Executive Summary

Hurricane Irma, category 5 storms in the Atlantic Ocean made landfall on the islands of the Caribbean through 7 to 10 September 2017. Whilst full extent of the damage is still unknown, estimated 1.2 million people\(^1\) have been affected, and 70-90 percent of houses and buildings have been badly damaged in the islands due to storm surge, high waves and hurricane-force winds causing severe flooding, mudslides and flash floods. Basic infrastructure have been severely affected, especially in Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda, Guadeloupe, the British Virgin Islands, US Virgin Islands, St. Martin, Sint Maarten, St. Kitts and Nevis and Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) for which assessments are ongoing.

As of 6 September, OCHA had deployed a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to Barbados to support Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) in the regional response across the Caribbean. A large supply chain operation in coordination with CDEMA, different international, regional and national organizations and the United Nations System is anticipated to ensure access to the affected population.

Through this Special Operation, WFP, in its capacity as Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster\(^2\) lead, and with its supply chain expertise in the area of aviation and shipping, aims to support the national government response to the emergency in the region by delivering the life-saving relief items, and providing access to the affected people. The Special Operation also aims to support CDEMA and Office of Disaster Preparedness Emergency Management (ODPEM) of the Government of Jamaica for enhancing their preparedness capacity for the hurricane season.

The special operation thus provides for:

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\(^2\) No formal request for Logistics Cluster / Emergency and Telecommunications (ET) Cluster activation has been received, however Logistics and ET Working Group elements are included in this SO as a contingency measure.
• Logistics sector coordination, GIS mapping and information management for the logistics response;
• Logistics augmentation including: Setup of a coordination hub in TCI and in Antigua supported by its supply chain support office, as required, respectively in Dominican Republic and Guadeloupe for additional storage and cargo reception facilities, sea cargo services using a coastal vessel and a landing craft, possible air service support (cargo and passengers), for an initial period of one month, and assessments for emergency infrastructural repairs for emergency access;
• Additional storage of appx. 8,000 mt and transport services to different hubs to support delivery of humanitarian food and non-food items to the affected population;
• Provision of emergency telecommunications required for the humanitarian community;
• Supply chain coordination activities in Barbados through establishment of a liaison office to augment CDEMA’s emergency preparedness and response capacity while supporting Antigua hub’s operations;
• Provision of support to Office of Disaster Preparedness Emergency Management (ODPEM) of the Government of Jamaica;
• Regional airlifts of NFIs from UNHRD Panama to the affected areas or to hubs, and deployment of Rapid Response Team (RRT)

This special operation will have an initial duration of 3 months at a total estimated cost of **US$ 11,786,462**.

**Project Background**

1. Hurricane Irma, catastrophic category 5 Atlantic hurricane, followed by Hurricane Jose, catastrophic category 4 Atlantic hurricanes, hit several Caribbean islands (with some islands close to 80% infrastructure damages) during 7th to 10th September 2017. Its maximum sustained wind of 285 km/h (180 mph) and torrential rain caused extensive damages to the basic infrastructures, including water and electrical infrastructures, with extensive flooding cutting road access to the affected areas.
2. An estimated 1.2 million people has been affected, however, an exact impact yet to be known as the assessment exercises are on-going. Some islands and territories are without electricity, water and damages have been reported to roads, ports, etc. Based on OCHA report3, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, St Martin/St Maarten, the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos are the most affected islands. Critical needs in supplies and support are being addressed around the clock. Early assessments estimate economic losses totaling US$10 billion across the affected islands, affecting the livelihood of people.

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Project Justification

3. The magnitude of the disaster, number of people affected, lack of information available and the geographical distance of the islands call for a coordinated and efficient response from the international community to avoid bottlenecks and possible overlaps. Logistics Rapid Response Team (RRT) and emergency telecommunications staff to support humanitarian actors on the ground has been deployed, and additional staff will be deployed to support the response.

4. The wind and rain has caused significant damage to the infrastructure, and WFP, working together with the government and other humanitarian partners, will assess and identify the key areas where emergency repair can be made to ensure transportation of relief items to otherwise inaccessible areas.

5. Temporary operational/coordination hubs are required to provide support to clusters of neighboring islands. These will be established in Antigua to cover the Eastern Caribbean and Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) to cover the western sector of the Caribbean. The expected volumes of relief items being brought into the affected countries, in conjunction with damaged infrastructure and limited access, will require establishment of staging areas for TCI to be based in Dominican Republic and for Guadeloupe covering Antigua and Barbuda.

6. Additionally, as some areas are completely cut-off, this Special Operation makes provision for the delivery of vital humanitarian cargo to isolated locations with a chartered vessel and landing crafts as well as possible air service support (cargo and passengers), for an initial period of one month.

7. The fundamental information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in the area of operations has been damaged. The disruption to the telecommunications infrastructure and services, particularly in remote rural areas, makes communications difficult and potentially impacts the safety, security and operational capability of a coordinated humanitarian response. It is likely that new temporary common inter-agency office facilities will be established to accommodate multiple humanitarian agencies supporting the National Emergency Operation Centres. This special operation will equip the offices with the requisite ICT infrastructure and related services to meet the individual requirements of the various agencies.

8. In view of the scale of the disaster, WFP urgently needs to augment its supply chain and emergency telecommunications capacity to ensure sufficient assets and staff are in place to support the humanitarian community, especially given that WFP is not present in these islands, territories and states.

9. The Special Operation aims to support governments in the Caribbean with their life-saving relief activities during the critical first months following the hurricanes. By liaising with CDEMA as well as national disaster management structures for a coordinated response, WFP aims to augment and strengthen emergency preparedness capacity of the national and supra-national government entities in the hurricane-prone region that may require continued future coordination, and thus,
achieve its corporate strategic goal of strengthening local capacity and building partnership.

**Project Objectives**

10. The main objectives of this operation are to:

- Enhance coordination, predictability, timeliness and efficiency of the emergency logistics response through establishment of a logistics support offices and working groups.
- Support the delivery of humanitarian aid to affected population by augmenting the logistics capacity by:
  - Deployment of supply chain (logistics and procurement) staff to consolidate, coordinate and transport humanitarian cargo across the different islands, the biggest challenge during the initial SO period;
  - Deployment of emergency telecommunications staff and installation of network infrastructure for the government and a wider humanitarian community;
  - Coordinating strategic airlifts through the staging area and other air cargo services, including contracting commercial airfreight should the service be available, for initial one month;
  - Provision of coastal shipping services that consists of a landing craft and a coastal vessel for initial two months of the response;
  - Setting up of temporary coordination hubs for TCI and for Antigua, with possible support offices respectively in Dominican Republic and in Guadeloupe consisting of storage facilities and office space;
  - Carrying out assessments for emergency road and bridge repairs.
- Make available reliable and independent data and voice communications services which are recognized as a priority for a successful humanitarian response.
- Augment data and voice connectivity as the existing structure will be stretched to capacity by the surge of humanitarian personnel.
- WFP will support local, regional and national Governments in the design and management of an emergency supply chains and in finding solutions to logistics bottlenecks.
- Provide an uninterrupted supply of critical life-saving and life-sustaining goods and services to those affected in the Caribbean region.

**Project Implementation**

This special operation accommodates the essential logistics and emergency telecommunications requirements to ensure the delivery of key relief items to the affected population and the necessary operational support to the humanitarian community for its crisis response. Given the rapidly evolving situation on the ground, the below implementation plan may be revised as necessary. The activities will include:

1) *Interagency Logistics Coordination – Logistics Working Group*
11. Through a Logistics Working Group, WFP aims to provide logistics coordination and information management support, as well as facilitating the handling of the incoming cargo based on the priority set by CDEMA.

12. Logistics Rapid Response Teams (RRT) have been deployed to TCI, Antigua, Sint Maarten and Barbados to work with CDEMA and local governments at their operation centers in coordination with partners on the ground. The primary objective of this technical assistance will be to assess the requirements, coordinate the logistics operation and facilitate access to common logistics services, and provide information management, cargo tracking, as well as GIS mapping services.

13. WFP, in support of CDEMA and national governments, will liaise with the national and international military entities, to coordinate on civil military issues, focusing primarily on logistics operational and strategic coordination for the use of military assets in relief activities.

14. Humanitarian cargo moved by the following services will be dispatched based on priorities set by WFP and other actors on the ground.

2) Establishment of operational and coordination hubs in TCI and Antigua and Liaison office in Barbados

15. Main operational and coordination hubs to support the overall humanitarian response will be established in TCI and Antigua. These hubs will provide logistics and emergency telecommunications coordination and support to neighboring islands.

16. A liaison hub in Barbados will be established to support the two operational hubs in Antigua and TCI in support of CDEMA to provide for immediate assistance with staffing and logistics resources based on identified gaps.

17. A support office in Guadeloupe covering Antigua and Barbuda will be established as required, in anticipation of damages to some airports in the Caribbean region and expected congestions for cargo handling in case airports in Anguilla and Barbuda cannot cope with the amount of humanitarian supplies being brought into the country. WFP will leverage on a possible support office in Pointe-a-Pitre in Guadeloupe where an international airport is present. The support office will be established, as required, to support the air and ocean transport operations within the region to the affected countries.

18. A support office for TCI will be established, as required, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, to enable support and response to these islands where WFP has no operational presence.

4) Set-up of storage capacity in the hubs

19. Storage capacity in affected islands will be augmented up to 8,000 mt through installation of Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) to support the common storage.
20. Free-to-user storages may be provided for the initial 3 months, subject to requirement and funding availability.

5) Shipping Services

23. Depending on the response required and the extent of the damage to port infrastructures, accessibility by land, etc., WFP will provide a landing craft and Ro/Ro (both of which have roll-on-roll off capabilities) to ensure delivery of humanitarian supplies to coastal affected areas in TCI for a period of two months.

24. In addition, depending on the nature, volume of the cargo and having sea transport capability that require better cargo protection, WFP could charter one Coastal vessels that will operate within the affected areas to be based in the Dominican Republic and Guadeloupe respectively.

25. WFP may also provide assistance and expertise on the shipping operations and Maritime coordination side given the nature of the disaster struck area.

6) Provision of Air Passenger and Light Cargo Services

21. Air support is urgently required to enable the humanitarian community to access affected locations which are cut off due to damaged port, bridges and blocked roads caused by severe flooding.

22. This Special Operation caters for passenger and light cargo transportation for a one month period. The air asset will be either based in Dominican Republic to serve/support TCI, and other affected areas as required. A second air service could be envisaged to be positioned in Antigua to support Barbuda, Anguilla, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Martin, Sint Maarten and Montserrat. Also, WFP regional coordination hub will be based in Panama to provide for airlift support in delivering life-saving humanitarian food and non-food items from UNHRD to the areas where necessary.

23. The deployment of the air services will enable movement of aid workers and light cargo such as emergency communications equipment and medicines to remote areas with limited facilities for fixed-wing operations, as well as to conduct rapid needs assessments for the humanitarian community.

24. The air service is expected to support various organizations including CDEMA, NGOs, UN agencies, and donor institutions to facilitate the emergency response. Ample flexibility will be maintained to adapt the operational set-up to the changing requirements of the humanitarian response. This include the possibility to work with the local private sector on commercial or pro bono bases.

25. The Aviation component will be implemented through standard WFP management structures and support systems and regularly reviewed in accordance with standard procedures in order to minimize risks and ensure
operational efficiency. WFP will coordinate with other humanitarian air service provides as necessary to ensure synergy and economies of scale.

7) Emergency Telecommunications

In support of emergency telecommunications, following activities may be implemented:

26. Already existing capacities in regards with both technical human resources deployment will be augmented to ensure full operational status of the staging areas, as well as support the increase of connectivity and bandwidth requirements, including provision of support where required. Two teams with VSAT equipment and other connectivity equipment will be initially deployed to support in collaboration with CDEMA and Department of Disaster Management & Emergencies.

27. Emergency Telecommunication services to the humanitarian community will be provided to ensure gaps are filled while reducing duplication of efforts. Operational ICT facilities and infrastructure will allow humanitarian workers to better coordinate assessments, rescue and relief operations in all affected areas in the Caribbean islands.

28. Enhanced coordination and provision of IT/ET related Information Management, Public Information and Communications activities and deliverables as well as an assessment to identify needs for Service for Communities.

29. Provide leadership to the ICT by organizing and chairing the working group meetings in order to better strategically coordinate the continuous identification of ICT problems and solutions adequate to ensure delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Project Cost and Benefits

30. The estimated project cost is US$ 11,786,462.

31. This Special Operation is intended to prevent and alleviate gaps and bottlenecks in the humanitarian logistics response and provide an uninterrupted supply of life-saving and life-sustaining goods and services to those affected in the Caribbean region, and to support the re-establishment fundamental information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in areas of operations. The 2017 hurricane season would be particularly challenging for the Caribbean Region, the SO would also contribute to increase the resilience and expedite the response should additional extreme meteorological events strike the islands.

32. The WFP Regional Director in Panama will be the Funds Manager for the Special Operation and the WFP Regional Finance Officer in Panama will be the Allotment Manager. The Regional Bureau will appoint an Special Operations Emergency Coordinator who will be responsible for the overall implementation of project activities.
**Monitoring & Evaluation**

33. The key performance indicators will be:

- Number of logistics coordination hubs, staging areas and a liaison hub established (5)
- Percentage of service requests to handle, store and/or transport cargo fulfilled (85%)
- Number of agencies and organizations utilizing transport and storage services (20)
- Number of bulletins, maps, and other logistics information products produced and shared (30)
- Meet with the partners on a weekly basis and accordingly meet with the governmental counterparts to coordinate frequency management procedures (12)
- Organizations receiving common services and responding to a user survey rate service satisfaction as 70% customer satisfaction one month into the emergency 90% customer satisfaction before deactivation.
- Number of common operational areas provided access to voice and data communications services (3) (5 if support offices are established)
- Number of common operational areas provided with telecommunications network (3)
- Organizations receiving services on Emergency Telecommunication and responding to a user survey rate service satisfaction of 80% or above
- Number of Infrastructure assessments completed in support of WFP and humanitarian operations (15)

34. Operational reports will be provided on a regular basis.

35. The humanitarian situation will be monitored and assessed on a regular basis to capture any necessary changes in a budget revision in due time should this be deemed necessary.

**Risk Analysis and Contingency Planning**

36. Demands for storage and transportation exceed current forecasts
   This risk will be mitigated through:
   - Continued assessment of availability of adequate commercial transportation and storage facilities; and
   - Availability of prepositioned equipment in UNHRD Panama to meet the needs of the humanitarian community.

37. Customs / transit delays for ICT equipment arrival that might delay planned work
   - In regard to the importation and licensing of telecommunications equipment, discussions on clearance and licensing of required approvals will be initiated at the very onset of the response.
Recommendation

This Special Operation for provision of Supply Chain and Emergency Telecommunications Augmentation and Coordination in support of the Caribbean Islands impacted by Hurricanes Irma covering the period of 3 months from 13 September to 12 December 2017 at a total cost to WFP of US$ 11,786,462 is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

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David Beasley
Executive Director