

13 October 2020

Organizations in attendance

CHAI, DRC, FAO, IAEA, ICAO, ICRC, ICVA, IFAD, IFRC, IMC, IMO, IRC, MSF, OCHA, UNDOS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS, WFP, WHO

Opening

- The co-chairs opened the meeting by updating the Task Force members that the official communication regarding the phase-out of the free-to-user cargo service has now been shared with all partners. More information was provided by WFP during the course of the meeting.
- WHO provided an epidemiology update: currently, with 2.2 million cases, infections rates seem to be dynamically increasing in most regions.
- Particularly, increased transmission rates are being observed in the EURO and EMRO regions, whilst, death rates have increased for the AFRO region. Conversely, the South East Asia region only seems to be having a decrease in infection rates.
- The co-chairs highlighted that efforts are being strengthened on the coordination with the ACT-Accelerator for therapeutics, diagnostics and the rollout of possible clinical trials.

Update on the independent review of the CSCS

- The Yellow House (TYH), the company that has been hired to conduct the independent review of the COVID-19 Supply Chain System (CSCS), provided an overview on the exercise - purpose and goals - and an update on the progress made so far.
- The study will mainly pivot around two main lines of inquiry:
 1. CSCS priorities: coordinated demand, purchasing and streamlined delivery, and
 2. CSCS main enablers and governance: information and knowledge management and communication, and the management of the Supply Portal.
- A Joint Steering Committee (JSC) was formed and kick-off. This is chaired by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) with members from some of the main actors involved in the response.
- The review is planned to be finalized by early December, but this timeline could be extended should the timeline not suffice to define a concrete analysis.
- The methodology of the study will focus on obtaining information using both quantitative and qualitative data. This will be gathered through a desk review, a survey and an interview process.
- It was noted that the review will not include any analysis regarding financial and human resources due to wide breadth of these items and difficulty in framing around the different pillars of demand, supply and distribution.

13 October 2020

- Some participants asked whether the study will also look at the aspects of the system that can be used to inform future responses to a pandemic including inputs into the transitions towards the Act-Accelerator. This will be considered by the reviewers.

Updates (WHO, WFP, Consortia Leads)

Supplies

- In terms of PPE, a large volume of cargo is being prepared for shipment mostly by partners, hence most PPE items will be delivered making use of the free-to-user services. It was however noted that the examination gloves are facing longer lead times.
- Procurement of biomedical items continue at its own pace, given the technical complexity both in terms of the items themselves and the handling capacity needed.
- Biomed is currently in the process of procuring a PSA plant, which requires even longer lead times, consequently this equipment may not qualify for the free-to-use services from WFP.
- For diagnostics, negotiations are currently ongoing around pricing and access of the antigen-based RDTs to low and middle-income countries and the pillar is working together with the ACT-Accelerator diagnostic pillar on negotiating pricing access and into the possibility of replicating the allocation model currently used by the consortium.

PPE

- The PPE consortium updated the task force on the completion of the technical evaluations of the 586 offers received. This was possible thanks to the collaborative efforts of the concerned UN agencies.
- LTAs are currently in the process of being established for coveralls, aprons, gloves and gowns; these LTAs will complement the already established LTAs for the respirators, type two surgical masks, facials and coveralls.
- Finally, additional offers from suppliers are under review for gloves and gowns for supplementary purposes.

Diagnostics

- Since April the consortia has delivered around 16 million tests country covering all products.
- Phase two of the products allocation has now been shared with regions and countries. Consequently, the consortium intends to move forward with procurements over the next few weeks.
- FAQ on allocation phases have now been updated and will be posted online.
- It was noted that the supply for manual tests and sample collection kits exceeds the supply. However, a major constrain exists with unmet demand for the automatic tests.

13 October 2020

- The two antigen-based RDTs that are on the emergency list have now been approved and are being requested through the Supply Portal by countries. These two products have been added to the supply catalogue.
- The consortium is currently working on consolidating the demand for these tests as well and countries can also receive support in procuring the tests through WHO, the Global Fund, PAHO, UNDP and UNICEF or the WHO Supply Portal.

Common services

Passenger

- To date, over 24,000 passengers have been transported to 67 destinations, serving 384 partners (45% UN, 43% NGO and 12% donors and diplomats).
- As commercial options become available, requests for passenger services gradually decline; weekly flights have seen a decline from a peak of 115 flights in July to 13 flights this month. Consequently, WFP has discontinued the services to 40 destinations and is currently serving only in 18 destinations.
- WFP stressed that the passenger and medivac services will continue to operate until the end of the year, especially for areas that remain difficult to reach.

Cargo

- Over 76,000 m³ of COVID-19 related cargo has been dispatched, 62,000 m³ of that was delivered via free-to-user services to 158 countries on behalf of 42 partners.
- WFP noted that given the remaining volumes, either booked or in the pipeline - which represent less than half of what has been moved so far -, availability of commercial services, the gradual decline in the requests for transport, as well as budget constraints, the phase out of cargo operations has to be defined.
- To this end, WFP has shared an official communication detailing the phase-out of free-to-user cargo services and a notice has been posted on the homepage of the [ESM platform](#) to inform users on the deadlines to request cargo movements.
- The official deadline for requesting transportation is 31 October 2020 for cargo ready to be moved latest on 30 November. While these deadlines are final, WFP will maintain a certain degree of flexibility based on the type of commodities, cargo and destinations.
- A Q&A session on the phase-out of the free-to-user cargo services is being organized by WFP for Friday 16 October; all ESM users have been invited.

AOB

- The next Task Force meeting will be held on 27 October.