# Bangladesh, CAR, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen

**Global ETC Teleconference**

**Date:** 07/09/2022 **Time:** 12:00 UTC

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**

## Attendance

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Chair | Omar Namaoui | Algeria |
| CISCO | Eric Knudson | USA |
| Government of Luxembourg | Gilles Hoffmann | Luxembourg |
| Government of Luxembourg | Roland Nurenberg | Luxembourg |
| CDAC Network | FanMan Tsang | United Kingdom |
| Ericsson Response | Lars Ruediger | Germany |
| UNHCR | Alexander Thomas | Denmark |
| UNICEF | Raul Castillo | Senegal |
| UNICEF | Jalal Tamimi | Jordan |
| WFP | Patrick Midy | Bangladesh |
| WFP | Burak Sezgin | Nigeria |
| WFP | Atmaja Sembiring | Syria |
| WFP | Ruaa Nasser | Yemen |
| WFP | Elizabeth Millership | UAE |
| WFP | Mufaro Masuka | UAE |
| WFP | William Gonzalez | Thailand |
| WFP | Mohamedouabou Ndiath | Senegal |
| WFP | Patricia Facultad | Italy |

## Agenda

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

# Minutes

## 1. Bangladesh

### Security situation

- The security situation in Cox's Bazar remains calm.

### ETS response

- The national IT Telecommunications position has been readvertised. The first vacancy announcement (VA) did not yield the required three candidates for the interview process. The shortlisted candidates will undertake the written interview during the week of 9 September.

- The 2023 Joint Response Plan (JRP) is being developed and will be ready by December 2022 for submission to the Bangladesh government.

- The ETS is seeking approval for a locally built network tower in the main humanitarian hub in Modhuchara. This will help to reach more sites and improve security from the current two masts.

- The government is moving some refugees from Cox's Bazar to the island of Bhasan Char. Request has been submitted to the government to approve and deploy a VHF network in Bhasan Char. The Government has indicated that they will need payment for the regular annual fees. Based on this engagement, the ETS estimates that the approval is underway.

- To expand the VHF network in Teknaf, three local suppliers have been identified to provide additional equipment accessories for VHF network connectivity. The Micro Purchase Order (MPO) is almost ready. The Note for the Record (NFR) approval phase is underway to procure the devices for the network expansion.

- The ETS is ready to connect 12 new WFP nutrition sites to the ETS network, pending the set up of electrical power infrastructure. Programme will follow up with the Corporating Partners (CPs) to ensure each site has electrical power infrastructure. Once this is done, all 12 sites will be connected.

- During August, there were network challenges related to an Internet Protocol (IP) address shortage. This has been resolved. The network is now more scalable and can be expanded to over 1,500 user devices. The next phase of the project is to integrate the network monitoring tool—NetCrunch—to mitigate any future challenges.

- Due to the escalating global fuel crisis, the ETS is exploring options to provide solar power in as many sites as possible to save funds and ensure a more reliable power supply.

- In August, data connectivity services were provided to 610 users across 53 sites. 73 tickets were received in August and all were resolved. 8,796 calls were received for August. The average daily call is therefore 284.

## 2. Central African Republic (CAR)

**Security situation**

- Apologies were received.

**ETC response**

- Apologies were received.


## 3. Nigeria

**Security situation**

- The security situation remains volatile. However, the ETS is allowed to stay overnight in all humanitarian hub locations that have a UNDSS presence.

- Pre-election violence is likely to occur in the northeast, according to UNDSS reports. This may affect ETS mobility in the region. The election is scheduled for February 2023. The situation will continue to be monitored.

- 147 COVID-19 new cases were reported across the country in the reporting period August 29 to 4 September. The Maiduguri humanitarian hub had several cases confirmed.

- Heavy rainfall keeps affecting some of the flights to the field. Heavy rain downpours also resulted in four bridges collapsing in Yobe State. This could impact on ETS connectivity services in Maiduguri, if repairs are required on the backup fibre link, which goes through this region.

**ETS response**

- ETS activities are fully funded for the remainder of 2022 into Q1 of 2023.

- The ETS coordinator is out for R&R. The Information Management (IM) Associate is back from Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY) in Rome. The Telecommunications Specialist has also been reappointed.

- Voice and data connectivity service are all up and running in eight locations. However, Banki is running at 50% capacity – a maintenance mission is scheduled in the coming week to bring the VSAT back to 100% capacity.

- So far this year, the ETS has provided connectivity service to 2,958 users from 101 organisations (17 UN agencies and 84 NGOs).

- The ETS continues to provide security telecommunications service in 10 locations, and they are all up and running at full capacity.

- In 2022, radio user training has been provided to 202 individuals from humanitarian agencies, mainly UNHCR and WFP.

- An off-grid capacity solar system project has been initiated for pilot in all sites, except for Dikwa. The plan is to switch from generators to 100% solar energy in all humanitarian hubs to ensure a reliable power source. There is currently a hybrid

power system in place. A FITTEST specialist is scheduled for a mission to assess the solar system project by end of September.

- The services for communities' pilot project to set up a public announcement system in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bama is formally known as the 'In Camp Information Dissemination Project'. At the time of reporting, specifications of the information to be communicated to communities were finalised. Vendors have been identified to provide the service and Procurement is creating the Purchase Order (PO).

- The ETS plans to extend data connectivity services in Maiduguri International Airport to the new UNHAS check-in lounge. This is to support passengers as requested. UNHAS crew and staff are already covered by connectivity in their office.

- The Security Operations Centre (SOC) antenna relocation plan is underway in Damaturu and Yola, as requested by UNDSS. This is to enhance the VHF network coverage for both Damaturu and Yola towns.

- On behalf of Marlink, the ETS is installing Broadband Global Area Network (BGANs) for VSAT troubleshooting in all humanitarian hub locations.

## 4. Syria

### Security situation

- The overall country security situation remains volatile. Various security incidences occurred in the past few weeks.

- On 31 August at 20:00hrs (local time), airstrikes targeted Aleppo International Airport, resulting in material damage and the suspension of all incoming and outgoing flights, including UNHAS flights. The suspension is in place until 3 September. Another airstrike attack targeting locations in rural Damascus occurred later during the same evening, including at a site near Damascus International Airport.

- On 6 September at 2020hrs, Syrian air defense intercepted air-to-surface missiles targeting Aleppo International Airport and Al-Nayrab Airport of Aleppo city, in east rural Aleppo. No casualties or material damage were reported. Flights to and from the airports (including UNHAS flights) have been suspended until a date yet to be announced.

- Food assistance to WFP beneficiaries in northeast Syria remains disrupted due to access challenges through the Tabqa crossing.

- A security operation was launched on 25 August by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Al-Hol IDP/refugee camp in Hassakah, northeast Syria. The operation has disrupted humanitarian activities in the camp.

- On 31 August, the Syrian Government (GoS) deployed military reinforcements to Jasim in northern Dara Governorate and increased scrutiny at checkpoints in and around the town.

- The COVID-19 cases trend continues to decrease across the country. This follows an increase on reported cases in mid-August. At the time of reporting, one WFP office is under orange COVID-19 alert. The rest remain on green alert phase.

### ETC response

- The ETC is continuing to provide internet connectivity services to 350 humanitarians from 11 UN agencies.

- Security communications services is being provided to 660 users from 14 UN agencies across eight sites in Syria.

- The ETC successfully upgraded the solar power capacity in the UN hub in Deir Ez-Zor from 7-11 August. The upgraded solar power system can now meet the requirements of both data connectivity services and the SOC in the hub.

- On 22 August, the ETC re-operationalized solar system panels in the SOC in Aleppo after strong winds caused severe damage to the equipment, which provides power to ETC services.

- An additional (fibre optic) internet link from an alternative ISP is being established by the ETC to improve connectivity services in the UN hub in Deir Ez-Zor. Through UNICEF, the ETC is following up with the ISP to establish the service, following the success of the link test.

- The ETC is planning to conduct a technical workshop focusing on ETC services and solutions from 10 to 14 October in Dubai. The workshop aims to increase the technical capacity and skill of national ICT personnel. With support from WFP UAE, the visa for the participants has been obtained and administrative preparation is ongoing.

- The ETC has obtained all shipping and clearance documents required to ship CISCO network equipment from the USA to Syria. The equipment is for upgrades to the connectivity infrastructure for all common operational hubs in Syria. The ETC is following up on the clearance process with expected clearance time by December.

- Based on the operational exigencies of the UNDSS-managed SOCs to support interagency field missions, the ETC is formulating a solution to equip interagency field missions with a portable power solution. The ETC has received the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) approval and is following up with the Syria Corridor Office to overcome shipment challenges.

- The ETC is following up with the transporter to re-export the ICOM Push-to-Talk (PTT) devices back to Dubai after receiving the feedback from the Syrian Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (SYTRA) confirming the previous disapproval.

- The ETC is following up with UNDSS to obtain the final clearance letter from MoFA for the ICOM VHF equipment. UNDSS has sent a letter to MoFA to release the goods.

- To maintain a contingency stock of VHF repeaters in country, the ETC is reaching out to WFP FITTEST to explore the possibility of supplying ICOM VHF repeaters. The ETC has submitted a request to MoFA to obtain importation approval.

- The ETC is fully funded for activities in 2022 and the remaining funds can support the operation up to Q1 of 2023.

## 5. Yemen

### Security situation

- In general, the security situation remains volatile and unpredictable.

### ETC response

- On 17 August, the ETC Coordinator handed over IT telecommunications equipment to the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (MoTIT), donated by WHO as part of the cluster's capacity building efforts.

- The ETC Coordinator conducted a meeting with partners and local ISPs to determine the level of effectiveness of the current ETC coordination.

- The ETC Coordinator met with the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (SCMCHA) and to obtain approval for the installation of four VSATs in new NGO sites being set up in Sana'a, Ibb, Saada, and Hajjah.

- The ETC in collaboration with UNDP and UNDSS is currently carrying out a joint technical mission to assess the relocation of the SOC Aden to the new UN clinic building provided by UNDP .

- The ETC received a request from the UN Clinic in Aden to provide their office with a stable and reliable internet connection through the UN hub link. The technical team is currently undertaking an assessment of the site.

- During August, the ETC provided data connectivity services to 1,021 users as well as security communication services to a total of 2,513 responders across 17 sites in Yemen.

- The ETC supported the transfer of satellite services to seven Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) in the south to the local service provider. This follows a directive from MoTiT. The service has been activated since 1 September.

- The project to set up ICT services in the office of SCMCHA is in its final stages. Most of the equipment has been delivered. Internet connectivity is now functional in the office.

- In coordination with UNDSS, the ETC completed the development, set up, and handover of the visitor access system for the UN Common Accommodation Facility (UNCAF) in Sana'a. The digital system will enhance the security of the premises by automating the management of visitors' access to the compound.

- The ETC is planning to improve the data connectivity services in the UN hubs in Al Mukalla and Al-Mokha in response to the increased need in connectivity.

- The PO has been approved for the provision of four VSAT stations to install in four new sites for NGOs. Two sites will be hosted by Save the Children, one by Action

Contre le Faim (ACF) and one by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The ETC is now awaiting approval from the government to install the four VSAT stations.

- The ETC received a request from OCHA to assist in the reactivation of a VSAT station in the joint office in Al Hodeidah.

- The ETC received a request from UNDSS in Aden to inspect and repair their VHF radios.

- The ETC is 70% funded out of the required US$3.4 million. Funding of US$900,000 was received from OCHA to support its activities in Q3 2022, and the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) provided an additional US$30,000 to fund partner projects. A further US$1.5 million was committed by WHO in two allocations to continue ETC support for the cholera epidemic, led and coordinated by WHO.

## 6. AOB

**The teleconference meeting ended at 12:25 UTC**

## Next meeting

The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on **Wednesday 12 October**.

# Acronyms

| | |
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| ACF | Action Against Hunger |
| BGAN | Broadband global area network |
| ETC | Emergency Telecommunications Cluster |
| ETS | Emergency Telecommunications Sector |
| FITTEST | Fast IT & Telecommunications Emergency & Support Team |
| GoS | Syrian Government |
| IP | Internet Protocol |
| ISP | Internet Service Provider |
| IT | Information Technology |
| MoFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MPO | Micro Purchase Order |
| NRF | Notes for the Record |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| SDF | Syrian Democratic Forces |
| SOC | Security Operations Centre |
| TDY | Temporary Duty Assignment |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDSS | United Nations Department of Safety and Security |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| VHF | Very High Frequency |
| VSAT | Very Small Aperture Terminal |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

**Minutes: Mufaro Masuka, Global ETC Information Management Officer**