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INFORMATION NOTE ON THE REVIEW OF UNJLC OPERATIONS IN IRAQ



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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for information to the Executive Board.

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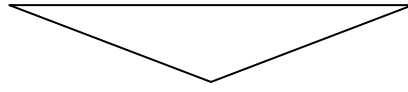
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DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of the recommendations contained in the “Information Note on the Review of UNJLC Operations in Iraq” (WFP/EB.1/2004/6-B/1).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.



INTRODUCTION

1. The magnitude and complexity of humanitarian interventions in Iraq, the important role of the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) in ensuring logistics coordination and UNJLC involvement in the preparedness and contingency planning phase warranted this comprehensive review.
2. The review is part of a trilogy that started with the Afghanistan UNJLC operation and that will be completed with the review of the Liberia UNJLC in early 2004. The objective was to identify lessons and best practices to improve application of the UNJLC concept in future deployments.
3. The review was undertaken by external consultants through the Dutch firm Royal Haskoning. WFP provided oversight through its Office of Evaluation (OEDE) in cooperation with the Surface Transport Service (OTL) and UNJLC.

THE PROCESS

4. The review is based on a participatory and collaborative approach. It was carried out in three phases: in **Phase I** — Preparatory/Documentary: Headquarters — the team reviewed documents and interviewed United Nations agency staff at the headquarters level; in **Phase II** — Learning from Action: the Field — carried out in Jordan, Syria and Kuwait, techniques such as the after-action review were used to capture knowledge and lessons; and **Phase III** — Identifying Lessons: the Report — produced a full technical report and a summary report containing lessons from the UNJLC experience in Iraq and recommendations to improve UNJLC activities in future deployments. Both reports are available from OEDE.

UNJLC ACTIVATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

5. In October 2002, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) reference group requested WFP to initiate preparatory work for establishment of a regional UNJLC; by the end of 2002, UNJLC had produced an overall plan covering the main scenarios and had identified gaps in the logistics sector.
6. In November 2002, the IASC working group further endorsed UNJLC's role in inter-agency logistics coordination in the preparedness phase. In January 2003, UNJLC was requested to prepare a plan for air operations and to investigate potential fuel shortages and develop contingency actions. On 21 March 2003, the day after the Iraq war commenced, the IASC working group officially activated the response phase of UNJLC-Iraq for six months, in accordance with the UNJLC activation protocol. WFP and UNJLC prepared Special Operation (SO) 10273 to fund UNJLC operations in Iraq from March to September 2003.
7. UNJLC activities related to the four SO components: (i) central coordination of humanitarian logistics operations in the region, (ii) air planning and coordination, (iii) civil/military coordination (CMCoord) and (iv) administrative support costs.



8. The organizational structure changed from time to time in response to rapidly changing conditions in Iraq; more than 40 staff were used for UNJLC-Iraq. The Chief of UNJLC reported to the Humanitarian Coordinator, Iraq (HCI) through the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator, Iraq (DHCI) for Operations.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

9. UNJLC was involved in the inter-agency contingency planning phase for the Iraq operation, producing logistics planning maps and the plan for United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) operations. The UNJLC website, weekly bulletin and online helpdesk system provided the humanitarian community with information on UNJLC logistics assistance in cross-border procedures, customs, air operations and fuel monitoring.
10. In response to the unstable post-conflict fuel situation, UNJLC reported weekly on the fuel situation across the country, on fuel supplies to the United Nations community and on the supply of essential components for the Iraqi oil industry under the Oil For Food Programme (OFFP). UNJLC's analysis helped the United Nations and Iraqi authorities to anticipate fuel shortages.
11. UNJLC helped with border crossings and customs procedures by negotiating with government authorities on behalf of the United Nations agencies on facilities for transit movements of humanitarian goods. In support of OFFP, UNJLC assisted in renegotiating contracts and supplying essential components for the Iraqi oil industry.
12. The task of the UNJLC Air Cell was to establish slot clearances, landing rights and cargo prioritization for humanitarian flights; UNHAS was responsible for daily operations and tasking of aircraft. UNJLC was instrumental in securing the use of two Belgian Air Force C-130s and one Japanese C-130.
13. UNJLC established a vital operational link with the military authorities to deconflict logistics operations, and organized and chaired weekly logistics coordination meetings for United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in satellite offices in Iraq and neighbouring countries and in New York.

MAJOR FINDINGS

14. UNJLC Iraq has proved its worth in value-added in special sectors such as: (i) operational-level CMCoord, (ii) forecasting fuel needs and shortages, (iii) customs arrangements for humanitarian goods, (iv) mapping logistics information to facilitate cargo movements and (v) contingency planning.
15. A survey of the logistics and information requirements of UNJLC clients would be needed to define UNJLC services and website contents. Good communications between UNJLC, its users and its custodian WFP are essential for mutual understanding and acceptance.
16. UNJLC-Iraq was unable to carry out its task of capacity-building in the prevailing political and security conditions. Until the end of 2003, however, UNJLC will assist the Iraqi ministries of transport and oil and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) during the most vulnerable period as they increase their capacities and assume greater responsibility.



17. The UNJLC exit strategy was modified several times in response to changing conditions in Iraq; this was done in consultation with HCI. The main points of the exit operation were that by the end of September 2003, all UNJLC offices would be closed and activities ended; the exceptions were the Amman office, which would close in October, and the information management and fuel units, which would be active until the end of December 2003. In November, however, UNJLC was officially informed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General a.i. (SRSG)/HCI that its support role to OFFP, CPA and Iraqi Ministries should be extended to the end of 2003.
18. WFP decided to evacuate its staff from Basra to Kuwait after the August 19 bombing of the United Nations offices in Baghdad. UNJLC and Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team (FITTEST) staff then had to leave Iraq. In view of this experience, it should be clearly decided who should be responsible for deciding on evacuations of UNJLC and other common-services staff.
19. The UNJLC Core Unit has been involved in general strategy support, information management (website and mapping), CMCoord and preparation of air corridors through contacts with civil and military aviation authorities. The Core Unit initiated the planning for the UNJLC-Iraq operations.
20. The single-SO concept for UNJLC Iraq activities was a substantial improvement on the previous multi-purpose SO for Afghanistan, which combined UNJLC, UNHAS, WFP logistics support and information and communications technology (ICT) activities. Fund management was clearly defined, with a direct link to Headquarters. Most of the budget costs were related to personnel. Although the financial structure was simple and transparent, a number of cases of unauthorized spending on hiring and payment of local staff were reported in the field.
21. The Chief of UNJLC position had been earmarked for an officer who later joined the WFP team on a full-time basis. A perception was subsequently voiced during the review that the Chief of UNJLC position was rotating between two UNJLC staff members, even though the two UNJLC positions of Chief of UNJLC and Operations Coordinator had been made clear from the outset. The Chief of UNJLC actually deployed in Iraq was still involved in WFP activities, which may have led to this perception.
22. UNJLC was supported by WFP for administrative and financial matters. There were, however, reports of friction between WFP and UNJLC on the application of procedures related to hiring staff, purchasing equipment and administration, and over collection and use of information provided by WFP to UNJLC.
23. As in the UNJLC-Afghanistan operation, the website is used especially at the headquarters level but less so in the field. It was observed that UNJLC's understanding of agencies' and other clients' real needs for logistic information should be improved.
24. In the early stages of UNJLC-Iraq operations there was some overlap with the tasks and fields of information of the Humanitarian Information Centre. There is a need for clear definition of tasks and functions and further integration of information management services and resources to avoid waste and duplication.
25. UNJLC helped to coordinate and facilitate customs procedures and border crossings with surrounding countries. An internal UNJLC review observed that services provided on customs and border crossings should be focused more on short-term needs than long-term customs reform. Local staff should be used for their local expertise, for example in customs procedures.



26. The UNJLC staff placed at the Office of the Iraq Programme (OIP) in New York provided logistics expertise in fulfilling OFFP contracts and facilitated: (i) development of a model for benchmarking prices and extra costs for OFFP commodities, (ii) fulfilment of six pilot OFFP contracts for the Iraqi oil industry through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and (iii) the sharing of logistics information amongst United Nations agencies active in OFFP.
27. Consultation with HCI seemed cumbersome in view of the busy schedule and tasks of the HCI and DHCI. The numerous HCI functions and the multitude of common services managed by DHCI overloaded reporting lines and hampered prompt feedback and guidance from HCI. In Iraq, integration with the regional United Nations offices was reported to be inadequate. Consultation with the resident coordinators in Jordan, Kuwait and Syria was described as excellent.
28. The UNJLC Fuel Team produced weekly reports based on various sources of information. They were able to forecast diesel shortages and advocate with the Coalition to make provisions for supplies of diesel. The CPA and Iraqi ministries frequently used UNJLC fuel reports. In July 2003, UNJLC unveiled plans to supply diesel and gasoline to United Nations agencies in Baghdad under a system similar to that in Basra and established fuel reserves for the Canal Hotel for use in case of evacuation. The HCI requested UNJLC to continue the fuel component after September 2003 especially on early warning of fuel shortages and access to fuel for the United Nations community.
29. There was initial disagreement in the field on the interaction between UNHAS and UNJLC, because the terms of reference for the UNJLC Air Coordinator included management and tasking of the aircraft. The WFP Air Cell in Rome leased the aircraft; air cargo operations were carried out by UNHAS.
30. The Regional Air Movement Coordination Centre (RAMCC), a unit of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), was the highest military authority to deal with requests for air movements. As the UNJLC CMCoord for Qatar was never granted accreditation by CENTCOM, communication between RAMCC and UNJLC/UNHAS was only possible by telephone and e-mail.
31. WFP did not benefit directly from UNJLC during the emergency operation. It was recognized, however, that UNJLC activities produced indirect benefits such as coordination of non-food logistics, information management and dedicated transport lanes at the Jordan-Iraq border for humanitarian aid.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

32. To ensure prompt activation and to increase efficiency, UNJLC should monitor the globe for potential emergencies and include in its response timely introduction of the UNJLC concept to United Nations agencies and others involved.
33. A needs assessment for UNJLC services at the field level is required. UNJLC should have a flexible, rapid response capability to anticipate and take on new services as needs arise.
34. UNJLC should remain a non-operational centre as far as possible, focusing on coordinating inter-agency logistics. It should only be involved in pre-defined operational tasks if there is a clear request from the main United Nations agencies and other users.
35. All United Nations agencies should promote UNJLC at the headquarters and field levels to increase awareness and acceptance of the concept.



36. United Nations agencies and NGOs generally accept and support UNJLC, but it should continue to market its services and value-added to the humanitarian community, especially at the field level.
37. A decision should be taken to determine who should decide on emergency evacuations of UNJLC and other common service staff.
38. The Core Unit is best suited to cover strategic issues and to provide support functions such as information management and mapping. It provides continuity for UNJLC in periods between emergencies, monitoring possible emergency scenarios, planning and training.
39. UNJLC should continue to make use of the WFP stand-by agreements, which are a resource for rapid mobilization of staff for its operations. UNJLC should ensure that staffing reflects actual requirements; it should recruit sufficient senior staff with logistics experience and try to recruit staff with local experience in areas such as customs procedures.
40. The position of Chief should be filled by one full-time UNJLC staff member to ensure strong leadership.
41. The relationship between UNJLC and WFP on support services should be described in a separate agreement for each UNJLC project. UNJLC should prepare standard information packages for new staff, detailing UNJLC and WFP rules and requirements for support services.
42. UNJLC should not have too large a staff for support services: in future operations it should make an accurate assessment of support services to be provided by WFP and establish staff accordingly. This could include augmenting WFP staff to support UNJLC; costs for extra staff should then be included in the UNJLC budget. UNJLC should in any case maintain effective lines of communication with WFP offices and staff on issues related to support services.
43. UNJLC should carry out a thorough assessment of the need for logistics information among United Nations agencies and NGOs to define the content of its website. It should acknowledge the sources used in the UNJLC website, bulletins and reports.
44. Positioning a logistics expert at OIP and developing a tracking system for OFFP contracts were examples of the UNJLC supply-driven approach. UNJLC should instead focus on offering services on a demand basis. It may identify potential needs, but must discuss them with clients before taking action.



FROM AFGHANISTAN TO IRAQ: MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN UNJLC DEPLOYMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION	
UNJLC Afghanistan	UNJLC Iraq
UNJLC should be involved in the planning and assessment phase of upcoming emergencies from the outset to increase its efficiency.	UNJLC Iraq was involved in the preparation phase before the crisis and was therefore well established at the start of operations in March 2003.
UNJLC should have a brief, defined duration in the initial phase of an emergency, with a focus on avoiding conflicts and bottlenecks in logistics services. Continuation into a further phase needs careful consideration.	UNJLC Iraq was active from March to September 2003, with some activities extended till December 2003, as approved by HCI.
In defining UNJLC functions, replication of tasks and services provided by WFP and other agencies should be avoided.	There was an improvement over UNJLC Afghanistan, but work still remains to be done because UNJLC was perceived by some agencies to be duplicating services.
For each UNJLC operation, a decision must be made either that UNJLC should coordinate only, or that it should also carry out operational tasks.	Although UNJLC Iraq was non-operational, some operational tasks were carried out, for example supplying fuel for United Nations cars. UNJLC seems to be accepted best if it remains non-operational.
UNJLC should only make priority listings for air cargo transport; it should not task or schedule aircraft. The relationship between UNJLC and UNHAS should be defined in detail.	This aspect still needs improvement: in the initial stages UNJLC scheduled aircraft. The UNJLC-UNHAS link will be improved by the new mandate for WFP to coordinate all non-peacekeeping air operations for the United Nations.
UNJLC should consult with United Nations agencies and NGOs in the field on their requirements for information, addressing sectoral needs such as transport surveys.	A market assessment of logistics information requirements for United Nations agencies is ongoing.
UNJLC should continue to coordinate with military forces on avoiding conflicting requirements for air space, and should remain involved in consultations regarding CMCoord operations.	UNJLC should analyse its liaison with military headquarters such as RAMCC on operational deconflicting: military forces tend to maintain tight security. Cooperation with military forces is essential to maintaining humanitarian aid supplies.
UNJLC should maintain its independence from WFP in order to strengthen its neutrality in inter-agency logistics.	UNJLC is now recognized as an independent, neutral coordinating body. It should focus on improving communications with WFP, its parent body.
UNJLC should market itself as the call centre for coordinating inter-agency logistics at the headquarters and field levels to increase awareness of the UNJLC concept.	Marketing of the UNJLC concept is still needed, despite training courses held since UNJLC-Afghanistan. United Nations agencies should be encouraged to market UNJLC internally.
UNJLC should be included in one separate SO rather than a multi-purpose SO as in Afghanistan to increase the transparency of UNJLC functions, budgets, expenditures and tracking of donations.	The separate SO concept has been successfully implemented and has contributed considerably to transparency.
Strong leadership and communication skills are needed to represent UNJLC at the highest United Nations and government levels; this must be assured for the future.	UNJLC should appoint one full-time person as its Chief. Alternating the position between two individuals undermines the single line of command. When a Chief and Deputy Chief/Operational Coordinator are deployed, their roles should be clearly explained to participating agencies.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CMCoord	civil/military coordination
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
DHCI	Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator, Iraq
FITTEST	Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
HCI	Humanitarian Coordinator, Iraq
ICT	information and communications technology
NGO	non-governmental organization
OEDE	WFP Office of Evaluation
OFFP	Oil For Food Programme
OIP	Office of the Iraq Programme
OTL	WFP Surface Transport Service
RAMCC	Regional Air Movement Coordination Centre
SO	special operation
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistics Centre
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

