

Guidance for In-Kind Donations

12 June 2015

Unsolicited Bilateral Donations (UBDs) Background

Often during large-scale emergencies, in-kind humanitarian commodities are provided by governments, NGOs, civil society, solidarity groups, or private individuals. These relief goods are intended to meet some of the needs of the affected population. They are usually delivered to a port of entry in the country facing the emergency. These goods may at times not be programmed as part of the emergency response and if not properly planned, may result in adversely affecting the response due to the below characteristics.

UBD CHARACTERISTICS

UBDs may be characterized by the below:

- Arrive unannounced or with very short notice
- Faulty paperwork
- Lack of clearly defined consignee
- Non-standard items

Experience of recent emergencies has shown that an international commitment to assist those affected by 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. Therefore initially, for UBDs, it is important to remove possible areas of contention around:

- Ownership (i.e. who is the consignee?)
- Clearance processes
- Transportation (inbound and outbound)
- Disposal where necessary
- Associated costs related to relief goods
- Distribution
- Donor responsibility (i.e. reporting, monitoring and accountability)

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 organizations working on the ground.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Accountability/Responsibility:

Ownership of un-consigned relief items normally lies with the host government's disaster management authority. In some cases this could also be the responsibility of an alternate entity from the government or humanitarian community. Another important point is to establish accountability for distribution and associated costs, etc. Additionally, guidelines to mitigate the impact of UBDs must be put in place. Government authorities can take proactive measures especially in rapid onset emergencies to quickly publish and disseminate lists of priority items for in-kind donations, accompanied with lists of items that are not required or acceptable.

This has been an effective way of preventing donors from dispatching inappropriate (sometimes unwanted surplus) items.

Consistent messaging/communication:

It is important to produce information products indicating defined Food and Non-Food Item (NFI) types to assist the disaster impacted country's needs.

Processing items at the point of origin:

The processing of items at the point of origin could facilitate improved management of UBDs and reduce the workload in the affected country. This should include: sorting items before loading; separating product types requiring specific storage and handling; enforcing standards to prevent unsuitable/substandard/un-usable items from being sent (saving freight costs); and discarding, or using locally, items which cannot make the journey. It would also be helpful to prioritize goods for sending to South Sudan based on their relevance to the needs of the population. Additionally, there is a need for the highest level of agreement on standardized aid items in emergencies.

Guidelines for disposal of items:

Assistance should be provided to the disaster management authorities in South Sudan to facilitate the development of guidelines for disposal of unsuitable or spoiled UBDs. This would help to avoid some of the political challenges faced by the receiving country in their relationship with the donor country.

High Priority Items by Cluster

In the current context, the Inter Cluster Working Group (ICWG) has identified the following to be the high priority items as of 12 June 2015:

1. **Education**
 - Exercise books, pens/pencils, blackboards, chalk, and plastic sheets.
2. **Health**
 - Trauma kits, diarrheal diseases kits, blood transfusion kits, clean delivery kits, post rape treatment kits, outbreak response supplies, personnel protection equipment, ORS, and tents.
3. **Food Security and Livelihoods**
 - Fishing inputs (nets, hooks, fishing twine, buckets, mesh wire, tarpaulin, cool boxes), farming tools (hand tools, hoes, spades, rakes, watering cans), and polythene bags.
4. **NFI/Shelter**
 - Plastic sheets, blankets, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, and warehousing units.
5. **Nutrition**
 - Food items including high energy biscuits (BP5), Ready-to-Use therapeutic Food (RUTF), Ready-to-Use Supplementary Food (RUSF), CSB++ and therapeutic milk (F75 and F100)
6. **Protection**
 - Dignity kits, torches, pads, and underwear
7. **WASH**
 - Collapsible jerry cans, buckets with taps and lid, water purification chemicals (chlorine tabs, and floc/disinfectant "PuR", water bladders (5, 10, 20 m³), soap, plastic sheeting (for emergency latrines)

Specific challenges and conditions of Food and Medicine				
Type of items	Shipping types	Challenges- packaging/shipping	Unsuitable Conditions of items	Inappropriate Items
Food	Bulk Items	Glass packaging: leading to breakages/damage to contents and challenges in storing/onward shipping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expired/very limited expiry date Packaging with limited description of contents or in non-English language Items requiring controlled temperature/storage Initially large quantities of food items stored outside in the holding area for too long, resulting in spoilage and product damage 	<p><i>Items which have to be discarded:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh milk and other dairy products Bread products Chocolate Milk substitutes, infant formula and fresh dates as they increase diarrheal disease.
	Family packs	Inappropriate packaging considering the logistics supply chain (multiple transshipment):		
	Commodity cartons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading to arrival of damaged cartons, resulting in spoilt products and contamination of other products This causes time delay due to repacking and palletizing of commodities Items held in hangars in the country of origin for extended periods resulting in spoilage 		
Medicines	Bulk Items	Glass packaging: leading to breakages/damage to contents and challenges in storing/onward shipping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expired or very limited expiry date left on items being sent Items requiring controlled temperature/storage (when no cold storage exists) Time delay due to repacking and palletizing of commodities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High value and controlled drug types being shipped at times without prior notice Mixed products (i.e. by IV bags)
	Commodity cartons	Medical items mixed with non medical items – difficulty in immediately identifying storage requirements and the risk of contamination.		
	Individual items as part of relief packs sent	<p><i>Poor shipping of items - Resulting in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damaged cartons and exposure of products to contamination Broken packaging resulting in spoilt products and contamination (e.g. bandages/medicine tablets) 		