

Bangladesh, CAR, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 27/04/2023 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:

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Attendance

Chair	Komi Amedjonekou	Italy
Government of Luxembourg WFP	Roland Nurenburg Marian Mgbemena Muhammad Khaled Mufaro Masuka Omar Namaoui Patrick Midy Ruaa Nasser	Luxembourg Nigeria Syria United Arab Emirates (UAE) Algeria Bangladesh Yemen

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

- UNDSS continues to closely monitor the serious security concerns across the refugee camps. All ETS staff visits to the camps need UNDSS clearance, a day ahead of schedule.

ETS response

- The ETS installed and implemented a new security measure against unauthorized access to the network by some devices
- The ETS improved the security of its data connectivity network by adding filters which restrict access to certain websites by mobile point of sale (mPOS) devices that are used to redeem WFP e-vouchers.
- The ETS expanded its data connectivity services by adding eight new sites to the network. The ETS also decommissioned two connectivity sites: the Mochoni e-voucher outlet in Teknaf and the IOM site in Camp 19, due to proximity of other functional sites and poor network signal. There are now 83 sites connected to the ETS network.
- Routine maintenance was conducted on site equipment at the Leda WFP e-voucher outlet in Teknaf to ensure uninterrupted data connectivity services.
- The ETS plans to proceed with VHF radio deployment and installation on Bhasan Char Island. Work on the installation will commence on 7 May.
- The VHF radio network for Cox's Bazar is being reviewed. A site assessment plan is being developed, to identify and quantify the radio network needs for all locations. The objective is to develop a new plan to increase the VHF radio network capacity using available minimum frequency pairing of channels. This is to maximize the likelihood of obtaining government approval.

2. CAR

Security situation

- The situation remains calm but unpredictable, due to the ongoing political campaigning ahead of local elections, scheduled for July.

ETC response

- Since the opening of the ETC Cyber Café and Learning Centre in Bangassou, 60 learners have been attending Information Technology (IT) training activities at the centre each week. An additional 1,969 people have visited the Cybercafe and Learning Centre since it opened. The first batch of 60 learners completed the computer training course and were issued certificates of completion of the course on 7 April.
- The WFP Chief Information Officer (CIO), Jay Mahanand, and Regional Bureau for Western Africa (RBD) IT Officer (RITO), Balamine Ouattara, visited the training centre and cybercafe in Bangassou on 7 April to observe the ongoing activities. Partners INTERSOS and Central African Red Cross were part of the mission.
- The phone booth service in Bria is being upgraded to cater for an increased need to make phone calls.

- A new configuration in the customer management software platform used to enable the establishment of the Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in Bangassou and Bouar has been finalized. Partners have been onboarded with both focal points and call operators fully trained on the use of the customer management application.
- To control the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the ETC implements a call center in partnership with the Ministry of Health to help the affected population communicate about their health and symptoms. A total of 270,349 calls have been registered since the opening of the 24/7 COVID-19 call centre in Bangui.
- The ETC charging station service in Bria is used to recharge mobile phones, radio receivers, and other devices by the local community. A total of 34,186 devices have been charged using the service since it opened in September 2021.
- The lack of funding remains a challenge for the operation. The ETC is yet to receive any funds for 2023 activities. The ETC in CAR is consulting with the Global ETC to identify possible partners to take over some activities due to funding limitations.

3. Nigeria

Security situation

- Violence in the northeast and incidents in the northwest continues to be major factors causing instability in parts of Nigeria. UN personnel and partners are advised to be alert and increase security situational awareness.

ETS response

- ETS services—data connectivity, security communications, and customer support—continue to be provided for humanitarian responders across 10 common operational areas.
- In April, the ETS has provided internet connectivity to 1,546 users from 95 organizations (14 UN agencies and 81 NGOs).
- 10 handheld VHF radios were programmed—eight for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and two for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- The ETS trained one UNDP staff in Maiduguri on basic VHF radio communications procedures. The ETC resolved 49 helpdesk tickets for customer support.
- The ETS submitted responses to two OCHA surveys—the Nigeria Annual Humanitarian Coordination Survey for 2022 and the monthly Nigeria Response Planning & Monitoring (RPM) Platform for monitoring period 1 (January 2023) to track and measure annual project implementation activity indicators.
- The vendor proposals to construct the galvanized poles for the services for communities' In-Camp Information Dissemination project in Bama were received and are currently being reviewed. The project is planned to set up a public

announcement system in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bama for broadcasting information to the population.

4. Syria

Security situation

- The overall security situation in the country remains unchanged, with several security incidences occurring in the past few weeks.
- Roadside Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) were detonated in Al-Hasakah and Daraa, while an airstrike hit the city of Al Qunaitra during week of 15 to 21 April.

ETC response

- The ETC in Syria continues to provide internet connectivity services to 11 UN agencies and security communications services to 14 UN agencies across eight sites in Syria.
- Based on a recommendation by the Syrian Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SyTRA), a new request has been submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to request the renewal of VSAT licenses. The ETC received an informal verbal update from SyTRA that the authority will renew the licenses. The ETC is still waiting to receive the formal written approval.
- The ETC is planning to establish an additional VHF radio repeater to extend radio coverage to rural Hama. The ETC has obtained the MoFA approval and final building clearance to conduct the installation. The ETC has obtained MoFA movement approval to conduct the installation between 1 to 15 May.
- To maintain contingency stocks of VHF radio repeaters in Syria, the ETC submitted a new Note Verbale (NV) to MoFA to request amendment of the technical specification of the ongoing equipment importation of VHF repeaters into Syria. The ETC has received the approval and shared it with the WFP UAE support office, and informed Syria customs authority of the permission.
- The ETC plans to conduct a field mission to assess the existing services and identify opportunities for improvement in both Aleppo and Qamishli. The mission is scheduled to take place in May. The ETC has received MoFA movement approval to visit Qamishli and Aleppo for the assessments.
- The ETC has listed the equipment required to upgrade data connectivity services in Deir Ezzor. A NV requesting approval to ship the equipment from Damascus to Deir Ezzor has been submitted to MoFA.
- The remain balance of ETC funds can support the operation up to mid-2023. The ETC is 57.8% funded so far this year.

5. Yemen

Security situation

- The overall security situation on the ground remains unchanged but unpredictable.
- UN and Yemen Airlines flight operations continue uninterrupted in both Sana'a and Aden airports twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays.

ETC response

- In April, the ETC provided data connectivity and security communications services to a total of 2,534 responders across 20 sites.
- The ETC installed dedicated Wi-Fi connectivity with improved bandwidth at the UN hub in Al Mokha to enhance and improve the internet connectivity speed for the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) staff.
- The ETC contacted the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (MoTIT) to follow up on the issuance of the import permit for the telecommunications towers currently in Djibouti enroute to Yemen. The towers will be installed to expand the VHF radio network coverage in Aden, scheduled in May at a date to be confirmed.
- An ETC telecommunications trainer arrived in Aden on 28 April to train UNDSS staff in security radio communications and assess the general performance and Security Operations Centre (SOC) equipment configurations.
- The ETC is reviewing the project proposal submitted by an NGO—All Girls Foundation (AGF)—to assist and support in the IT rehabilitation of a training center in Al-Mukalla city under services for communities' activities.
- Following a request from IOM, the ETC is in the final stage of reviewing the provision of household solar lights project for IDPs in Al Mokha. The project is funded by WFP Yemen and will be implemented by the ETC.
- The ETC, in collaboration with the New Horizon training centre in Sana'a, is providing IT networking, administration and security training to partners. 67 partner staff have been trained and a further 47 personnel are expected to attend the upcoming trainings.
- The ETC is 54% funded which will cover project costs until the end of June 2023. A new funding proposal is being prepared. The ETC is also expecting US\$200,000 from the inter-agency cost-shared budget. Funds will be used to improve network connectivity in the South.

6. AOB

- N/A

The teleconference ended at 12:31 UTC

Next meeting

The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on **Thursday 25 May 2023**.

Acronyms

AGF	All Girls Foundation
CFM	Common Feedback Mechanism
CIO	Chief Information Officer
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IM	Information Management
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IT	Information Technology
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOTIT	Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology
NV	Note Verbale
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RBD	Regional Bureau for Western Africa
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RITO	Regional IT Officer
SOC	Security Operations Centre
SyTRA	Syrian Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
{TESS+}	Telecommunications Security Standards
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNMHA	United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement
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