Bangladesh, CAR, Nigeria

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 26/02/20   TIME: 12:00 UTC

Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	(Global ETC), UAE
ACF	Thomas Gerard	France
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
GSMA	William Derban	UK
MSB	John Isaksson	Sweden
UNHCR	Alexander Thomas	Copenhagen
WFP	Habib Shashati	Bangladesh
	Khawar Ilyas	Nigeria
	Luis Portatadino	Nigeria
	Andrew Henze	Thailand
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
WHO	Khaled Shamseldin	Egypt

Teleconference started at 12:02 UTC

Agenda

1. **Bangladesh**
    a. **Country updates**
    b. **Partner updates**
2. **Central African Republic (CAR)**
    a. **Country updates**
    b. **Partner updates**
3. **Nigeria**
    a. **Country updates**
    b. **Partner updates**
4. **AOB**

Minutes

1. BANGLADESH

Security situation

- The security situation in Cox's Bazar remains calm.

- All non-essential missions to Teknaf camp area were suspended for a limited period due to possible tensions within the camp. The suspension has now been lifted.

Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) response

- Following the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) mission to Cox's Bazar conducted by WFP's Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team (FITTEST), a key recommendation is that the network be upgraded to link key sites and to strengthen 2G and 3G coverage to enable voice services. The TESS Senior Programme Manager's mission report will be shared with all stakeholders to update them on the upcoming plans.

- The ETS is currently providing Internet connectivity services in 14 existing e-voucher sites to support digital assistance efforts, with nine more e-voucher sites planned. When complete, the ETS will be providing connectivity to 23 e-voucher sites. The ultimate goal of the ETS project is to provide security communications and connectivity for humanitarians and retailers across 1,000 facilities with a detailed project plan currently being developed.

2. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Security situation

- All humanitarian missions to Birao were briefly suspended in January/February due to an escalation of conflict in this area.

- As reported by UNHCR, the recent armed clashes in Birao have caused high rates of population displacement, estimating that up to 25,000 people may cross the border into Sudan. In response, UNHCR has activated emergency procedures in Darfur to receive 16,000 refugees from CAR.

ETC Response

- The ETC in CAR has received a contribution of 100,000 EUR (approx. USD 108,000) from ETC partner, the Government of Luxembourg, to support three projects in Bria and Bangassou that will enable affected communities to access critical information and services.

- The ETC in CAR continues to face a significant funding shortfall to meet the USD 1.3 million required to carry out 2020 activities – including data services and implementation of the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) upgrades – as outlined in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

- During the first week of February, the ETC deployed a local Internet Service Provider (ISP) to Alindao to move the satellite terminal located at the premises of Cordaid – who have hosted ETC data services for the past two years – to the premises of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The larger OCHA site is able to accommodate additional Internet users. The next step is to install data connectivity services at the new site.

- Two TESS-trained staff from WFP and the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) were deployed to Bambari from 31 January–3 February to carry out upgrades to the VHF and HF radio network, in line with the TESS recommendations. The team will return to complete the activities once additional approvals are obtained to use the infrastructure and services of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

- From 6–11 February, an ETC team deployed to N'Dele to standardize the security communications infrastructure in line with the TESS recommendations. As with the deployment to Bambari, the team will work with MINUSCA and UNDSS to obtain the necessary approvals to complete the recommendations on a future mission.

- A WFP FITTEST Senior Telecommunications Specialist deployed to CAR from 17–29 February to oversee implementation of the TESS recommendations. As part of the deployment, the ETC and FITTEST conducted a joint oversight mission in Paoua from 24–25 February to check implementation of the TESS recommendations that were carried out in December 2019. It was found that the VHF network successfully covers up to 15 kilometres outside Paoua.

- The ETC, WFP FITTEST and UNDSS met on 18 February to discuss continuation of upgrades to the VHF radio network in Bangui planned as part of the TESS recommendations, as a priority. FITTEST will submit an alternative proposal to the two-site Bangui/Zongo model that was previously planned. A site survey will be carried out to finalize the design.

3. **NIGERIA**

Security situation

- Humanitarian missions to Ngala, Borno State, have resumed following the attack on the humanitarian hub in January. However, the security situation across North-East Nigeria remains volatile and there has been a reported increase in attacks, including those that directly target humanitarians.

ETS Response

- The ETS continues to provide services across North-East Nigeria – data connectivity in eight locations and security communications in 11 locations. In January, the ETS provided Internet connectivity services to more than 1,903 humanitarian responders from 74 organisations.

- The ETS in Nigeria is facing a 100 per cent funding shortfall which is impacting on its 2020 activities. The ETS is currently exploring the option of a cost-sharing model with partners on the ground while it seeks funding to cover 2020 activities. Staffing shortages are also impacting on the ETS's ability to deliver in-house training.

- The ETS has completed the deployment of audio conference kits in eight humanitarian hubs. The final audioconference kit was deployed in Dikwa. This will enable staff at all of the hubs to communicate with each other.

- The ETS organized an introductory webinar for all humanitarian hub Local Security Assistants (LSAs) and a refresher training for Security Operations Centre (SOC) operators.

AOB

N/a

Teleconference / Meeting ended at 12:17 UTC

Next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on Wednesday 25 March 2020 12:00 UTC.

Acronyms

CAR	Central African Republic
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
FITTEST	Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
HF	High Frequency
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
LSA	Local Security Assistant

MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SOC	Security Operations Centre
TESS	Telecommunications Security Standards
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website: www.ETCluster.org

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact:
Global.ETC@wfp.org

Minutes: Elizabeth Millership, WFP