussing key principles in terminal operation and how to measure productivity. The training was then concluded with a tour of Turkey’s largest port where the participants got a chance to see live operations and meet key staff at the port.
Trucking Fleet Operations Management Training in Lebanon (23–25 September 2019)

The three-day workshop in Lebanon provided humanitarian logisticians with information required to better manage trucking fleet operations. The training focused on procurement and contracting, asset maintenance practices, route planning and scheduling, safety and security and other aspects of fleet management that can enable safer and more efficient delivery of humanitarian aid.

Building Response Capacity in 2020

The LET maintains a roster of employees from LET companies who are trained and ready to deploy in the case of a humanitarian emergency and at the invitation of the Logistics Cluster. The previous two trainings have taken place in Indonesia and Dubai with 49 participants, but planning is underway for a training in Miami in 2020 to re-bolster the number of people trained and ready to deploy from the Americas region. In March 2020 employees from LET member companies will participate in LET response simulation exercises and receive training in health & safety, field security, communications, and teambuilding.

CUSTOMS CLEARANCE WORKSHOP IN BANGLADESH (7 JULY 2019)

The day-long workshop shared the experiences of LET partners, Agility and UPS when dealing with international operations in Bangladesh. The workshop built upon previous experiences through a combination of case-based presentations and roundtable discussions. The objective was to increase awareness on topics such as best practices to import/export goods in Bangladesh, how humanitarian organizations can strengthen their trade capacity and enable smoother customs operations, etc.

The event took place in Cox’s Bazar, with the Logistics Sector humanitarian partners consisting of UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs in attendance, as well as the National Logistics Cluster. 35 participants from 21 different organisations participated in the workshop. UPS focused on the themes of Demurrage, Customs Overview/Clearance/Documentation at the Ports of Entry and Tax Exemptions, while Agility presented on Customs Clearance/Processes, Best Customs Practices, and a Customs Overview on the Ports of Entry.

Additionally, the Logistics Sector and LET partners, Agility and UPS, have conducted quarterly meetings to support partners with ongoing customs clearance processes.

FLEET MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN BEIRUT, LEBANON
LET Facts

Background and history
The goal of the LET is to provide pro-bono logistics services, expertise, and assets to the Logistics Cluster, supporting humanitarian responses for up to six weeks (depending on the context) immediately following a large-scale natural disaster or with gap-filling in case of the escalation of a complex emergency. Additionally, the partnership also supports with preparedness activities and support for complex emergencies. This partnership between private companies and WFP remains a good practice example of WEF-initiated and operationalized private-public relationships.

Services
The LET has provided logistics support for more than 22 emergency responses, global crises and many preparedness initiatives since 2005. The team is activated when large-scale and sudden-onset disasters strike or when complex emergencies escalate, providing the Logistics Cluster with access to a global network of transportation and logistics expertise. Moreover, LET is engaged in national disaster preparedness activities mainly by gathering and sharing information about transport and logistics. Occasionally, the LET deploys its highly trained logistics experts to join the Logistics Cluster staff for disaster-response operations.

Governance
LET partners form a steering committee together with representatives of the Logistics Cluster and convene bi-monthly steering committee calls. Twice a year, the steering committee meets face-to-face for strategic planning.

The Global Logistics Cluster
The Logistics Cluster enables global, regional and local actors to meet humanitarian needs. In 2019, the Logistics Cluster cooperated with and supported over 500 partners and stakeholders, including national and international NGOs, UN agencies, foundations, civil society organizations, and government agencies across 15 operations in 2019.

Due to its expertise in the field of humanitarian logistics, WFP was chosen as the lead agency for the Logistics Cluster. Proactively, the Logistics Cluster works with stakeholders in countries and regions at risk of humanitarian disaster to strengthen local capacities. In crises, where local capacities have been exceeded, the Logistics Cluster has been mandated to provide leadership, coordination, information and facilitation of access to operational logistics services and information. Globally, the Logistics Cluster is a community of organizations working together to overcome common logistics constraints in humanitarian emergency operations, and to develop and share best practices and solutions.

The Logistics Cluster Global Meetings (GLMs) are held twice a year, and bring together Logistics Cluster partners and senior logisticians from humanitarian organisations at the global level. These meetings are a forum for strategic discussion of the Logistics Cluster and provide an opportunity to discuss relevant Logistics Cluster operations, collect feedback from partner organisations on Logistics Cluster performance, present new initiatives and projects relevant to the field of humanitarian logistics. For the first GLM of the year (9-11 April 2019 in Dubai), the LET provided a facilitator pro-bono to help guide and animate discussions.
LET
The Logistics Emergency Teams comprises four of the largest global logistics and transportation companies: Agility, UPS, Maersk, and DP World, which work together to support the Logistics Cluster led by United Nations World Food Programme. The partnership was facilitated by the World Economic Forum in 2005.

logcluster.org