



**WFP Aviation (HQ)
SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200280**

Country:	Headquarters (worldwide)
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	WFP Aviation Global Emergency Response
Total cost (US\$):	9,337,398
Duration:	15 July 2011 to 31 December 2012

Executive Summary

1. In recent large emergencies WFP/UNHAS helicopter assets were vital in ensuring the delivery of life saving relief items to affected populations who could not otherwise be reached using surface transport means. In emergency situations the timely deployment of air assets is essential for the humanitarian community to respond to the emergency and carry out life saving activities. In order to improve the humanitarian community's ability to respond in a timely and efficient manner and initiate life saving activities at the onset of the emergency, the lead-time for the deployment of helicopters needs to be reduced.
2. Helicopter assets are not always available in the country or region where they are required. Shifting helicopter assets around the globe is a costly exercise and, in times of emergency, valuable days are lost dismantling, freighting, reassembling and testing before such assets can be put into use. Market competition also increases during large emergencies, driving up prices.
3. Lead times for the deployment of helicopters can be reduced using the two-pronged approach which will be implemented through this special operation. The first is a fleet of two pre-contracted helicopters, on standby in Entebbe, Uganda for use by the humanitarian community through WFP/UNHAS, available for immediate deployment within the regionally and further afield if required. In addition to this, WFP/UNHAS presence in Asia and Central and South America will be increased to improve regional knowledge of commercial air operators and aviation infrastructure and allow the pre-screening and education of air operators in WFP/UNHAS procedures. This will facilitate the preparation of rosters of air operators with the capacity for rapid mobilization within these regions, thereby reducing the need for the expensive and time consuming positioning of aircraft from outside the region.
4. The special operation is for a duration of 18 months, from 15 July 2011 to 31 December 2012, at a total budgeted cost of US\$ 9,337,398.

Project Background

5. WFP, as the custodian of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (WFP/UNHAS), provides air services to the humanitarian community across the globe. WFP/UNHAS services include air passenger services for humanitarian workers in areas where there is no safe alternative transport option and the transportation of life saving humanitarian relief items and support equipment in emergency situations where surface means are not feasible and commercial air cargo movement is not available.
6. Air assets deployed in humanitarian relief or emergency operations by WFP/UNHAS are contracted through commercial air operators, based on the specific requirements of the operation and the conditions in the country.
7. In recent large emergencies such as the Myanmar floods of 2008, the Philippines cyclone of 2009, the Haiti hurricane in 2008 and earthquake in 2010 and the Pakistan floods of 2010, WFP/UNHAS helicopter assets were vital in ensuring the delivery of life saving relief items to affected populations who could not otherwise be reached using surface transports means. In emergency situations such as these the timely deployment of air assets was essential for the humanitarian community to respond to the emergency and carry out life saving activities.
8. For the emergency operations mentioned above the lead-time for mobilizing the required helicopters and having them operational in the field, was between seven and twenty one day. This includes the time to charter an aircraft to position the helicopter assets, dismantling and reassembling on arrival (at a minimum rotors need to be removed) plus mandatory test flights. The helicopters WFP/UNHAS used in Haiti in 2010, for example, were deployed from the Ukraine, as were the majority of the helicopters deployed to the Pakistan flood response that same year. In order to improve the humanitarian community's ability to respond in a timely and efficient manner and initiate life saving activities at the onset of the emergency, the lead-time for the deployment of helicopters needs to be reduced.

Project Justification

9. The continent of Africa has limited air operators whose operations and assets meet the required international safety standards, with approved operators only being found in South Africa. Many approved air operators can be found in Europe and currently WFP/UNHAS relies primarily on operators in Eastern Europe and South Africa for the contracting of helicopter assets worldwide. There are air operators in Asia and South America but these companies have not been assessed by WFP's Aviation Safety Unit for compliance with international safety standards, may lack the necessary aviation certificates and permits, nor be familiar with humanitarian air operations or the requirements for working with WFP/UNHAS. This means that these operators cannot be quickly contracted for the deployment of helicopters and crew to emergency response operations.

10. Without the adequate availability of air assets locally, it may be necessary to freight helicopters long distances from outside the region. This requires the chartering of large cargo aircraft to preposition and deposition the helicopter assets. The type of cargo aircraft suitable for this purpose are limited in number on the commercial market and are in high demand, especially from the large multinational military forces. Once the cargo aircraft has been secured the helicopter assets need to be partially dismantled in order to fit inside the body of the cargo aircraft. After the helicopter assets have arrived in the theatre of operation they need to be re-assembled by specialist personnel and mandatory test flights need to take place. Apart from the obvious expense this is a time consuming process.
11. During large sudden onset emergencies there can be high demand for helicopter assets in the commercial market. This demand may come not only from the humanitarian sector, but also the military, oil and gas industry, peace-keeping missions and civil protection entities. While the increased demand may affect deployment lead times due to poor availability of assets, unfortunately it also drives up the charter rates and increases of between 50 and 100 percent are not unusual.
12. The issues described above which contribute to the lead times involved with the deployment of helicopter assets could be overcome using a two-pronged approach. Firstly, a standby fleet, pre-contracted by WFP/UNHAS and based in a regional hub could serve the needs of the Humanitarian Community in that region within an immediate deployment radius of 3,500km. Without the need for secondary cargo aircraft for prepositioning, and the requisite dismantling and reassembly, the assets could be operational within the region within 24 hours and at a much reduced cost. The standby fleet could also be deployed to areas further afield, beyond the 3,500 km radius, if necessary with the use of a secondary cargo aircraft. While the prepositioning would still be costly, the availability and contracted rate of the helicopter would be guaranteed.
13. WFP/UNHAS stand-by fleet will be based in Entebbe airport in Uganda. As mentioned earlier, the only approved air operators in Africa are based in South Africa. In addition to this Africa continues to be the theatre of multiple natural and man-made disasters, such as civil conflicts, floods and droughts and pandemics which, coupled with the level of development in most African countries, make them vulnerable to disasters. Entebbe is a geographically central location, from where MI-8 helicopters can be deployed by their own means as far afield as Pakistan and Madagascar and all of continental Africa. Furthermore Civil Aviation Authorities in Uganda still accept the operations of Ilyushin 76 aircraft without restriction, which is the only aircraft suitable for the long-distance airlift of two MI-8 helicopters. Entebbe is also centrally located in regards to other regional aviation offices such as WFP Aviation, United Nations Department of Field Support (UNDFS) and ECHO Flight.
14. The second part of the approach would be to minimise the need for costly prepositioning of helicopter assets by increasing the number of locally available air operators in regions such as Asia and South America who have been pre-screened and "rostered" for immediate deployment with WFP/UNHAS. Air operators who work with WFP/UNHAS need to not only meet the required safety

standards, they also need to be familiar with the WFP's aviation contracting procedures, deployment and operational requirements that are particular to a humanitarian operation, and have all the necessary permits and clearances in place for a rapid deployment to the theatre of operations. A range of pre-screening, awareness raising and "readiness" activities with the air operators would increase the capacity of WFP/UNHAS to contract and deploy helicopter assets locally and within the short time frame required in emergency situations. In addition to working with local air operators, response times could be further reduced by carrying out preparedness and awareness-raising activities with local civil aviation authorities and national disaster management entities in disaster prone countries.

Project Implementation

15. Through this special operation WFP Aviation will contract a stand-by fleet of two medium-lift helicopters (MI-8T), with the crew and support staff, to be based in Entebbe, Uganda. The helicopters will fly under their own power for deployments within a 3,500 kilometer radius of Entebbe. Beyond this distance, the helicopters will be positioned in the area of operation through the chartering of a secondary cargo aircraft.
16. The helicopter fleet will be on standby for rapid mobilization to emergency operations regionally and, if required, globally. The MI-8 T offers a payload of 2.5 metric tons with up to 19 seats. Its range of 5 hours or 500 kilometers is suitable to meet the requirements for assessments, staff movement and cargo deliveries during the initial phase of an emergency.
17. The mobilized helicopters will be deployed to the theatre of operation with a mobile re-fuelling system and equipment for to support sling operations if required. This will increase the capacity of the helicopters to operate from rudimentary field bases when necessary.
18. Funds from this special operation will cover the operational costs for the first month of deployment of each helicopter when deployed in support of emergency operations, up to a maximum of 3 months per helicopter per year. If a helicopter is required beyond the one month period the operational costs for the additional months will need to be budgeted under an alternate, country specific project. This funding approach will give the added flexibility of allowing assets to be deployed at the immediate onset of an emergency when projects and funding mechanisms remain to be established. If the frequency of deployment of the standby fleet to emergencies exceeds the three month per helicopter per year, the project budget will be revised and additional donor funding will be sought.
19. In order to maximise the operational and cost effectiveness of the helicopter fleet, the assets will also be offered for use by the Humanitarian Community outside of periods of emergency response. Under these circumstances the use of the helicopters will be on a full cost recovery basis with the users being invoiced for the costs incurred and the funds being returned to the special operation. Any such request for use of the fleet will be carefully assessed and subject to approval to

ensure that readiness and capacity for timely emergency response is not negatively impacted.

20. WFP/UNHAS will establish an Aviation Emergency Response office in Entebbe, Uganda and assign a Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) who will be responsible for the management of the stand-by fleet. WFP/UNHAS presence in Asia and Central and South America will be expanded with the deployment of Aviation Emergency Response Officers to be based in Subang or Bangkok (for Asia) and Panama (for Central and South America). The Emergency Response Officers will report to the CATO in Entebbe and together this team will be known as the Aviation Emergency Cell. The Aviation Emergency Cell will:

- Manage the stand-by fleet and coordinate the deployment of the air assets both regionally and globally as required;
- Assess requests for deployment of the helicopter fleet (on a cost recovery basis) outside of times of emergency response operations in order to ensure the readiness and response capacity of the standby fleet will not be negatively impacted;
- Through regionally based Aviation Emergency Response Officers, increase the number of approved air operators available for emergency response operations by identifying and proposing appropriate local air operators to the WFP Aviation Safety Unit for evaluation and registration as providers of local, regional and global aviation services;
- Raise awareness amongst the new air operators with respect to WFP/UNHAS procedures, deployment modalities and operational practices to ensure they can be contracted and deployed in the short time frames required thereby developing regional rosters which will reduce the need for the deployment of air assets from outside the region.
- Enhance coordination and mobilisation mechanisms with existing national and regional emergency response entities such as civil aviation authorities and disaster management agencies in disaster prone countries as a preparedness measure to facilitate fast operational set-ups in times of emergency, entering into pre-agreements where possible;
- Coordinate with humanitarian actors including the UNHRD network and the Logistics Cluster to ensure maximum operational “readiness”;
- As a preparedness measure, carry out aviation logistics capacity assessments in order to ensure accurate and up to date information on aviation infrastructure, support services and operational procedures in countries considered high risk in terms of likelihood of future emergencies which will be crucial to the timely deployment of aviation assets, especially in remote areas.
- Remain abreast of policies and regulations for permits and clearances to allow foreign registered aircraft operations in the respective countries. Organise yearly training sessions for WFP staff involved in aviation emergency response, as well as rostered consultants and standby partners that could be called upon as surge capacity.

21. Emergency deployment kits, comprised of laptop, satellite phone, mobile phone, navigator, and VHF airband radio will be made readily available for immediate operability of Aviation Teams.

Management structure

22. The WFP Aviation Unit (ODLA), based in Rome, will be responsible for the contracting and provision of aircraft and crew for the operation. The Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO), based in Uganda, will manage the operational activities. The WFP Chief of Aviation (ODLA), based in Rome, will act as the funds manager for this Special Operation while the Head of Aviation Business Unit, ODLA will be the Allotment Manager.
23. The decision to deploy helicopters from the standby fleet shall be the responsibility of the Chief of Aviation in consultation with stakeholders including the Humanitarian Coordinator's Office in the country concerned.

Sustainability and Exit Strategy

24. The aviation emergency response capacity activities will be initially established for 18 months till the end of January 2013. In the later half of the project an evaluation will be undertaken to assess the impact of the special operation and look at self-sustainability options which would allow the phase out of the special operation project category as the funding mechanism of the standby fleet.

Project Cost and Benefits

25. The project funding is expected to be raised through donor contributions and partially recovered from the emergency operations whenever the helicopters are activated. The special operation is for duration of 18 months, from 15 July 2011 to 31 December 2012, at a total budgeted cost of US\$ 9,337,398.
26. The humanitarian community will benefit globally from reduced lead times for the deployment of helicopter assets at the onset of emergency response operations where surface transport means is not feasible. This will facilitate the timely delivery of life-saving relief items to affected populations.

Monitoring & Evaluation

27. Key performance indicators will be reported at the end of the project and will include the following:
 - Number of emergencies supported with a target of three emergencies per year
 - Helicopter deployment timeframe from call forward of standby capacity to commencement of operations in the emergency theatre.
 - Number of new air operators added to the aviation roster and familiar with WFP/UNHAS contracting, deployment and operational procedures.
 - Number of WFP staff and aviation surge capacity personnel trained on aviation related emergency response procedures and modalities.
28. The CATO will provide regular operational reports to the Chief of WFP Aviation in Rome and other stakeholders as required.

Recommendation

This Special Operation, covering the period from 15 July 2011 to 31 December 2012, at a total cost to WFP of US\$9,337,398, is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josette Sheeran', written over a dotted line.

Josette Sheeran
Executive Director

27/7/11