

## ICT Emergency Cell Working Group – Addis Ababa/Tigray region

**Date: 04/05/2021    Time: 14:00**

### Online Meeting

#### Attendance

Chair	Rami Shakra (UNHCR Senior IT Emergency Coordinator)
IOM	Gaylord Cofie
Office of the RC	DaEun Han
UNDSS	Rustam Salyakhov
UNHCR	Dereje Bezabih Abdalla Khalil
UNOCHA	Nicke Wing
UNICEF	Berhanemeskel Tesfaye
WFP	Tinsae Gidey Ivan Thomas Khawar Ilyas Elizabeth Millership Prakash Muniandy Urs Bultemeier

#### Agenda

1. SOC updates
2. Election preparedness implementation plan inputs
3. CERF application for response in Tigray
4. AOB

### 1. Security Operation Centre (SOC) updates

#### *Harmonization plan –*

- The ICT Emergency Cell continues preparations to implement a security communications harmonization project to ensure telecommunications infrastructure used by UN agencies – including in vehicles and offices – is optimized for use by UN staff.
- Reviewing and testing of the code plugs to achieve common UN VHF and HF channels for the use of all UN agencies has been completed by UNHCR. These code plugs are to be shared among UN agency technicians.
- The pilot phase of the UN harmonization action plan has been agreed – two missions will be carried out to eight sites: Adama, Hawassa, Dessie, Gode, Shire, Embamadre, Asossa and Gambella.



- A summary plan of the harmonization pilot phase is as follows:

a) <b>Comprehensive equipment installation work is to be carried out at the current UNDSS SOC base across four locations including HF, VHF, repeater, solar panels and harmonization of UN channels in SOCs and all UN agency vehicles and as well reprogramming of all handheld radios in the region.</b>					
Location	Planned Dates	Assigned Tech	Vehicle assigned by	Driver	Advance is required for installation Materials
Adama	12-22 May 2021	Atnafu Seyum and Astrael Kokeb	DSS - D/Pickup	Ashebir Dubale	20,000 Br in the name of Astrael from DSS
Hawassa	12-22 May 2021	Tinsae Gidey and Belay Mekonnen	WFP is requested to assign a D/Pickup with driver		10,000 Br in the name of Belay from DSS
Dessie	27 May-7 June 2021	Atnafu Seyum and Astrael Kokeb	DSS - D/Pickup	Ashebir Dubale	10,000 Br in the name of Astrael from DSS
Gode	27 May-7 June 2021	Tinsae Gidey and Belay Mekonnen	WFP is requested to assign a D/Pickup with driver		15,000 Br in the name of Astrael from DSS
b) <b>Harmonization and upgrade work at the SOC base and all agency vehicles and reprogramming handhelds.</b>					
Shire and Embamadre	12-22 May 2021	Melkamu Addisu	UNHCR is requested to assign a vehicle with driver		
Asossa	27 May-7 June 2021	Melkamu Addisu	UNHCR is requested to purchase air ticket for the tech		
Gambella	21-30 May 2021	Elias Ayele - he will continue harmonization work after completing other planned mission from 18-21 May in Gambella)			

- One issue is there is only one pick-up vehicle available for one mission – a second vehicle will be needed.
- The harmonization project will be expanded to additional locations once the pilot phase is complete.

*Expanding network coverage –*

- Issues have been reported with the range of the repeater in Shire. However, UNDSS has carried out coverage mapping of the network and the coverage is as expected. One solution is to raise the WFP repeater in Shire to higher ground, depending on approval from the national authorities.
- A duplexer to support the network in Shire is still in Addis. The UNHCR technician assigned to carry out the mission to Shire [Melkamu Addisu] will bring the duplexer during his mission on 12 May. If possible, Melkamu will assess the new repeater in Shire to find out if coverage expansion is possible.



- A complaint has also been received from the Emergency Coordinator (EC) on the range of the repeater in Mekelle. There are two repeaters in this location – WFP and UNICEF. The WFP repeater has been tested and is found to be functioning well in only some areas. The possible preferred option is to use the UNICEF repeater located on high ground. A plan to test the range of the UNICEF repeater has previously been discussed so that the best working repeater can be chosen.
- The incoming WFP ICT Coordinator will assess these issues further when he is on the ground in Tigray from 11 May and work with UNDSS, UNHCR and others to address network coverage.

#### *Capacity building –*

- There is a need to deliver intensive radio user training to the increasing numbers of new staff arriving in Mekelle.

## 2. Election preparedness implementation plan

- A matrix has been shared by the office of the Resident Coordinator (RC) for completion by the ICT Emergency Cell outlining its planned preparedness actions in the run up to the general election being held in Ethiopia on 5 June. The Cell had previously submitted its draft inputs along with an information map.
- Outstanding actions for the Cell are to confirm the status of the inputs, in particular, to provide mapping of shareable connectivity services within each agency compound, rather than commit to the installation of new VSATs which will not be possible before June. The Cell agencies also need to identify which VHF radio channels are being provided and in which locations. Expectations will also need to be managed within the plan re the importation of equipment such as Thuraya devices, due to government restrictions.
- It was agreed that the plan to strengthen security communications services outlined in the election preparedness plan overlaps with the activities to be implemented under the UN harmonization project.
- The Cell agreed the critical importance of submitting the 'whitelist' – a list of UN office locations and residences of critical staff which – with approval from the national authorities – will retain access to connectivity services in the case that the services of the national ISP [Ethio Telecom] are shut down. A previous whitelisting plan was submitted to the HCT but there is a need to ensure this plan is complete and has been received.
- As the deadline to submit final matrix inputs was 23 April, UNHCR (as lead of the Cell) will ensure the inputs are finalized by 5 May, including inputs from all Cell members on the locations of alternate sites such as staff residences, so these can be submitted for review and endorsement. DaEun Han from the RC's office will share the existing information already submitted by the Cell to facilitate its completion.
  - **Update:** UNHCR has submitted the information for the whitelist. DaEun will share the list with the group to collect information from the other agencies.



### 3. CERF application for response in Tigray

- Following discussions held last week, WFP is submitting a CERF funding request of US\$499,782 by COB on 4 May (date of this meeting) to provide ICT coordination and services for three months in support of the humanitarian response plan for Tigray. This will ensure the team can provide dedicated support and resources for the planned activities currently supported by the ICT Emergency Cell.
- The application aims to manage expectations on what can be achieved within the government guidelines, including the importation of equipment, setting up of Internet connectivity services and other constraints.
- There is no requirement to include the staffing cost of SOC operators in the WFP CERF funding application as UNDSS is providing the resources for this in the three key locations and has initiated the recruitment of five additional operators.
- WFP has also been asked to provide a budget and plan for eight months to cover until the end of 2021. The focus will remain on providing backbone support and services in the three locations of Mekelle, Shire and Embamadre.

#### AOB

- The clearance of the VSAT equipment in customs is pending approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Ministry of Telecommunications (MoT). The RC's office will follow up on this during a call with the MoT on 5 or 6 May.
- A meeting was held with the Operation Management Team (OMT) on 4 May. During the meeting, the OMT endorsed the SOC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) prepared by the Cell, discussed the ICT Emergency Cell SitReps and the pending point about USAID joining the Working Group meetings. The group agreed to have a separate meeting with partners and NGOs. Next steps are to implement the SOP and hear back from USAID to discuss their attendance at the meetings.

All information related to the ICT Emergency Cell can be found on the ETC website:

[www.etcluster.org/emergency/ethiopia-tigray-region](http://www.etcluster.org/emergency/ethiopia-tigray-region)

**Minutes:** Elizabeth Millership, WFP