Bangladesh, CAR, Libya, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 02/06/2020   TIME: 12:00 UTC

Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	(Global ETC), UAE
ACF	Thomas Gerard	France
	Victor Yusuf	Nigeria
emergency.lu	Gilles Hoffmann	Luxembourg
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Government of Luxembourg	Catherine Kayser	Luxembourg
ITU	Haidar Baqir	Switzerland
MSB	John Isaksson	Sweden
Samaritan's Purse	Don Jamison	USA
UNHCR	Alexander Thomas	Denmark
	Min Sun	Denmark
UNICEF	Antonio Fortes Gomes	USA
	Haytem Elgbali	Libya
	Ike Uzoeqwu	USA
	Jalal Tamimi	Jordan
	Awsan Almamari	Yemen
WFP	Ahmed Abdullah	Egypt
	Balamine Ouattara	Syria
	Ekue Ayih	Bangladesh
	Habib Shashati	Bangladesh
	Khawar Ilyas	Pakistan
	Lalou Yavoucko	CAR
	Sarah Mace	UK
	Suzanne Fenton	UAE
	Triwik Kurniasari	UAE
	Wali Noor	Yemen

Teleconference started at 12:00 UTC

Agenda

1. **Bangladesh update**
2. **Central African Republic (CAR) update**
3. **Libya update**
4. **Nigeria update**
5. **Syria update**
6. **Yemen update**
7. **AOB**

Minutes

1. BANGLADESH

Security situation

- As of early June, Bangladesh has recorded more than 52,000 COVID-19 cases. In refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, there were more than 400 cases with the first COVID-19 related death of a refugee reported on 2 June.
- The lockdown enforced by the Government of Bangladesh will be extended until mid-June. However, some government offices are already open as the restrictions have been partially eased.
- Cyclone Amphan impacted some regions in the country but didn't cause significant damage to the refugee camps.

ETS Response

- The ETS has received confirmation of US$2 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
- The ETS is currently providing data connectivity services to 20 e-voucher outlets, some of which support digital assistance efforts.
- The ETS currently has one staff on the ground who will manage the Helpdesk to help connect users and the technical team if any issues arise.

2. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

ETC Response

- The ETC has set up a COVID-19 call centre in Bangui as requested by the Ministry of Health to provide information and guidelines on COVID-19-related issues to affected communities. The team will recruit six operators and one manager to operate the call centre.
- The ETC has started Local Area Network (LAN) migration by using a new solution. The team has deployed the solution in three locations and will continue the installation in other locations across the country.

- The ETC has secured US$100,000 from the UN Reform Critical Corporate Initiative (CCI) and will use the funding to provide data services in the field for approximately six months.

3. LIBYA

Security situation

- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there are more than 200 cases of COVID-19 and five related deaths in Libya.
- The Libyan border remains closed to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown has hampered staff movement.
- The conflict around Tripoli continues to escalate.

ETS response

- The ETS-managed call centre in Tripoli continues to serve as a nationwide COVID-19 information channel. To date, there have been 14,000 incoming calls but only around 7,000 of them have been answered due to a lack of resources. The number of COVID-19-related calls has been declining, while the number of calls on other humanitarian issues is increasing. The ETS will promote the hotline to provide more information on humanitarian issues as the COVID-19 situation subsides.

4. NIGERIA

Security situation

- The COVID-19 lockdown has been lifted in Borno state, North-East Nigeria, and people are able to move around freely.
- As of 2 June, Borno state has recorded around 250 confirmed COVID-19 cases. The response community is waiting for the government's guidelines on the working modality after travel restrictions are eased.

ETS Response

- Only one critical ETS staff is working from the office while others are working remotely due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The ETS is nearly 60% funded of the total US$2.95 million required to carry out this year's activities. The ETS was not able to carry out some activities due to COVID-19-related travel restrictions and this situation has affected its overall budget consumption.
- The ETS continues to maintain data services and security communications with more than 3,000 Internet connectivity users from 97 organizations across North-East Nigeria.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected capacity building activities and the planned installation of the hybrid solar-based power system which will provide a more reliable energy source in remote locations. To address this, the ETS has started to conduct training activities online to train

humanitarian staff on basic security communications. The installation of the hybrid solar-based solution will commence after travel restrictions are fully lifted.

- As part of the COVID-19 response, the ETS is preparing a concept note to provide Internet connectivity in an installation ward which will be managed by a humanitarian organization. The ward will be established in Maiduguri for humanitarians that may be infected with COVID-19. The project will cost around US$72,000 for six months.

5. SYRIA AND SURROUNDING COUNTRIES

Security situation

- The security situation is still unpredictable, particularly in the north-east and north-west areas.
- The government has lifted the COVID-19 lockdown, but social distancing measures continue.
- The borders are still closed, restricting the movement of humanitarian responders. WFP is trying to organise more humanitarian flights to fly UN and non-governmental organization (NGO) staff in and out of the country. The first flight was from Beirut, Lebanon, to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. WFP is working on organising a second flight either via Doha in Qatar or Addis Ababa depending on the majority of passengers' destinations.

ETC Response

- The ETC is working on migrating all security telecommunications infrastructure in Syria. The team joined a discussion with the Syrian Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SYTRA) about the licenses needed for the new equipment before the team can proceed with deployment. The team is requesting the government's approval for the deployment which is expected to be carried out as soon as the transportation activities are fully back to normal.
- The ETC has completed the installation of fibre link to improve connectivity services at the UN hub in Aleppo. The team is waiting for the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to provide a router to start the link activation.
- The team is exploring alternative ways to conduct two capacity building sessions which have been postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic. These include a training session on radio frequencies optimization scheduled to be delivered by the Global ETC team and training on data communications for inter-agency group slated to be organized with NetHope. The ETC team will follow up with the Global ETC and NetHope to discuss how to proceed with these training sessions.

6. YEMEN

Security situation

- The security situation remains tense and unpredictable.
- All international staff continue to work remotely following the COVID-19 lockdown. Some staff are stuck in Jordan or Ethiopia due to travel restrictions.
- Only WFP Head of IT is working on the ground, while the ETC Coordinator is working remotely and three ETC staff are on BIS.
- Currently, the 74 UN staff in Yemen are receiving advice and assistance from UN clinics in the country to safeguard their health during the pandemic.

ETC Response

- The extended Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Yemen was approved. The ETC is well funded to cover the operation's basic needs.
- The ETC continues to provide data connectivity services remotely in some locations, particularly in the south, following an increased demand for ETC services during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Throughout May, the ETC Helpdesk has received and resolved 822 issues from responders.
- The team has completed the installation of equipment to provide Internet connectivity for the Resident Coordinator's office and the humanitarian community in Sana'a. Currently, three more meeting rooms are fully equipped and available for humanitarian organizations to enable them to work effectively.
- The ETC is providing technical support for the establishment of two dedicated COVID-19-hotlines for the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP) in Sana'a and Aden. The team is waiting for the signed agreement between WFP, WHO and MoPHP before setting up the hotlines.
- The ETC has received funding approval from WHO to upgrade the existing communications infrastructures in 26 Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) which will be used to support the COVID-19 response.
- On 2 June, the virtual High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen brought together representatives of more than 125 UN member states, UN agencies, NGOs and civil society to raise funding to meet the humanitarian needs of affected populations.
- On 17 May, the ETC held an online meeting with its partner organizations which requested that the ETC deliver online training. They also requested support and guidance on video conferencing platforms and digital signature tools to facilitate their work during this pandemic.
- The ETC is preparing to implement the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) project to expand the Very High Frequency (VHF) coverage in the south to improve the safety and security of responders. The team has ordered the equipment and is expected to start the project once the equipment is received.
- The team is planning to set up connectivity services at a new UN hub which will be hosted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Marib. The team has received approval from IOM to deploy the equipment from Aden.
- In response to the increasing demand for the provision of ETC services, the ETC has reassessed its network management and bandwidth allocation practice to provide improved service and coordination with local ISPs.
- The ETC has been requested to support the WFP, the Ministry of Education, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to explore ways to establish a digital platform to conduct online distance learning for Yemeni students. The ETC would appreciate any experienced countries or partners who may be able to share their knowledge or expertise on digital learning solutions. *(The International Telecommunication Union [ITU] shared a link on digital learning solutions and offered further support as needed.)*
- Following the closure of ETC hubs in Sana'a and Ibb in January, the ETC is engaging with its partners to install fibre link to reopen the hubs in new sites.

Teleconference/Meeting ended at 12:37 UTC
Next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on TBC.

Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
BIS	Break in Service
CCI	Critical Corporate Initiative
CFM	Common Feedback Mechanism
EOC	Emergency Operations Centres
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISP	Internet Service Provider
LAN	Local Area Network
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
MoPHP	Ministry of Public Health and Population
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
SYTRA	Syrian Telecommunication Regulatory Authority
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World health Organization

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: Triwik Kurniasari, WFP