HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS ASSOCIATION (HLA)

7TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Hosted by:
Humanitarian Logistics Association (HLA)
Trademark Hotel, Village Market, Nairobi
1st October 2019

Sponsored by:

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Acknowledgement

Special thanks to all our sponsors without whom we would not have achieved such a successful event. They are, ASTRAL Aviation, BOLLORE Logistics, TRISTAR, SKYLIFE and TECHNO Relief. Our appreciation to all the organizations and individuals from various organizations who took time to attend and participate in the General Assembly (GA).

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To all the HLA members who were able to attend the GA, our sincere gratitude goes to all of you. We are also especially grateful to those who worked tirelessly to make the day a success including Kenneth Sang, Josephat Ngesah, Sally Deffor, Christiano Odula, Roselyn Opel, Christine Mirenja, Geoffrey Kariuki, Tikhwi Muyundo, Collins Barasa, George Fenton, and the Master of Ceremony, Nicodemus Ndeti. And last but not least, we acknowledge the service providers, Trademark Hotel for hosting the event and providing excellent services, as well as the photography and videography team, led by Daniel Nyaoke for capturing this memorable event; and finally, the printers INFOMARK TC LTD. Thank you all.
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Introduction (HLA)

HLA was registered as a UK NGO (with global remit) in 2009 and represents a global network of professionals, academics and institutions, with almost 3,000 individual and over 30 institutional members, plus a further 5,000 interested contacts.

HLA is governed by a Board of Trustees, which is supported by a voluntary Advisory Group. Both the board and advisory group are composed of humanitarian logistics experts who ensure relevance of content, and enable connections and collaborations between members, NGOs, academia, donors, public and private sectors, and local civil society.

In order to take the next steps in achieving its mission, HLA has defined a three-year strategy that will enable wider and more structured connections and solutions for improved delivery, within a defined HL (Humanitarian Logistics) standards framework. The strategy includes six integrated and linked objectives, as outlined below, which are prioritised based on value to members, resources/funding requirements, potential for income to support HLA activities, and complexity of each objective, with some objectives happening in parallel based on available resources/funding.

Objectives
1. Establish local country HLA branches
2. Leverage technology and innovative approaches in supply chain
3. Partnerships and private sector engagement to facilitate modernisation of supply chain
4. Knowledge brokerage: Creating a platform for easy access
5. Capacity development
6. Establishment of common standards

Partnerships and collaborative working relationships exist with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK and International), H2H Network, Inter Agency Procurement Group, International Association of Public Health Logisticians, Humentum and the Logistics Cluster. HLA also hosts the Partner Capacity Enhancement for Logistics (PARCEL) training material, and is in the process of linking with the Humanitarian Library project as a portal to manage HL knowledge.
Welcome Note

George Fenton, Chief Executive, HLA

Mr Fenton thanked all participants for attending the second General Assembly (GA) convened in Nairobi – the first was held in 2010. He acknowledged the importance of being able to assemble a diverse audience including so many private sector participants. The event was linked to the Africa Logistics Conference, which ran immediately after the GA at the same venue. The idea between co-locating the two events was to identify key issues facing humanitarian logistics and humanitarian logisticians, in this case focusing in East Africa.

The intended outcome of the event was to come up with three to five key issues that the participants consider as worthy of follow up, for example via future roundtable discussions, webinars and other events. In 2018, HLA focused on humanitarian aviation, which enabled the identification of issues that were discussed over the last twelve months.

Overall, Mr Fenton highlighted the importance of enhancing the public and private sector’s strategic engagement in HL and the need to:

- Emphasise the creation of linkages among HL players
- Recognise the importance of Public-Private Partnerships
- Develop the role of HLA in Kenya and wider East Africa
- Engage private sector actors in helping HLA achieve its objects

Keynote Address

Michael DeSisti, Regional Director, USAID Food for Peace

USAID FFP is located in Nairobi and is supporting 14 countries across East and Central Africa. For over 65 years, USAID has been the largest donor of food aid and has become more efficient and effective in meeting ever-increasing needs, while acknowledging that there is room for improvement. In an effort to improve food supply chains, the approach has gradually evolved to provide market based assistance in the form of cash and food vouchers and local or regionally purchased food. However, the scale of need and resilience of local markets in food insecure contexts both affect this. Therefore, food assistance may continue to be needed.

USAID’s emphasis and focus is on getting food to vulnerable populations as quickly as possible, hence the need to modernize the humanitarian supply chain, and learn from partners and private sector.

Humanitarian Logistics is critical to the efforts of USAID FFP in the Horn of Africa. In-kind food is moved through the port of Djibouti from thousands of miles away in the USA where the identification of food sources and the actual purchasing is done using competitive bidding methods. In the fiscal year ending September 2019, 440,000 MT was shipped through Djibouti.

In a bid to ensure an efficient and effective supply chain, USAID FFP has adopted three guiding principles in its efforts to modernize its supply chain, i.e. transparency, accountability and optimization. Some key questions to ask are therefore:
o How can USAID deliver food faster and effectively, and with more cost efficiency (i.e. fewer losses)?

o How can we turn our supply chain into a system that empowers those we serve, and facilitates their journey to self-reliance?

o How can we (FFP) learn from and leverage the private sector’s know-how and core expertise?

Whilst acknowledging that more can be achieved through working with partners and private sector, FFP has also taken the following steps towards modernization of the supply chain

o Launched the first inventory tracking system for prepositioning treatments

o Began using shipment visibility software to track the live locations of our vessels

o Sent the first shipment of QR coded bags to Djibouti to lay a foundation for data collection

o Has worked with MIT to study hermetically sealed bags to prevent infestation, which has been incorporated into FFP programs to ensure food is safer and of high quality

o Currently piloting a state-of-the-art technique, “Cocoons”, in the Djibouti warehouse, a low-oxygen and low-moisture environment that wraps around a large volume of bags to restrict the growth of aflatoxins

o USAID at large has stepped up private sector engagement as critical to success on the journey to self-reliance and adopted it as its new mantra. In the words of USAID FFP Administrator Mark Green, “the purpose of foreign assistance should be to end the need for its existence.”

PSE and digital strategies have been developed to maximise on innovative technology, giving the example of Nairobi where technology is thriving. There is therefore the need to leverage the potential of Nairobi as an innovation hub for ideas, technology and new partnerships.

Key Question: How do we better tap into these resources, and work with local and regional innovators? And how do we catalyse our development goals by partnering with the private sector?

Key messages from Sponsors

Jeffrey Potter, CEO Skylife Technology

SKYLIFE is revolutionizing the humanitarian logistics space through innovative ways of delivering Humanitarian aid.

Creation of the world’s fastest emergency response via prepositioning and applying technology for faster, efficient and cost-effective delivery using skyboxes to achieve its ultimate goal of saving lives.

Karl Mason, Director, International Business Development, Tristar Transport

TRISTAR has a global footprint and is present in over 100 countries

Its activities involve road transport and warehousing, fuel firms and terminal management, marine operations, applying block chain and big data technology to improve warehousing and distribution operations, commercial aviation refuelling, and also operates a fuel station in Kenya.

Mr. Mason emphasised:

● the difference between traditional logistics and humanitarian support
the importance of heeding to ethics by logisticians
- having ready-to-deploy personnel with capacity for rapid response to disaster/emergencies
- the re-emergence of air cargo ships albeit with new technologies (Hybrid Air Cargo Ships) which are more fuel efficient and cost-effective
- innovative approaches such as using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) that are remote controlled
- use of smart contracts based on blockchain technology to enhance transparency, smart camps and smart wallets.

Sanjeev Gadhia, CEO Astral Aviation
Astral Aviation has gained extensive experience flying humanitarian aid rapidly to where it is most needed, including during the recent Cyclone Idai that hit Mozambique.
The drone technology which has in the past been thought of as near impossible in HL space, is now being introduced in its operations in spite of the challenges with the regulations from governments.

Mr. Sanjeev encouraged better collaboration, communication among Humlog players and suggested that HLA should explore the possibilities of creating a common IT platform for information sharing. Capacity building for Logistics staff to enhance rapid response should therefore be a key consideration. He further demonstrated how drone technology works and emphasised the advantages such as cost and quick turnaround in response to humanitarian needs.

PANEL DISCUSSION
Moderator: George Fenton

Q1. Connecting networks: What are the key operational and relationship challenges among networks in the Humlog space?

- Lack of cooperation between programme (proposal writers) and operations staff (logistics staff as implementers) limiting the ability of humanitarian organizations to deliver value for money.
- There is too much emphasis on cost reduction.
- Most humanitarian organizations are operating in silos with the sole aim of pleasing their financiers and donors e.g. monitoring expenditure in a way that ensures the next funding.
There is a need to rethink the supply chain model by re-examining the last mile challenges. There appears to be a disconnect between what is happening in the field and the HQs. The latter do not seem to know the realities on the ground.

- Aid and Relief should not be operated as a commercial activity. Bollore Logistics have a new model where they are combining their supply chains in all the 48 countries in Africa where they have footprints, to achieve cost efficiencies. In most aid programming, only technical people are involved in proposal writing resulting in little financial allocation for operations. There is need for integrative approach between the two sides of the organizations for more effective and efficient aid delivery (Jonathan O’Connor).

**Recommendations**

- The emphasis in the HSC should shift from cost reduction to efficiency, effectiveness, delivery and impact as key to HL objectives
- Encourage private sector involvement since they are more efficient in terms of funds transfer e.g. Equity Bank and Safaricom of Kenya
- Logistics should be looked at as being beyond warehousing and distribution
- Encouraged cash programming capacity enhancement through market response assessment as a more efficient way to deliver aid
- More end-to-end visibility required in humanitarian supply chain management rather than FOB to Port of clearance, which can be managed by a single freight forwarder can deliver better value for money for beneficiaries (Jonathan O’Connor).

**Q2. What are the roles, challenges and opportunities for humanitarian, private and public sectors to develop and manage eco supply chains? (Considering SDGs and Paris Agreement)**

The Government provides support through policies and is required to help suppliers appreciate climate change. Suppliers form a large part of the supply base and therefore partnerships with the private sector would strengthen the supply chain. These partnerships can be achieved through efficient and effective communication and collaboration (Saidou Hamani).

**Challenges facing eco-supply chain (Prof. Z. Awino):**

Globalization which is expected to bring together countries to resolve climate change issues is under threat by some countries practising exclusionist practices/policies e.g. UK (Brexit) and USA (nationalization)

- Logistics play a major role in the movement of goods but organizations are not considering reverse logistics to manage the environment
- Companies are operating like silos yet emergency response depends on partnerships

There needs to be a model to synchronize all players in humanitarian supply chains

- Time has come now where Governments must operate like a business i.e. this is the new public sector theory-performance based.

**Q3) Standards – There is a belief that the correct definition of standards is “universally accepted and endorsed way of doing things”, is this true?**

Standards should be about efficiency, effectiveness, resilience. He emphasised that NGOs need to be flexible to respond to the dynamism of logistics work (Christian Georlette).
Plenary Discussions

Workshop 1: Connecting Networks, led by Jonathan O’Conner

Topic:
What are the key operational and relationship challenges among networks in the Humanitarian Logistics (HL) space?

With attention to the Sustainable Development Goals and vendor / private sector engagement, what are the key operational and relationship challenges among the sectors (public, private & aid) active in the HumLog space? What mechanisms could be used to address these challenges and how best could HLA facilitate change among networks?

Challenges

- Lack of coordination with the private sector, yet opportunities exist; encouraged to practice initiatives such as green procurement
- Inability to measure CSR’s impact on beneficiaries
- Lack of data and information sharing. Logistics clusters not sharing information in some areas and countries
- No understanding of selection criteria for partnerships, which can be resolved by mutual interest and shared values e.g. climate change is affecting all of us
- Monopolistic approaches
- The UN has systems and assets which other humanitarian organizations leverage but not for free
- Unsolicited donations affecting ability to buy/markets
- Logisticians handling dangerous items from suppliers.

Recommendations

- HLA needs to develop a common platform for information and knowledge sharing
- HLA should be more visible and grow membership to help coordinate organizations
- Logistics staff encouraged to develop smart contracts with environmental protection clauses
Topic:

What should be the scope and priorities for the work needed to map, identify gaps, endorse and compile knowledge to inform HL standards?

HLA plans a project to compile key HL standards into a single handbook to promote common minimum operational requirements (that could become a component of the ‘Sphere Standards’). The private and public sectors will have a key role to play. What are the benefits and what should be the scope?

- Standards help in developing the key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Measures efficiency and effectiveness
- Help in accountability and aligning understanding between sectors
- Priorities needed to compile and endorse knowledge
- Empower and support teams to perform important tasks.
Workshop 3: Environmentally sustainable humanitarian supply chains, led by Daniel Njenga and Josefa Zueco from WFP

**Topic:**

What are the roles, challenges and opportunities for the humanitarian, private and public sectors to develop and manage eco supply chains?

Climate change considerations: What is the role, challenge and opportunity for the humanitarian, private and public sectors to develop and manage environmentally sustainable humanitarian supply chains (HSC)? What scope is there for carbon reductions in h/logistics and effective waste management?

The first step would be to understand the meaning of sustainability in HSC
- Triple bottom line – social, economic, environmental
- Whether to focus all triple elements
- Does this concept apply to HSC?
- The issue of sustainability is related to discussion of objectives of HSC vs. Commercial
- We need to think about political ramifications of unethical / unsustainable decisions
- Commercial concept: more experienced sustainability
- Humanitarian: little experience, and no financial incentives for HOs
- Create operation systems, policy, practices – that are acceptable and long-term impact that seek to reduce environmental effects.

Efforts in Greening HSC
- Many organizations are trying to do this
- Greening is better now due to innovation and technology development
  - Material recycling
  - Replantation
  - Use of green energy
- Relief vs. development
  - Relief is more difficult, the green aspects should not be forgotten
- Engaging with partners, the concept should be more underlined
  - Suppliers, transporters, carriers, logistical providers

How can humanitarian needs help to drive private sector and their innovative solutions?
- Sharing ideas and complementing each other
- Understand financial incentives of private sectors
- Tendering process
Workshop 4: Humanitarian aviation, a localised approach, led by Sanjeev Gadhia (CEO, Astral Aviation)

Put emphasis on how to use assets to deliver humanitarian aid efficiently and effectively keeping in mind that we are dealing with real life-threatening situations.

- Lack of collaboration and communication hindering aid delivery. Areas of improvement include:
  - Communication for effective coordination between Humlog and private sector and inter-agencies
  - Preferred partnerships
  - Long Term Agreements (LTAs) with vendors – although they can also limit flexibility as has been seen among some NGOs who are locked in with some service providers
- Lack of awareness of private sector players e.g. Bollore is No 1. airfreight provider inter-Africa and no one knows about it. Private sector unaware of humanitarian needs
- Politics were also cited as a hindrance to effective supply chain management e.g. the territorial dispute between Kenya and Somalia
- Effects of logistical failure cited as the cause of the prolonged Ebola problem in DRC, a problem that should have been resolved in one month taking a year – unlike in Sierra Leone where better coordination saw quick resolution
- Armed conflict like in DRC affect distribution and transport of humanitarian aid
- Weather conditions such cyclone Idai destroyed airports and thus more innovative ways needed to deliver relief aid to the needy e.g. drones
- Civil aviation regulations a challenge to operate drone technology
- Burn-out of aid works – adequate personnel required
- Corruption
- Lack stakeholder involvement e.g. Local communities to facilitate faster delivery
- Lack of inter-cluster coordination
- Funding challenges

Topic:
How can cross-sector connectedness and information sharing at the local level be improved?

Humanitarian aviation (and freight forwarding) is vital for emergency response yet there is poor strategic coordination to ensure that suitable assets (aircraft and UAVs) are available at the right time and price, and can be used safely and efficiently. How can the capability and information sharing among local aviation stakeholders be enhanced to better connect people to markets and [relief] goods in a faster, cheaper and more efficient way in order to maximise the wider aviation sector’s role as an economic force?
Private sector plays a big role in customs clearance since it is core business for some of them. They are faster, for example, handling exemptions, providing bonded warehousing, offloading (Bolloré has done this often), thus ensuring supply chain is not interrupted.

End-to-end humanitarian logistics encouraged.

Recommendations

- HLA website should be used as a common platform where organizations can log in to find solutions or service providers.
- Collaboration and prioritizing response should be encouraged instead of organizations working in isolation and duplicating efforts. A case was cited where lack of coordination sometimes results in organizations providing similar requirements but missing out on essential ones in an emergency. HLA has a role to play in facilitating connections.
- HPCs (Humanitarian Procurement Centres) could be used to consolidate needs that could be purchased at lower prices by other humanitarian organizations – similar to a model being applied by Aviation Sans Frontiers with UN and MSF through Framework Agreements.
- Organizations need to align their requirements (UN, NGOs, Private Sector, Govts) to leverage better deals with the private sector – the objective being achieving more for less.
- HLA could facilitate or advocate strategic links between Aid clusters and the private sector.

Next steps

HLA has an important role to play in:

- Providing strong thought leadership in supporting the coordination of humanitarian logistics.
- Closing the humanitarian logistics knowledge gap.
- Expanding the HL network to improve local disaster preparedness and response capabilities.
- Convening events and forums to discuss challenges and identify solutions.
- Lobbying on behalf of members.
Links
https://parcelproject.org/
https://ciltuk.org.uk/
http://www.astral-aviation.com
http://www.tristar-group.co
http://technorelief.com
https://www.skylifetech.com
https://www.bollore-logistics.com
https://www.humanitarianlogistics.org