

Bangladesh, CAR, Libya, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 24/03/2021 TIME: 13:00 UTC

Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	(Global ETC), UAE
Action Contre Le Faim	Thomas Gerard	France
CDAC Network	Fanman Tsang	South Sudan
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Govt' of Luxembourg	Gilles Hoffmann	Luxembourg
MSB	John Isaksson	Sweden
REACH	Lucasz Kruk	Switzerland
UNHCR	Min Sun	Copenhagen
	John Warnes	Kenya
	Andrew Sentamu	Sudan
	Serge Shafak Tsafack	Cameroon
UNICEF	Ali Al Dhayani	Yemen
	Ike Ukoegwu	USA
	Jalal Tamimi	Jordan
WFP	Habib Shashati	Bangladesh
	Amirullah Syarif	Bangladesh
	Jessica Stanford	Bangladesh
	Monika Bernard	Belgium
	Gianluca Bruni	Egypt
	Brent Carbno	Italy
	Omar Namaoui	Italy
	Ahmed ElSheikh	Libya
	Ernest Aho	Nigeria
	Oyintare Kalama	Nigeria
	Hikmat Akad	Syria
	Geronimo Turgo	Syria
	Oscar Caleman	Thailand
	Fathi Enneji	Tunisia

Agenda

1. **Bangladesh update**
2. **Libya update**
3. **Nigeria update**
4. **Syria update**
5. **Yemen update**
6. **AOB**

Minutes

1. BANGLADESH

Security situation

- The situation remains tense especially with the relocation of Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char island.
- There are a total of 582,806 positive cases of COVID-19 in the country with 8,869 deaths.
- On 22 March, a fire broke out at Camp 8W in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar. Based on the primary assessment, the fire started from a gas cylinder blast. The fire swept through camps 8E, 9, and 10, affecting more than 88,000 individuals and destroying more than 10,000 infrastructures including shelters, mosques, community centres, learning centres, service centres, learning facilities, shops, and CIC offices.
- The ETS is working closely with all humanitarian actors on the ground to explore how the team can support.

ETS Response

- The ETS continues to provide connectivity to 222 humanitarians in 34 sites, including e-voucher outlets, Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) treatment sites, logistics hubs and residential hubs. Due to restrictions on importing equipment, the number of sites has not increased.

2. CAR

Security situation

- The security situation remains volatile and unpredictable with violence in different locations.
- Military operations continue with the recapture of towns once controlled by CPC armed groups (Nangha-Boguila in Ouham, Alindao in Base Kotto, Bokolobo in Ouaka). The presence of these CPC elements in isolated areas constitutes a constant danger to the civilian population and a potential obstacle to humanitarian access.

ETC Response

- The ETC is continuing to provide internet access to 579 humanitarian actors in 11 localities (Bouar, Bria, Bossangoa, Batangafo, Alindoa, Paoua, Kangabandoro, Bangassou, Bambari, Birao, Zemio) to facilitate the implementation of assistance to the population.
- The ETC provided support to the international NGO Action contre la Faim (ACF) to solve the coverage problems of the HF/VHF radio network.
- The ETC has responded to the request of UNOPS for configuration and maintenance of VHF radios.

3. LIBYA

Security situation

- The situation remains the same and is relatively calm.
- Politically, the new interim government has now taken power
- The country is in the midst of a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government is taking the appropriate measures to try and mitigate it and may close some education facilities in most cities to prevent the spread of the virus.

ETS Response

- The ETS continues to enhance the coverage of the VHF network in the newly-installed SOC in UN hub in Benghazi. However, the repeater has stopped working due to power outages so the ETS is checking what the issue is to identify what needs to be done to resolve it.
- The ETS continues to provide WiFi to persons of concern in a UNHCR Community Day Centre (CDC) in Tripoli. The ETS continues to collaborate with UNHCR and their partners, including the local ISP, to improve the login and registration process for users. More user guides will be printed in the Tigrinya language for users to help POCs easily access the service, and the team plans to create a multi-language video that will be shown by community mobilizers to encourage more POCs to use the service.
- The team has received a request from OCHA to import Tetra and BGAN equipment into Libya and is working to secure the relevant licence and customs clearance documentation needed.
- UNICEF also requested to import satellite terminal into Libya and the ETS is requesting all the documentation so it can submit a letter to MoFA for customs clearance.
- The ETS-managed inter-agency CFM team is organising an annual partner retreat tomorrow for all partners involved to focus on enhancing their accountability to the affected population and how humanitarian programmes can be adjusted based on feedback received.
- The launch of the Global ETC's first Chatbot project has been postponed until the team has signed with all partners as all existing hotlines, including WFP, will be integrated into the ETS call centre.
- IOM is providing US\$10,000 to enhance CFM services.

4. NIGERIA

Security

- The security situation remains volatile across north-east Nigeria, with an increase in attacks against government security forces.
- There is an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the north-east although no new cases have been reported among humanitarians.

ETS Response

- In March, the ETS provided internet connectivity to 1,350 users from 79 organizations (11 UN agencies and 68 NGOs).
- The hybrid solar-based power system installation has been completed in all sites with final testing and monitoring of the service taking place in the last site.
- The ETS is currently 31% funded for its planned activities this year.
- Radio equipment needed to implement the TESS project at the Security Operations Centre in Maiduguri is expected to arrive by the end of April.

5. SYRIA

Security situation

- An airstrike incident was reported in Bab al Hawar on the border with Turkey an airstrike. As the area has been quiet for over a year, the area is being monitored.
- There are reports about ISIS attacks on Syrian army forces, Kurdish-led forces and civilians especially in rural areas of Al Hassakieh governorate.
- Security issues remain on the road between Homs and Deir Ez-Zor which continues to be monitored by security personnel.
- No incidents have been reported in coastal areas or in the south, although the deteriorating economic situation continues and the severe lack of fuel is affecting the living conditions of the population.
- The number of daily COVID-19 cases reported by the Ministry of Health is increasing with 17,750 new cases reported as of yesterday. Education facilities won't be closed at this stage but random PCR tests will be conducted in schools.

ETC Response

- The ETC has a meeting tomorrow with the supplier of the new security communications equipment to discuss how to proceed with the capacity building and sending equipment. The supplier had previously declined to supply the handheld devices to Syria which had impacted ETC plans to import Push-To-Talk devices as an alternative solution for long distance communications as HF will be phased out by 2025. The PTT devices can be sent to Dubai but not until July.

- Six satphones are stuck on the Syrian border having left Beirut. The ETC has asked UNDSS to assist and approvals to import them will be shared soon.
- The ETC plans to conduct a mission to Tartous to fix a faulty repeater with the necessary approval received. Tartous suffers from severe power outages and lack of fuel meaning UNDSS will be unable to operate the repeater so the ETC will install a solar system.
- Solar systems will be installed in all UNDSS SOCs and the team is waiting for the solar batteries.
 - The ETC Coordinator in Yemen asks if installing solar systems in UNDSS SOCs fall under the ETC mandate. The ETC Coordinator in Syria responds that due to the lack of fuel for generators and power, the ETC has upgraded the system to provide not only a DC system, but also an AC system.
- The ETC plans to upgrade data infrastructure for all common areas. Part of the upgrade involves equipment from the US and the company is waiting for approval from the US Treasury to obtain a special issuance of export licences to Syria as the country is under embargo.
- The ETC's planned oversight mission to all common locations to check common services and identify what other upgrades may be needed remains on hold as most offices are working remotely.
- The team has planned to install solar back-up systems in Homs and Aleppo but the supplier couldn't provide the necessary equipment. The ETC is now exploring alternative suppliers. [This is a different system to that installed in UNDSS SOCs; it is a high-tech solution that utilizes a technology which will last longer and is scalable.]
- The team will submit its inputs to the Syria HRP 2021 by tomorrow with a budget of US\$600,000. However, the recent update is that the ETC will receive US\$900,000 which is the same amount received last year.
- UNICEF colleague notes that regarding possible school closures in some operations, coordinators may consider approaching Programme in case there are any requests to support remote learning, even on an advisory level.

6. YEMEN

Security situation

- The security situation remains volatile with coalition airstrikes reported in Sana'a with military operations increasing in Marib governorate.
- There is an increasing number of COVID-19 cases and deaths in most governorates however no official figures are available.
- Self-isolation period for UN staff remains five days subject to a negative PCR test.

ETC Response

- The ETC is expanding connectivity services to an isolation centre in the dedicated COVID clinic in Sana'a.
- Half of the ETC team is now back in the office.



- On 18 February, the ETC met with the new HC for Yemen and presented on services, challenges and areas of support we need. He committed to support the ETC on the long term funding from OCHA and also the importation of equipment.
- Following the approval of the HRP, the ETC is working with OCHA regarding funding opportunities for the project.
- The YHF funding for Q1 will expire in March but have requested a three-month no-cost extension.
- On 10 March, the ETC hel the virtual workshop plenary with 33 participants from 23 organisations. Partners reviewed the cluster’s 2020 performance, looked at service demand and agreed on priorities for 2021.
- Due to increased demand from agencies in the south, the ETC upgraded connectivity services at the UN hub in Al Mokha, started connectivity services at the UN hub in Marib managed by IOM and the team is monitoring performance.
- In Al Hodeidah, the ETC received a request from INGOs to expand services to them. The ETC already has an INGO hub hosted by PUAMI which covers one part of the city but INGOS from other parts of the city cannot access services. The ETC is now discussing this with Islamic Relief who is in the right location to set up another ETC INGO hub.
- The project to provide connectivity at Aden airport is progressing and is due to be complete by the first week of April.
- The ETC has five pending shipments transiting in Djibouti waiting for pre-import certificates.
- The team has received a request from WHO in Aden to extend services to their new guesthouse.
- The ETC participated in a joint mission with UNDSS to Al Mokha between 13-19 March to do preventive and corrective maintenance and provide technical training for new radio operators.
- In UNCAF, the ETC will soon complete the set-up of a joint server room and IT lab for agencies.

Teleconference/Meeting ended at 13:46 UTC

The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held in April.

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