

## **Bangladesh, CAR, Ethiopia, Libya, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen**

### **Global ETC Teleconference**

**Date: 05/05/2021    TIME: 12:00 UTC**

#### **Attendance**

Chair	Caroline Teyssier	(Global ETC), UAE
Action Contre Le Faim	Thomas Gerard	France
CDAC Network	Fanman Tsang	South Sudan
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Gov't of Luxembourg	Roland Nurenberg	Luxembourg
REACH	Lucasz Kruk	Switzerland
UNHCR	Rami Shakra	Spain
	Massoumeh Farman-Farmaian	Switzerland
	Nizar Zeidan	Switzerland
UNICEF	Ali Al Dhayani	Yemen
	Jalal Tamimi	Jordan
	Antonio Gomes	USA
	Haytem Elgbali	Libya
	Yusuf Oloyede	Libya
UNRWA	Moayad Ayoub	Syria
WFP	Habib Shashati	Bangladesh
	Mohammad Dabdab	Bangladesh
	Francis Koroma	CAR
	Richard Egwangu	Egypt
	Omar Nagy	Egypt
	Khawar Ilyas	Ethiopia
	Liz Millership	Ethiopia
	Damian Stafford-Shaw	Ireland
	Brent Carbno	Italy
	Phyza Jameel	Italy
	Duncan Oyando	Italy
	Fathi Enneji	Lebanon
	Ahmed ElSheikh	Libya

Ernest Aho	Nigeria
Oyintare Kalama	Nigeria
Atmaja Sembiring	Syria
Muhammad Khaled	Syria
Oscar Caleman	Thailand
Oz Hadziemin	UAE
Wali Noor	Yemen
Annabel Symington	Yemen

Teleconference started at 12:05 UTC

## Agenda

1. Bangladesh update
2. CAR update
3. Ethiopia update
4. Libya update
5. Nigeria update
6. Syria update
7. Yemen update
8. AOB

## Minutes

### 1. BANGLADESH

#### Security situation

- The lockdown has been extended for another week due to COVID-19.

#### ETS Response

- The ETS continues to provide services in three common operational areas, including Cox's Bazar, Ukhiya and Teknaf.
- The ETS is providing connectivity to 506 humanitarians in 37 sites 12 NGO and 7 UN, including e-voucher outlets, Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) treatment sites, logistics hubs and a residential hub. Of the 37 sites, three sites are where the ETS is providing connectivity for humanitarians who were relocated following the fire that broke out in the camp in March.
- ETS activities have had to slow down until the lockdown is lifted.
- The importation of equipment remains a challenge with the local market limited.
- The ETS Coordinator remains in Dubai due to the suspension of international flights.
- The ETS conducted a preparedness exercise and prepositioned equipment ahead of the monsoon season.

## 2. CAR

### Security situation

- 75 staff tested positive for COVID-19.
- The security situation remains unpredictable.

### ETC Response

- The team is providing Internet connectivity services to 508 users across 11 sites in CAR.

#### *Phone booths in Bria –*

- The office of the centre supervisor is being finished, alongside the phone booths. The recruitment process for operators has been finalized.

#### *COVID-19 call centre in Bangui –*

- The Ministry of Health (MoH) has given the date of the second week of May to restart the activities of the COVID-19 call centre. The ETC has finalized the contracts of the call centre supervisors.

## 3. Ethiopia

### Security

- The security situation remains volatile with the humanitarian community in the Tigray region continuing to face common ICT challenges in the response to the crisis since it erupted in November 2020.
- An ICT Working Group, chaired by UNICEF, was set up at the beginning of the response. A sub-group – the ICT Emergency Cell – was endorsed by the Operations Management Team (OMT) in February 2021 to address some of the gaps in ICT services with a focus on security communications and data connectivity. There are six UN members of the ICT Emergency Cell – IOM, OCHA, UNDSS, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP.
- The group has identified three key priority locations for the response in Tigray – Mekelle, Shire and Embamadre.
- The team is working closely with OCHA to develop a preparedness plan in the event of further escalations of tension in the lead up to the general election on 5 June. Activities include ensuring the SOCs are fully operational, mapping all UN agencies' locations with available connectivity services and requesting government approval for a 'whitelist' of UN agency sites and residences of critical staff to ensure ISP connectivity services remain available for these locations in the event of a national communications blackout. A service map of all UN agency locations across the country has been shared with OCHA.
- The team faces strict government restrictions on the importation and licensing of communications equipment into Ethiopia.

### Inter-agency Response

- The team has set up Security Operation Centres (SOCs) in Mekelle and Shire to support the safety and security of UN staff as they move around the Tigray region. The SOC in Mekelle is hosted on UNICEF premises with equipment donated by UNHCR, utilizes WFP VHF services, and is staffed by UNDSS operators. The SOC in Shire is located on UNHCR premises and is staffed by UNDSS and UNHCR operators.
- UNDSS is currently planning an assessment ahead of establishing an SOC in Embamadre, which hosts members of the humanitarian community due to its proximity to refugee camps in Adi Harush and Mai Aini.
- At the beginning of the response in November 2020, national ISP services were shut down across the Tigray region, resulting in a high demand on the limited VSAT bandwidth capabilities of individual UN agencies. The ICT Emergency Cell's request to the national authorities for the ISP to be reactivated in the sites of UN agencies and a number of INGOs was granted in March 2021.
- Due to strict government restrictions on licensing and sharing of data connectivity services, it is not possible to establish common Internet connectivity services in humanitarian hubs in Tigray. Currently, humanitarian partners access connectivity services at UN agency locations.
- A WFP ICT Coordinator and Information Management Officer (IMO) from the Global ETC team arrived in Addis Ababa on 3 May to support the Cell and ensure visibility is provided for the teams' activities. UNHCR will also deploy an additional staff member to Ethiopia on 6 May to support the ICT response. All three will be based in Mekelle following a seven-day self-isolation period in Addis Ababa.

#### *Funding –*

- WFP has submitted a CERF funding request of US\$499,782 to provide ICT coordination and services for three months in support of the humanitarian response plan in Tigray. This includes coordination, IM, capacity building, strengthening security communications services and assessing options for humanitarian organizations to access Internet services through national providers.

## **4. LIBYA**

### **Security situation**

- The situation remains the same and is relatively calm.
- 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 provide WiFi to persons of concern in a UNHCR Community Day Centre (CDC) in Tripoli and is working with UNHCR and their partners, including the local ISP, to improve the login and registration process for users.
- 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.

- The team is carrying out final preparations ahead of launching the Global ETC's first Chatbot project that will be integrated into the ETS call centre.
- The ETS has installed a back-up power solution for the security communications equipment at the Security Operations Centre (SOC) in the UN hub in Benghazi to ensure the equipment continues to run optimally.
- The ETS-managed call centre in Tripoli continues to serve as a nationwide COVID-19 information channel as well as a means for affected communities to seek information about other humanitarian issues and to provide feedback on assistance received. In April, call centre operators answered more than 1,600 calls with 9% of calls relating to COVID-19 and the remaining 91% on other humanitarian issues, mainly protection, food security and cash.

## 5. NIGERIA

### Security

- The number of COVID-19 cases in north East Nigeria has decreased with no new cases reported. Vaccinations have started for UN staff and their dependents.

### ETS Response

- Since the beginning of the year, the ETS has provided reliable Internet connectivity services to more than 2,382 users from 87 organizations (15 UN agencies and 72 NGOs) across North-East Nigeria.
- The team resolved 112 issues reported to the ETS helpdesk in April.
- Throughout April, the ETS programmed 21 radios for humanitarian staff — Care International, ACTED, IOM, PUI, UNDP, UNHCR and UN Women — to improve the communication between staff in the region.
- This month, the ETS conducted a webinar session on basic VHF radio use for one participant from Premiere Urgence Internationale (PUI) in Maiduguri.
- The ETS has installed solar power equipment in 8 locations. The team hasn't been able to install in Rann due to the security situation.
- The ETS conducted a mission to Ngala on 16 April to carry out corrective maintenance work on satellite connectivity equipment to optimize services for humanitarians.
- The ETS is planning to conduct a mission to install the Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) system and upgrade existing telecommunications infrastructure in the Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Damaturu.
- The ETS has received US\$750,000 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The ETS is now 69.4 percent funded to continue its activities in 2021.

## 6. SYRIA

### Security situation

- The security situation remains volatile due to the deteriorating economic situation and lack of fuel. Clashes are continuing in the north of the country, particularly Aleppo and Qamishli.
- In the north-west, humanitarians are unable to access until 17 May.
- In Tartous and Latakia, no significant incidents until today when airstrikes were reported.

- The number of COVID-19 cases is increasing.

### **ETC Response**

- The ETC and UNDSS continue to follow up on the six satellite phones held at the border with Lebanon for several months, awaiting MoFA to share its approval with customs authorities. The sat phones will equip the six UNDSS-managed SOCs in Syria.
- The ETC has obtained clearance from the US Treasury to import essential network equipment to install in common operational hubs in Syria to improve Internet connectivity services.
- Restored connectivity in Tartous and installed solar power systems for SOCs.
- The ETC has re-submitted its inputs to the Syria HRP 2021 with a reduced and revised budget of US\$786,152. The submission is currently under review by OCHA.
- The ETC has dispatched solar power solution equipment to the remaining four locations – Homs, Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor and Qamishli – where it will be installed in the UNDSS-managed SOCs in these locations. MoFA approval has been granted to install the solution in Homs from 17-22 May. T
- In terms of national capacity building, the ETC continues to plan the Disaster Management and Emergency Technical Coordination training together with NetHope.

## **7. YEMEN**

### **Security situation**

- The security situation remains volatile with airstrikes continuing in the north.
- Self-isolation period for UN staff remains five days with two PCR tests.
- The ETC continues to provide critical connectivity in isolation centres in Sana'a, Al Hodeidah and Aden.

### **ETC Response**

- The ETC has received US\$1.5 million from WFP, US\$850,000 from the Yemen Humanitarian Fund allocation in January and has been pledged US\$1 million by CERF as outlined in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). With this, the ETC is fully funded to carry out its activities in 2021.
- Following the meeting with RC who met with authorities to get approval to ship equipment from Djibouti.
- Deployment of telecommunications equipment for new SOC in Marib on hold by national security due to security situation.
- Submitted draft workplan for 2021 to OMT for endorsement.
- Due to the increased service demand, the ETC will reactive INGO site in Sana'a and is looking for partners to host ETC services for INGOs in Ibb, Sana'a and Mukalla.
- The team has upgraded the bandwidth in Al Mokha and Aden.
- The ETC signed a new MoU with IOM to host ETC services in Marib which is now operational.
- The ETC plans to provide connectivity in two new INGO sites in Al Hodeidah by Islamic Relief and Sana'a by EC.



- The project to provide connectivity to all passengers at Aden airport is completed and the team is now waiting for the authorities to confirm the official launch date.
- The team has completed the technical assessment for expanding internet connectivity services to the new WHO guesthouse in Aden. The procurement process has started.
- UN joint server room in UNCAF is completed and the ETC is working on SOP to outline use of services.
- In April, 2,400 responders accessed internet and security communications services across Yemen while the Helpdesk received and resolved 4,009 tickets since January.

**Teleconference/Meeting ended at 13:09 UTC**

**The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held in June.**

## 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](http://www.ETCluster.org)

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

**Minutes:** Suzanne Fenton, WFP