

Bangladesh, CAR, Libya, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 28/07/2021 TIME: 12:00 UTC

Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	(Global ETC), UAE
Action Contre la Faim	Thomas Gerard	France
CDAC Network	Fanman Tsang	South Sudan
GVF	Riaz Lamak	India
MSB	John Isaksson	Sweden
NetHope	Dagbjartur Brynjarsson	Iceland
UNHCR	Alexander Thomas	Denmark
	Rami Shakra	Denmark
UNICEF	Antonio Gomes	USA
WFP	Brodie Cribb	Australia
	Amirullah Syarif	Bangladesh
	Ekue Ayih	Bangladesh
	Habib Shashati	Bangladesh
	Monika Bernard	Belgium
	Gisele Mekuatedefo	CAR
	Claudio Siddi	Italy
	Omar Namaoui	Italy
	Ariuntuya Tsendayush	Libya
	Bhawana Upadhyay	Nigeria
	Burak Sezgin	Nigeria
	Mohamedouabou Ndiath	Senegal
	Hikmat Akad	Syria
	Claire Roach	UAE
	Ozdzan Hadziemin	UAE
	Sami Alio	UAE
	Ruaa Nasser	Yemen

Teleconference started at 12:00 UTC

Agenda

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

Minutes

1. BANGLADESH

Security situation

- The ETC continues to operate in three areas: Cox's Bazaar, the mega-camp in Ukha, and Teknaf in the south of the country.
- The security situation is calm at the moment, however security continues to advise caution when moving in the region.
- The monsoon season has started and its impacts on ETC operations are beginning to be felt. There have been some reports of casualties due to flooding and humanitarian agencies are mounting a flood response.
- The COVID-19 lockdown was eased slightly over the Eid al-Adha holidays, but stricter measures have now resumed. The government announced that the lockdown will last at least until 5 August, however it is anticipated that the lockdown will be extended again as it has been since April.

ETC Response

- The ETC is providing Internet connectivity in three operational areas to a total of 441 users, mainly concentrated in the mega-camp in Ukha
- The ETC is supporting all seven UN agencies active in Bangladesh with radio communications. Radio support is not provided to NGOs due to government restrictions on NGO access to radios.

2. CAR

Security situation

- The security situation has been relatively calm over the past month.
- The rainy season in CAR has started, bringing with it violent winds. The ETC will stay vigilant in maintaining its network infrastructure and that of its partners over the season, which is expected to last three months.

ETC Response

- The ETC is providing connectivity across 11 sites in CAR.
- The ETC continues to support the COVID -19 call centre in Bangui managed by the Ministry of Health (MOH). In July, a total of 1,825 calls were recorded, mostly related to COVID-19. 54% of calls came from Bangui, while the remaining 46 percent of callers were from the provinces. Callers mainly inquired about side effects of the COVID-19 vaccination and what to do if a family member contracts COVID-19.
- A mission was carried out in Batangafo from 8–15 July to assess the performance of Internet connectivity services, the feasibility of extending the network, and increasing the availability of the power solution to improve services for humanitarian users. An inventory of equipment was conducted.
- The ETC conducted a range of activities to support its NGO/INGO partners in CAR, including World Vision to evaluate their HF security communications systems, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to relocate their Security Operations Centre (SOC), a data connectivity optimization mission at the offices of Oxfam, testing the VHF/HF equipment of the Alliance for International Medical Action (ALIMA), and providing technical guidance to Fondation Luthérienne Mondiale (FLM) and Triangle Génération Humanitaire (Triangle GH) on purchasing a radio system.

3. LIBYA

Security situation

- The security situation is relatively calm despite a few recent armed clashes in Tripoli.
- The country is preparing for the general election which will be held on 24 December.
- The COVID situation is worsening in the western and southern regions. On 25 July the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) announced 3,845 new covid infections. This brings the total number of infections in Libya to 233,449 cases, of which 43,719 are still currently active. Libya has recorded a total of 3,375 deaths since the outbreak began in the country since March 2020. In response to the worsening situation, the Government of National Unity (GNU) has imposed a curfew from 6AM to 6PM for two weeks and increased the number of vaccination centres.
- The Libyan-Tunisian border is now closed and allowing only emergency cases to pass. United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights continue between Tripoli and Benghazi.

ETS Response

- July saw two ETS missions to Tripoli to assess the quality of the services provided in Libya, one by the ETS coordinator, and another by the Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) assistant.

Security Communications

- Following a meeting with the Security Information and Operations Centre (SIOC) and the Head of IT for the United Nations Support Mission for Libya (UNSMIL), a formal request has been made for a Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) mission to evaluate and make recommendations on how to improve security communications in Libya.
- A request to renew VHF licenses has been sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to be submitted for clearance from the Ministry of Telecommunications.
- There was a delay in receiving a communications toolkit ordered from the World Food Programme (WFP) UAE due to issues with the shipping agent. It is now expected to be received by the end of July. The kit will help to troubleshoot VHF coverage issues in Benghazi.
- The ETS team is still providing equipment importation clearance services and radio programming services on request. The ETS is following up on the request submitted on behalf of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for clearance for a BGAN satellite device.

Services for Communities

- The ETS-provided free Wi-Fi service at the Community Day centre (CDC) in Tripoli was re-established this month after the centre's relocation to a new site. The CDC is managed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR and the Italian NGO Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI). During the re-launch of the service, the ETS team evaluated the log-in and registration process and met with several persons of concern (POCs) to collect their feedback. The registration page now supports 4 languages (Arabic, English Amharic and Tigrinya) and has been simplified. Additional updates will be made to the registration page based on the feedback received. Over the past week, a total of 32 POCs used the free Wi-Fi service in 150 unique sessions.

Common Feedback Mechanism

- To further reduce barriers to accessing information, three new operators speaking Amharic, Hausa, and Tigrinya were hired by the ETS-managed call centre in Tripoli. Services were already offered in Arabic, French and English, bringing the total number of languages in which the service can be accessed to six. From 3 – 23 July operators registered 1,269 cases, the majority of them related to humanitarian services. The remaining calls related to COVID-19.
- ETS team met with the Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) implementing partner Moomken on 7 July to review the performance a newly implemented call management software module that links calls received to the customer relationship management system for tracking cases. The software is now fully operational.
- Positive feedback was received from persons of concern at the CDC who participated in an initial pilot of the Chatbot, Mila. The Chatbot will be integrated into the CFM to provide another channel for affected and at-risk populations to access information on COVID-19 and humanitarian assistance. Final preparations are being made for the official launch of the Chatbot.

4. Nigeria

Security situation

- Following the attacks on humanitarian hubs in Dikwa in January 2021, which also affected the ETS humanitarian hub, the security situation has not improved sufficiently to allow the ETS to return.
- Travel to other regions in the northeast is also discouraged for security reasons except for urgent interventions.
- The COVID-19 situation is worsening across the country, with cases increasing daily.

ETS Response

- There have been issues with the VSAT satellite equipment in Banki and Ngala. The network in Banki is functioning at half capacity, with one of two VSAT devices non-functional. In Ngala, the sole VSAT has only intermittent connection. The ETS team has conducted several missions to conduct repairs and maintenance, however security conditions do not allow for overnight trips, so the time that can be spend on site is limited.
- Corrective maintenance that was planned by Marlink in Monguno and Damasak has been finalised today.
- In July, the ETS programmed 25 radios and conducted training for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Première Urgence International (PUI).
- Training sessions were also held with International Rescue Committee (IRC), and another is planned for next week with Translators without Borders on user policy terms for connectivity.
- The biggest achievement in July was the implementation of the Remote Security Operations Centre (RSOC) in northeast Nigeria thanks to the mission conducted by Sami Alio, FITTEST (WFP Fast Intervention Team) specialist. The RSOC will allow remote radio rooms in six hubs to be monitored from Maiduguri. The RSOC solution has been finalised for six hubs which are now connected to Maiduguri. The RSOC will be implemented in the remaining two locations when the hubs are ready. In Damasak, the equipment is ready for installation, but the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) management is working finding a solution for establishing RSOC operations. In Dikwa there is no equipment and the RSOC solutions will need to be installed from scratch. IOM is planning to make this site operational in 2 months.

5. Syria

Security situation

- The security situation in Syria remains the same, with some conflicts in the northeast and northwest.
- In the northwest three projectiles recently targeted Aleppo, and there has been shelling exchange reported on both sides of the Idlib front line.
- UN operations have not been significantly affected by the above security incidents.

- On 24 July the Ministry of Health (MOH) announced that the total number of COVID-19 cases recorded since the beginning of the pandemic is 26,000, with 1,900 deaths.
- No official numbers have been published by the MoH on the number of vaccines administered in the country.
- WFP Staff in the offices in Syria can use offices and workspaces while respecting social distancing.
- 215 WFP staff and dependents have taken their first dose, while 16 have had both doses.

ETC Response

Capacity Building

- Advanced VHF training with ICOM France is still on hold due to COVID restrictions.
- Disaster management training is being planned with NetHope partners. The ETC is working on the procurement process and waiting on final approvals from the International Humanitarian City in Dubai to host the training. The delivery date for the training will be finalised based on the approvals and COVID restrictions.

Security Communications

- The solar power solution has been finalised for the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) SOCs in Tartous, Homs, Qamishli, Deir Ezzor, and Aleppo. The ETC is awaiting confirmation from the Damascus office to install solar and power backup in the final SOC.
- New end-user equipment ordered to upgrade UNDSS SOCs has been delivered, with the exception of six satellite phones that remain at the border awaiting clearance.
- The ETC's planned oversight mission for all common areas in Syria was finalised this month with a final visit to Qamishli. The ETC is exploring requirements and needs for ETC services in common areas. The main concern is power availability during outages and a lack of fuel. It is currently not easy to access fuel sources, especially in Deir Ezzor and Qamishli areas. The ETC is looking into possible solutions that will support connectivity and security communications in these areas. The slow importation process, which now takes 6-8 months with changes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) clearance process, is a major challenge in implementing a solution. Local market solutions are being explored.
- The ETC is planning to upgrade the data infrastructure for all UN common areas in all hubs. Import license clearances were recently received from the US Treasury for the necessary equipment. The production line for this equipment is moving slowly due to COVID. The latest estimate is that the equipment should be ready to be delivered to the shipping agent within 2-3 weeks.
- The ETC is following up on the 20 VHF devices for UNDSS currently in Dubai. The shipping documents are currently being finalised and the shipping process will be initiated next week.
- The long-term agreement (LTA) conditions for internet and connectivity services document has been finalised with the support of the ETC's ICT partners in Syria, and has been endorsed by the ICT working group. The ETC has submitted the document to the procurement working group so they can launch the tender.

- The ETC in Syria is 100% funded for 2021. Based on existing commitments, the ETS will be able to spend the remainder of the grant from the United States by the grant deadline at the end of October.

6. YEMEN

Security situation

- No updates on the security situation reported.

ETC Response

- On 14 July, the ETC team in Aden met with the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (MOTIT) to discuss and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch the new ETC site that will provide connectivity to all passengers – including humanitarian responders and commercial passengers – at Aden International airport. The ETC has already set up the connectivity infrastructure needed in the Airport and is now waiting for it to be launched by the authorities.
- A joint ETC/UNDSS mission was successfully conducted to Al Mukalla from 26 June -10 July. The mission objective was to build the technical capacity of the radio operators to ensure the security of the humanitarian operations and personnel.
- The ETC team has completed the expansion of Internet services to the new World Health Organisation (WHO) guesthouse in Aden and re-established the Internet connection at the Action Contre La Faim (ACF)-hosted INGO site in Sana'a.
- In response to a request from Première Urgence - Aide Medicale Internationale (PUAMI), the ETC successfully relocated their VSAT station in Aden to their new office.
- The MoU for opening a new INGO site hosted by Islamic Relief (IR) in Al Hudaydah has been finalized. The ETC will support by setting up connectivity services.
- An agreement has also been finalized to support to the WHO-led and funded project to set up two COVID-19 hotlines in Aden and Sana'a. This project is in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MOPHP).
- In response to a request from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the ETC has assessed project requirements and is planning to support the NRC by improving connectivity services in the '90 district' in Aden, where they are based. The project will immediately benefit four INGOs – Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), CARE International, NRC, and ZOA International – and may enable other organizations to move into the area.
- In response to a request from NYCMedics, the ETC has completed the technical assessment to set up VHF network communications services for 20 ambulances in four hospitals in Aden. The project will be funded by NYCMedics.
- The Evacuation and Humanitarian Operations Committee (EHOC) has given its approval to import a shipment of three ETC consignments of equipment from Djibouti to Aden that will be used for three IT projects in Yemen, funded by WHO. This is the final set of approvals needed to ship the equipment.



Teleconference/Meeting ended at 12:36 UTC

The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on 15 September.

Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ALIMA	Alliance for International Medical Action
BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network
CDC	Community Day Centre
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CESVI	Cooperazione e Sviluppo
CFM	Common Feedback Mechanism
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
CIC	Camp-in-Charge
CO	Country Office
EHOC	Evacuation and Humanitarian Operations Committee (Yemen)
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
FLM	Fondation Luthérienne Mondiale
GNU	Government of National Unity (Libya)
GVF	Global VSAT Forum
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IR	Islamic Relief
IT	Information Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
LNA	Libyan National Army
LTA	Long-Term Agreement
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOPHP	Ministry of Public Health and Population (Yemen)
MOTIT	Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (Yemen)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NCDC	National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
POC	Persons of Concern
RSOC	Remote Security Operations Centre
SOC	Security Operations Centre
TC	Telecommunications
TESS	Telecommunications Security Standards
UN	United Nations
UNCAF	United Nations Common Accommodation Facility
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service



UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission for Libya
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
YHF	Yemen Humanitarian Fund

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: Claire Roach, WFP