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Logistics Humanitarian Hub in Panama

The Humanitarian Hub in Panama – the country’s Regional Logistics Centre for Humanitarian Assistance – is working around the clock to supply medical equipment and food to local Panamanians and surrounding countries in Central America during these difficult times as a result of COVID- 19.

One particular logistics movement emerged as unique and heroic. On 6 April 2020, an emergency coordination effort was initiated resulting in a Panamanian freight forwarder commandeering of an Embraer Legacy 600 aircraft from the Honduran Air Force.

Upon securing the aircraft from the military, the freight forwarder chartered the aircraft to leave Toncontín International Airport in Honduras and be at Tocumen International Airport for 9am the same day. The consignment awaiting the Embraer Legacy 600 was 182,000 COVID-19 test kits destined to be back in Honduras for 7pm, leaving only a small window to pack and load the cargo into the aircraft. In less than 24 hours from commandeering the aircraft, the kits were back in Honduran territory ready for further dispatch to surrounding Central American countries.

The test kits proved challenging to transport requiring a temperature below 20°C, which meant that the freight forwarder needed to maintain a cold chain not just from Panama to Honduras but also beyond as cargo travelled to an additional six countries in the Central American and the Caribbean region.

The request for this cargo was placed by the Central American Bank for Economic Integration in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance and Health of Honduras and the Government of Panama. The stakeholders responsible for moving the cargo were the freight forwarder UpCargo Logistics and their import agent IS Logistics.

The Upcargo logistics and their staff, a member of FIATA, the Panamanian Association of Cargo Agents, and the Federation of National Associations of Cargo Agents and International Logistical Operators of Latin America and the Caribbean, are proud to be able to provide their services towards moving humanitarian aid cargo which helped save hundreds of thousands of lives. For more, visit the FIATA COVID-19 dedicated webpage: www.fiata.com/covid_19.html.