

BRIEFING PAPER – UNSOLICITED DONATIONS HAITI

1. Objective

The purpose of this paper is to **provide guidance for governments, commercial enterprises, NGOs, civil society organisations and other entities considering sending donations to Haiti** in support of the emergency response to the earthquake.

2. Background

Experience of recent emergencies has shown that an international commitment to assist those affected by conflict and sudden-onset disasters, whilst vital for rehabilitation of affected nations, has also resulted in donations of goods accumulating at ports and airports, instead of being delivered to beneficiaries.

In order for humanitarian aid to be of the most benefit to affected populations, **donations should be well-planned with national authorities and the humanitarian community coordinating the relief effort and fully compliant with national requirements for the importation of goods.** Cargo that lacks documentation and adequate planning for onward delivery **may have an adverse effect on the relief effort** by taking up scarce resources, such as aircraft landing slots or storage space, and can place an **additional logistics burden** on organisations working on the ground.

Humanitarian aid delivered during the **initial phase of the response** must also **correspond with priorities for life-saving supplies set by the government of Haiti and the Humanitarian Country Team** and be necessary and appropriate for intended beneficiaries.

Within the context of the Haiti earthquake response, this paper outlines **practical measures donors can take to avoid the build-up of Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs)** in Haiti and to ensure that the intentions of the international community to assist those in need are fully realised.

3. BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR DONATION OF HUMANITARIAN RELIEF ITEMS

3.1 Consignee – who will receive the cargo?

- Humanitarian aid sent to Haiti **must be addressed to an entity as the intended recipient** (consignee). This can be a local or international NGO or UN agency or other entity who, **by prior arrangement**, has agreed to take responsibility for arranging collection of the cargo once it arrives at the port or airport and for onward delivery and distribution to beneficiaries.
- Sending goods addressed to “*The people of Haiti*” will not be sufficient.
- Aircraft carrying cargo **without a consignee will not be allocated a slot for landing** at Port-au-Prince airport. In the past cargo arriving at the airport with no consignee to organise collection took up valuable ramp and storage space, preventing other incoming aircraft from offloading.

3.2 Documentation – does this meet requirements for entry into Haiti?

- All cargo, including humanitarian relief items arriving in Haiti or the Dominican Republic must be accompanied by the **correct documentation in order to be accepted by the port and airport authorities, customs and others.**
- Basic documentation required for relief consignments includes the following:
 - **Detailed packing list / manifest**
 - **Airway bills or bills of lading**
 - **Letter of donation**

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- **Health certificate (if required)**
 - **Non-commercial invoice**
 - **Certificate of origin**
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- Even though importation taxes and duties do not currently apply to humanitarian cargo entering Haiti and the Dominican Republic, there is still a requirement for minimum documentation as stated above.
 - **Lack of documentation may result in cargo being refused entry to Haiti and Dominican Republic** or onwards movement being delayed for failure to meet requirements of local authorities such as customs, ministry of finance and/or ministry of agriculture etc.
 - The Haitian Government Department of Civil Protection takes the final decision on whether to allow entry of humanitarian goods into Haiti.

3.3 Coordination with humanitarian organisations on the ground – is this type of aid a priority?

- The humanitarian community in Haiti is responsible for **setting priorities for the types of humanitarian aid entering Haiti**, to ensure that **all resources are focused on the delivery of life-saving or life-enabling materials**, rather than on delivering aid that will be needed later.
- The humanitarian community is organised into sectors (called Clusters) such as health, water and sanitation, shelter etc. Each cluster lead organisation has a focal point who works with a group of similar organisations to coordinate the delivery of specific types of goods. A list of focal points is posted at
- http://3w.unocha.org/WhoWhatWhere/clusterLeadList.php?uSite=ocha_haiti_earthquake&repId=2
- Potential donors **should consult the cluster focal point before sending donations**, to get advice on whether the **type of relief item is a priority at that time**; is indeed a requirement for the response and is **appropriate for the affected population**.
- **Examples of issues to consider:** Before sending food it is important to verify whether the necessary cooking equipment is available; Do medicines and vaccines require transportation and storage at specific temperatures, in which case they may be unusable upon arrival; Are donations of clothes appropriate for the climate; Is electronic equipment compatible with local power supply?

Special note on donations of infant formula

- In accordance with internationally accepted guidelines, **donations and distribution of infant formula, bottles and teats and other powdered or liquid milk and milk products should not be made**. Any **procurement** of breast milk substitutes should be based on careful needs assessment **in coordination with the Haitian Ministry of Public Health (MSPP) and UNICEF**. All queries regarding donations should be directed to UNICEF, the designated agency coordinating nutrition in Haiti. Human milk donations require fully functioning cold chains. As these conditions are not currently met in Haiti, human milk donations cannot be used at present. The uncontrolled use of these products could endanger infants' lives.

3.4 Support from the Logistics Cluster – does the donation qualify?

- Donors **requesting assistance from the Logistics Cluster** in the Dominican Republic or Haiti for storage or transport of humanitarian relief **must first ensure the above conditions relating to consignee, full documentation and coordination with the relevant sector/cluster focal point are met**.

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- Complete information about the **sending entity** is required; the Logistics Cluster provides support to **humanitarian organisations**.
- Cargo must be **packaged to withstand all stages of handling without breaking** (e.g. offloading from aircraft; storage; loading onto trucks or aircraft for onward transport and final offloading at point of distribution) and be clearly labelled with full details of the consignee.
- At least 48 hours notice must be given for requests for storage or transport.
- Information and forms for requesting Logistics Cluster support are posted at <http://www.logcluster.org/ops/hti10a>

For more information on any of these issues please contact: Haiti@logcluster.org