

Bangladesh, CAR, Libya, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 14/10/2020 TIME: 12:30 UTC

Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	(Global ETC), UAE
ACF	Thomas Gerard	France
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Gov't of Luxembourg	Gilles Hoffmann	Luxembourg
GSMA	William Derban	UK
Inmarsat ??	Mike Carter	UK
Internews	Emily Cowrick	UK
MSB	John Isaksson	Sweden
OCHA	Laurent Dufour	CAR
UNHCR	Min Sun	Denmark
UNICEF	Ike Uzoegwu	USA
	Mazen Shwikany	Syria
	Awsan Almamari	Yemen
	Jalal Tamimi	Jordan
WFP	Habib Shashati	Bangladesh
	Mohammed Dabdab	Bangladesh
	Luis Portatadino	Bangladesh
	Houman Haddad	Bangladesh
	Francis Koroma	CAR
	Richard Egwangu	Egypt
	Omar Namaoui	Italy
	Ahmed ElSheikh	Libya
	Fathi Enneji	Libya
	Elmuiez Babikir	Nigeria
	Jean Claude Laouwayi	Senegal
	Gianluca Bruni	UAE
	Wali Noor	Yemen

Teleconference started at 12:02 UTC

Agenda

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

Minutes

1. BANGLADESH

Security

- Security incidents last week hampered humanitarian activities in the camp and other operational areas. While the situation is now calm, responders continue to work inside the camp with caution.

ETS Response

- The ETS team currently comprises eight staff on the ground. Both security communications and IT team leaders are now at the hub in Cox's Bazar.
- The ETS coordinator will go on break in service and his replacement is expected to arrive in country by November.
- The ETS is 78% funded with US\$3.8 million received out of US\$5.1 million.
- The Joint Response Plan (JRP) exercise for 2021 started on Sunday, and the ETS has already started approaching partners to identify gaps that need to be addressed in 2021.
- The ETS is providing services in 28 sites, including e-voucher outlets, logistics hubs, Camp-in-charge office and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) sites as part of the COVID-19 response.
- A total of 209 humanitarians from seven UN agencies and three NGOs are registered to use ETS data connectivity service.
- A total of 709 humanitarians from 10 UN agencies are using the VHF network. [*NGOs do not have access to the radio network]
- 15 self-standing towers have been ordered that will be used to enhance the infrastructure. The towers are expected to be in the country by mid-January 2021 and erected by mid-2021.

2. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

ETC Response

- The ETC continues to actively seek funding to continue its activities in CAR.

- The expenditure plan which is currently being discussed will depend on the outcomes of two oversight missions to the sites of the planned services for communities' projects in Bangassou (17-20 October) and Bria (21-23 October). The ETC will meet with implementing partners INTERSOS and the Red Cross to establish the progress of the projects and activities remaining to be completed.
- The overall ETC expenditure plan in CAR will also depend on outcomes of discussions with the Ministry of Health (MoH) on the long-term plan and further possible support needed for the dedicated COVID-19 toll-free call centre set up by the ETC in April to assist the MoH in its response to the pandemic.

3. LIBYA

Security

- The ceasefire announced across all Libyan territories in August continues to be in effect.
- Commercial flights are expected to resume between east and west.

ETS Response

- The REACH proposal for a potential collaboration to analyse coverage and reliability of voice and data services is expected to be finalised this week.
- The Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) team conducted a refresher VHF handheld radio training for the ETS in the first week of October. The ETS team has since received a request from IOM to programme their radios.
- The WiFi at the UNHCR Community Day Centre is operational and the team is now waiting for the official launch of the project.
- The ETS-managed call centre which was established as a Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) project in Tripoli continues to serve as the national humanitarian and COVID-19 hotline. From 26 September to 9 October, more than 1,100 calls were addressed with approximately a quarter related to COVID-19. Since the call centre was launched in February, more than 14,400 calls have been received. Operators continue to share official health guidelines and referred suspected COVID-19 cases to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

4. NIGERIA

Security situation

- In Borno, some attacks against security forces and civilians continue.
- The rest of the north-east continues to be impacted by violence. Six incidents have been reported but no humanitarian actors were harmed. All humanitarians are asked to comply with UN security measures.

ETS Response

- The team launched the annual ETS user satisfaction survey with 554 responses received so far.
 - UNICEF colleague notes the importance of the survey to see user feedback on the ground. The ETC team confirmed that the report will be shared with partners.
- Since the start of October, connectivity is being provided for 1,329 users from 109 organisations.
- All sites have now been migrated to the new countrywide telecommunications infrastructure. The team will conduct a few IT support missions to do installation reviews and note any observations and recommendations.
- The ETS continues to conduct maintenance work and preventative maintenance as the dusty season approaches to ensure equipment and services remain fully operational.
- Restrictions on field travel have impacted ETS activities and KPIs for 2020, including the planned installation of the solar system equipment in the hubs. The team will start planning to install the equipment as soon as the security situation improves.
- A new IT specialist is expected to join the team soon.
- There was a technical discussion regarding a mechanism for load balancing on user traffic including data traffic bandwidth allocated at each hub versus number of hub users.

5. YEMEN

Security situation

- The security situation remains volatile and unpredictable with airstrikes and armed clashes reported across the country, mainly on the frontline.
- Following the closure of Sana'a airport on 19 September, the airport was opened to special agreed flights on 28 September. Regular flights will hopefully resume from 17 October onwards.

COVID-19 response

- The ETC continues to provide IT support including connectivity to COVID-19 isolation centres in Aden and Al Hudaydah.
- The upgrade of the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP) hotline in Sana'a and the establishment of a new hotline in Aden are pending the go-ahead from World Health Organisation (WHO).
- The ETC continues to provide remote support while major technical incidents that required physical intervention are taken by the coordination in Sana'a, Al Hudaydah and Aden

ETC Response

- As of today, ETC services are provided in 11 sites and connectivity is being used by 600+ humanitarians. The ETC also continues to provide support at eight UNDSS-managed Security Operations Centres (SOC). ETC security communications services are provided to more than 2,800 users.

- Since January, the ETC helpdesk has registered and addressed more than 13,000 tickets.
- The ETC is engaging in the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) process for 2021.
- The Yemen Humanitarian Funding (YHF) was successfully extended to the end of December so the ETC is fully funded. Activities included in this funding are the provision of connectivity in Aden airport and the ETC Working Group capacity building which will be done by an external provider in mid-November.
- The Supreme Council for the Management and Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (SCMCHA) has requested ETC support to conduct an IT infrastructure assessment and subsequent provision of videoconferencing facilities. This is under discussion with WFP and OCHA regarding the funding for this as it is outside the YHF.
- In Aden, the team completed the ETC extension to UNDP and UNDSS guesthouses and received another request from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to provide connectivity in their guesthouse which will hopefully be completed tomorrow.
- Following a quick user feedback survey done in Sana'a on 7 September, the ETC has upgraded the bandwidth for humanitarians in the UN Common Accommodation Facility (UNCAF).
- ETC connectivity services are operational in the new UN hub in Hajjah managed by WFP but no approval has been received to set up an SOC and equipment. This is being negotiated between the Resident Coordinator's office and UNDSS to approve the hub without security telecommunications.
- The new UN hub in Marib managed by IOM is still under construction. The UN has agreed to operate from a hotel where the ETC will set up an SOC. Team is waiting for the Aden authorities to approve the deployment of equipment and satellite terminal to provide connectivity. The ETC might use an alternative solution in the meantime as some agencies have already deployed staff to the hub. WN requests experience if this will work.
- ETC connectivity services in the INGO hub in Al Hudaydah hosted by PUAMI are reactivated and accessible to partners.
- The ETC in Aden is working with UNDSS to install a dedicated VHF repeater for INGOs. This is first time INGOs will have a dedicated repeater in Yemen. Approval has been obtained and all are now waiting for the frequency from the authorities.
- The ETC will provide a virtual technical training session for 32 members of the ETC Working Group in mid-November together with a third party.
- A UNICEF colleague notes that he has received a letter regarding potential interruption of services due to the fuel crisis, and asks how equipment can be imported. The ETC Coordinator in Yemen explains that it is difficult in the north of the country as there is only one service provider and there is a ban on the importation of equipment. However, he will raise the issue at the next Operations Management Team (OMT) meeting.

Teleconference/Meeting ended at 13:43 UTC

Next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on Wednesday 18 November.



Acronyms

CIC	Camp-in-Charge
CO	Country Office
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
SOC	Security Operations Centre
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
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: Suzanne Fenton, WFP