WFP Yemen
SPECIAL OPERATION SO (200130)

Country:	Yemen
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Air Passenger Service and Logistics Cluster Coordination in Support of the Humanitarian Response in Sa'ada
Total cost (US$):	US$ 530,634
Duration:	6 months, from 24 May until to 23 November 2010

Executive Summary

Six years of civil conflict have led to high levels of population displacement, substantial infrastructure damage, and high insecurity in the northern Yemen governorate of Sa'ada, with high displacement to neighboring governorates. The sixth round of war began on 12 August 2009, displacing as many 350,000 persons. On 11 February 2010 a ceasefire declaration was agreed upon between the Government and Houthis. As a result, the Humanitarian Community is aiming to reinforce its presence and enhance the necessary operational capacity to provide relief assistance to the affected populations in Sa'ada.

On 22 February, the Humanitarian Country Team requested the activation of the Logistics Cluster, focusing on improved emergency preparedness and response, provision of an information sharing platform including Geographic Information Systems, strengthened coordination, enhanced capacity to respond to needs, and advocacy for the smooth importation of relief goods.

As a result of the February 2010 ceasefire agreement and the request for activation of the Logistics Cluster, the Humanitarian Community formally requested regular air charters to support to secure and regular movement of staff and limited relief goods to Sa'ada town. This is expected to facilitate the timely and effective implementation and monitoring of humanitarian activities in the Governorate of Sa'ada. WFP, in its role as custodian of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Services, will establish a reliable, safe and efficient air transport in cooperation with Yemenia Joint Venture in support of humanitarian activities in the Governorate of Sa'ada.

Through this special operation, WFP in its capacity as Logistics Cluster lead and custodian of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS), will support the efforts of the Humanitarian Community to respond to the crisis in Yemen. This project caters for the assets, staff and systems necessary to:
- enhance the predictability, timeliness and efficiency of the emergency response under the Cluster approach, and
- Facilitate the access of humanitarian personnel and light cargo to the affected areas and ensure operational continuity.

The special operation is for a duration of six months, from 24 May to 23 November 2010 at a total cost of US$ 530,634.

1. Project Background

1. The current Sa'ada crisis in North Yemen is unfolding in the context of high vulnerability nationwide due to elevated prevalence of poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition; natural disasters; rapid depletion of the water supply; social and political unrest; reduced Government capacity to provide basic services; and high population growth.

2. This project focuses on the area of civil conflict, Sa'ada governorate, which is located in the northern part of Yemen and bordered by Saudi Arabia from the north and west. It is comprised of 15 districts with a total population of nearly 800,000 people. Sa'ada is located 240 km from the country's capital, Sana'a.

3. The conflict in Sa'ada erupted in 2004, when a group called Al-Shabab Al-Momen (The Faithful Youth) created by a local leader Al Houthi clashed with the Government. The emergence of the Sa'ada rebellion has been linked to economic, political, social and religious grievances. Since 2004 there have been six separate rounds of war. Despite numerous ceasefire agreements over the years, clashes have continued, spreading to neighboring governorates and in 2008 to within 20 km of the capital Sana'a. WFP, UN agencies and NGOs have been providing emergency relief to families displaced and severely affected by the conflict since June 2007.

4. On 12 August 2009 the 6th round of war began with major clashes across Sa'ada governorate (including in Sa'ada town) and in Harf Sufyan area of Amran governorate. The 6th round witnessed unprecedented levels of insecurity and population movement, which escalated further following the regionalization of the conflict in early November 2009. Some 350,000 persons (Government of Yemen figure, April 2010) have been displaced to safer areas within Sa'ada and to neighboring governorates of Al Jawf, Hajjah, Sana'a and Amran; between 10 and 15 percent of IDPs are living in official camps, while the vast majority of families are scattered or with host families. Coping mechanisms of families have been exhausted following repeated confrontations and prolonged displacement.

5. At the end of August 2009, UN agencies and International NGOs relocated staff from Sa'ada due to the high level of insecurity and clashes within the city. Regardless, WFP and humanitarian actors were able to maintain assistance throughout the conflict thanks to key implementing partners, including Islamic Relief.

6. On 11 February 2010 a ceasefire was declared however the security situation remains volatile, with ongoing clashes, growing rhetoric from all parties, and no mass return of IDPs to places of origin. Of the 15 districts in Sa'ada governorate, 9 remain without Government presence.

7. Access has remained restricted to the town of Sa'ada and border areas in the North and West parts of the country both in times of ceasefire and war. Three months after the February 2010 cease-fire, humanitarian access is still a major challenge, limiting the humanitarian community's ability to provide regular assistance and hampering needs assessments in Sa'ada, Al Jawf and Amran governorates. Landmines, unexploded ordinance, and infrastructure damage present further challenges.

8. All of Yemen is currently in Phase III. UNDSS has deemed none of the roads from Sana'a to Sa'ada cleared for staff use: the main road travels through the

conflict area of Harf Sufyan and is made more volatile due to tribal checkpoints, kidnappings, and car jackings; a secondary road through Al Jawf governorate is off limits as the entire governorate of Al Jawf is a no-go area for UN and many INGOs; a third side road through western Sa'ada travels though Houthi territory and areas of heavy clashes where landmines and unexploded ordnance provide further obstacles as they also do on the northern route from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Sa'ada town. In the current scenario, road access will continue to be denied for UN (and most I/NGO) staff for the foreseeable future.

9. The attention of the Humanitarian Community is now focused on reinforcing its presence to enhance the operational capacity required in Sa'ada; the main aim is to expand access to other districts and urgently assist populations previously trapped by the conflict. The protection of civilians and security of humanitarian staff is the priority.

10. At the end of 2009, the Humanitarian Country Team elaborated the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan to guide aid efforts in 2010. Three key strategic priorities were identified:
   i. Provide life- and livelihood-saving humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable populations affected by man-made and natural disasters
   ii. Address protracted humanitarian and recovery needs, including emergency levels of malnutrition country-wide and post-emergency needs in Sa'ada and Hadramout governorates
   iii. Strengthen the capacity of humanitarian actors and of key Government counterparts involved in service and assistance delivery

2. Project Justification

Logistic Coordination and Information Management:

11. In February 2010 the Humanitarian Country Team requested the formal activation of the Logistics Cluster under the leadership of WFP. The Humanitarian Community has stressed the necessity to continue and maintain coordinated and cohesive logistics systems to ensure the uninterrupted supply of life saving relief items in Yemen as well as ensure the movement of staff and aid.

12. Due to the heavy fighting from August 2009-February 2010, it is understood that some local populations have been trapped by the conflict and remain entirely inaccessible to agencies. Relief organizations must conduct an assessment and immediately address the most severe needs through a coordinated approach as soon as access is granted.

13. Following the 5th round of war, the Sa'ada Reconstruction Fund assessed the situation and found that infrastructure had faced serious damage. In the aftermath of the 6th war, with increased severity and reach of clashes and strikes, it is expected that infrastructure has been even more severely affected. The need to assess bridges, roads, and warehousing is expected. Adequate warehousing conditions and sufficient capacity to store relief items and equipment will therefore be immediately required to support humanitarian activities until rehabilitation begins.

14. One of the serious obstacles to the effective and timely provision of assistance that actors are facing across Yemen is the clearance and customs control of relief items. Key bottle necks include testing and quality control as well as limited

capacity in the ports. Though a model agreement for the facilitation and speedy clearance of humanitarian goods has been presented to the Government, there is need for further coordination and support is required towards the development of structured government systems and procedures.

<u>Provision of Humanitarian Air Services:</u>

15. The first ad-hoc air charter agreement was activated in May 2009. Since then the Humanitarian Country Team has intermittently requested ad hoc air charters to/from Sa'ada town for the movement and/or evacuation of relief personnel. As a result of the February 2010 ceasefire agreement and the request for activation of the Logistics Cluster, the Humanitarian Community has formally requested regular air charters to support implementation through the regular movement of staff and limited relief goods to Sa'ada town.

16. With the assistance required by the IDPs and affected local populations, the humanitarian community needs regular safe access to Sa'ada governorate for staff and relief items to implement their programmes. However access to this phase III area, including to the main town of Sa'ada where actors are based, has become increasingly difficult despite the ceasefire; all roads to the governorate have been affected by the fighting. Even when there is limited ongoing conflict, road access is consistently problematic due to tribal activities, internal grievances, damaged infrastructure and overall poor road conditions. In the current context, movement of relief staff by road is not feasible and therefore has to be undertaken by air.

17. Similarly travel conditions make it unfeasible to bring items such as security or communications equipment by road. These therefore will also be transported by air to ensure speed and security of delivery.

18. Under the current volatile security conditions, for staff to work in the Sa'ada Governorate, the humanitarian community has to be able to ensure their evacuation/relocation if/when required. Such evacuation has already happened on more than one occasion, including most recently on 11 May 2010. The Humanitarian Country Team therefore has requested that this air support ensure evacuation of staff when required.

3. Project Objective(s)

19. The objectives of this operation are to:

- Enhance predictability, timeliness and efficiency of the emergency response under the Cluster approach;

- Facilitate the access of humanitarian personnel and light cargo to the affected areas and ensure operational continuity.

4. Project Implementation

20. This special operation accommodates the essential assets, staff and systems required to facilitate a coordinated logistics response in support of the affected populations in the Sa'ada governorate.

21. Given the evolving situation and volatile security conditions on the ground, the implementation plan of this operation may be revised as necessary. The activities will include:

Logistic Coordination and Information Management:

22. A Logistics Cluster cell will be established in Sana'a, with support from the Logistics Cluster Global Support Cell in Rome, to maintain and develop existing coordination activities.

23. The Logistics Cluster will provide the humanitarian community with a logistics information sharing platform. Information will be made available on a regular basis through the Logistics Cluster website and mailing lists and will include situation reports, logistics assessments, guidelines and standard operations procedures for the import and transit of relief items, Geographic Information System tools and maps, etc.

24. The Logistics Cluster will work closely with the humanitarian organizations and the Government of Yemen to facilitate and participate in logistics assessment missions as well as to identify and address gaps and bottlenecks in the logistics response. The Logistics Cluster will facilitate the cohesion of the supply chain elements of a rapid assessment and response for newly accessible areas. This will include the coordination and facilitation of security clearances for relief cargo transportation.

25. The Logistics Cluster in Yemen will advocate for a standardized procedure for customs clearance of relief aid on behalf of the Humanitarian Community.

26. The Logistics Cluster will also provide relief organizations with the required emergency storage capacity when new areas of the Sa'ada Governorate become accessible; to this end WFP has budgeted for four collapsible 10x32 mobile storage tents. Temporary storage will be provided as required at no cost to the humanitarian actors.

27. The Logistics Cluster will continue to coordinate the logistics response based on the priorities set by the Humanitarian Country Team.

Provision of Humanitarian Air Services:

28. WFP, in its role as custodian of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Services, will provide air transportation to ensure regular and safe movement of aid workers and light cargo between the capital and the affected area. This is expected to facilitate the timely and effective implementation and monitoring of humanitarian activities in the Governorate of Sa'ada.

29. Flights will be scheduled on a regular basis six times a month from Sana'a to Sa'ada. This will allow for once weekly flights plus two additional flights per month. Ad-hoc flights may also be organized as required or to allow for the evacuation of humanitarian personnel.

30. The Aviation Unit (ODLA), based in Rome, will be responsible for chartering of a 12-13 seat capacity aircraft from a local operator. This operator, Yemenia Joint Ventures, has already been evaluated and found to be of an acceptable level of compliance with UN Aviation Standards and regulations considering the area of

operation and their local experience. WFP has already implemented charter flights through this operator to Sa'ada, including for the recent staff relocation.

31. A User Group will be established to define the air transport requirements and priorities as well as to monitor the quality of the service provided. The User group will most likely be composed of UN agencies, INGOs, diplomatic missions and donor representations.

32. The provision of air services will depend on WFP management structures and support systems for passenger and cargo booking which will be made through WFP/UNHAS in Sa'ana.

33. Monthly flight schedules will be maintained with flexibility to take appropriate action and adjust to requests for special flights.

34. Given that the current Sa'ada EMOP includes a provision for flight charters until the end of June 2010, the funding for air services under this SO covers only four months out of the planned six months for this operation.

5. Project Management

35. A Logistics Cluster/Humanitarian Air Service (HAS) coordinator will be deployed to Sana'a to implement the aforementioned activities in close cooperation with the humanitarian actors and the local authorities. He/she will be under the supervision of the WFP Yemen Head of Logistics and will be supported by the Logistics Unit in the WFP country office in Yemen.

36. The Country Director will be the Funds Manager and the Head of Finance will be the Allotment Manager of this special operation.

37. The Global Logistics Cluster Support Cell and the Aviation Service Branch in WFP Headquarters will support the activities undertaken at field level and provide guidance as appropriate.

38. The UNHAS User Group will meet at least on a monthly basis to review the adequacy and quality of the common service.

6. Exit Strategy

39. This project will be continuously monitored and the implementation plan revised, as the situation evolves, according to the needs of the humanitarian community. The User Group will recommend the phasing out of the air transport services between Sa'ana and Sa'ada as soon as the security situation allows the use of alternate safe means of transport for humanitarian personnel to reach the beneficiaries.

7. Project Cost & Benefits

40. This Special Operation has a total cost of US$ 530,634 and is expected to provide the necessary logistics coordination and air transport capacity in support of the humanitarian community's response in Yemen.

41. Due to the availability of a safe and reliable commercial operator in Yemen, WFP will charter an adequate aircraft from a local operator on a per flight basis. The contract with the operator will include all the necessary support services such as provision of fuel, landing/handling fees, liaison with Aviation authorities, etc. thereby minimizing the level of specialized WFP aviation staff required while also negating the need for aircraft mobilization costs.

42. While the facilitation of humanitarian air services and Logistics Cluster Coordination is budgeted in the Special Operation for a six month period, only four months of actual flights are included under the SO as two months of flight costs have already been budgeted and resourced by WFP under its Emergency Operation for Sa'ada IDPs (EMOP 10684.0).

43. A nominal booking fee charged to users for passengers and cargo will allow for partial cost recovery; as such, the Humanitarian country team will be able to continue implementing humanitarian air services past the end of the Special Operation action. The levying of flight charges will also encourage users to ensure a more cost efficient usage of the aircraft through better planning of personnel movements and is expected to reduce the number of "no-shows" to flights.

44. The booking fee that will be charged to UNHAS users will be set in agreement with of the User Group, the Humanitarian Country Team and Donor representatives. This fee will be regularly reviewed by all users and will be revised as necessary. Ad-hoc or "special" flights will be provided on a full cost recovery basis.

45. The funding for this Special Operation will be provided by donor contributions supplemented by a system of partial cost recovery for the provision of the air services.

8. Monitoring & Evaluation

Logistic Coordination and Information Management:

46. The key performance indicators are:
    - No. of agencies and organizations utilizing the logistics coordination services. Target: 18 organizations, including but not limited to WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, HCR, UNFPA, WHO, FAO, UNDSS, Save the Children, IR, CSW, IOM, and additional INGO/NGO partners.
    - No. of bulletins, maps and other logistics information produced and shared. Target: Situation reports produced every two weeks – total 12 reports; Note for the Record of Logistics Cluster meetings (twice monthly) and User Group (once monthly) meetings – 18 Records; 10 maps; web site updated on at least weekly basis to update on meetings, post reports and maps, etc.
    - Feedback on the quality of the information sharing tools and products made available to the Logistics Cluster participants (qualitative). Target: feedback provided during logistics cluster meetings (every two weeks), with an evaluation every two months.
    - No. of major humanitarian information-sharing platforms that "pick-up" Logistics Cluster-produced material. Target: 4
    - Guidelines and procedures for expediting the import and transit of relief consignments. Target: 1 set of Standard Operating Procedures will have been prepared in coordination with partners and Government of Yemen officials and agreed upon in writing by all parties

As required, indicators will also include:
- Percentage of requests for Inter-Agency storage fulfilled. Target: 100%
- No. of agencies and organizations using storage facilities. Target: 18 organizations, including but not limited to WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, HCR, UNFPA, WHO, FAO, UNDSS, Save the Children, IR, CSW, IOM, and additional INGO/NGO partners.

<u>Provision of Humanitarian Air Services:</u>

47. The key performance indicators are:
- Percentage of light cargo transported through UNHAS versus requested. Target: 80%.
- Number of passengers transported through UNHAS. Target: with an average of 6-8 persons per one way flight, over four months of flights some 336 passengers would be transported (not accounting for duplication)
- Percentage utilization of contacted hours and effective utilization of the aircraft capacity. Target 100%
- Number of UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations utilizing the air services. Target: 25 organizations, including but not limited to WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, HCR, UNFPA, WHO, FAO, UNDSS, Save the Children, IR, CSW, IOM, and additional INGO/NGO partners; on an exceptional basis some limited media and embassy representatives.

48. Operational reports will be provided on a regular basis (see indicators above).

RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from 24 May to 23 November 2010 at a total cost of US$ 530,634 is recommended for approval by the Deputy Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer with the detailed budget provided.

APPROVAL

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Amir Abdulla

Deputy Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer