

COVID-19 Response

ETC Situation Report #7

Reporting period – 01/08/2020 to 22/10/2020

ETC SitReps on the COVID-19 response will be distributed as the situation evolves.

Highlights

- The Global ETC team has identified a vendor to support the development of the chatbot solution. The chatbot will enable health partners and/or humanitarian organizations to communicate and provide accurate country-specific information to affected populations during the COVID-19-related response and beyond.
- To support the COVID-19 response in Bangladesh, the ETS continues to coordinate the provision of critical data connectivity in 22 Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) treatment centres and Isolation and Treatment Centres (ITC).
- In Libya, operators at the ETS-managed call centre have answered more than 14,400 calls on the COVID-19 pandemic and other humanitarian issues.



The ETS team in Bangladesh is coordinating the provision of connectivity in Severe Acute Respiratory Infection treatment sites.

Photo: WFP/Nusrat Jahan

Situation Overview

As of 18 October, the global number of confirmed COVID-19 cases surpassed 40 million, with the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) reporting nearly 1.1 million deaths in 218 countries, areas or territories. The incidence of new COVID-19 cases has continued to accelerate, while the incidence of new deaths has remained relatively stable.

Around 11.8 million cases and 409,000 deaths have been confirmed in the 63 countries covered in the COVID-19 [Global Humanitarian Response Plan \(GHRP\)](#).



ETC Activities

Global ETC

- Amid travel restrictions and work-from-home situations, ETC/ETS teams continued to provide vital communications services to humanitarian responders in Bangladesh, Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Nigeria, the Pacific, Syria and Yemen.
- Information on the ETC response to COVID-19 – including ETC operational guidance, the updated Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP), Situation Reports and [infographics](#) – are available [here](#).

ETC/ETS operational activities

- To support the COVID-19 response in **Bangladesh**, the ETS continues to coordinate the provision of critical data connectivity in 22 Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) treatment centres and Isolation and Treatment Centres (ITC). So far, 11 sites have been connected with the ETS directly providing connectivity in two IOM-managed sites and ETS partners, including UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) providing connectivity in nine.

Despite the restrictions on the movements of humanitarian staff to curb the spread of the virus, the ETS team continues to provide regular maintenance, assessments and installations to ensure the provision of reliable Internet connectivity to the response community across refugee camps in its operational areas in Cox's Bazar.

- Operators at a dedicated COVID-19 call centre established by the ETC in Bangui, **Central African Republic** (CAR), continues to answer calls from the general public to assist the government's response to the virus. Operators provide support and advice, while referring cases with COVID-19 symptoms to the Ministry of Health.
- In **Libya**, the ETS-managed call centre established in Tripoli in February, continues to serve as a humanitarian hotline as well as the dedicated national COVID-19 hotline to support the government's response to the pandemic. To date, the call centre has received more than 14,400 calls. The majority of COVID-19-related calls were from people asking for information, such as awareness messages, useful contact numbers and locations of emergency centres. Operators provided official guidelines and referred those with potential COVID-19 symptoms to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).
- The ETC in the **Pacific** continues to formulate a project plan to spend US\$600,000 received from USAID/BHA and an additional US\$310,000 received from OFDA for the response to COVID-19 in the Pacific, including the design of a common feedback mechanism (CFM) project.

The ETC is in discussions with Vanuatu's Ministry of Health on their requirements to implement a new teleconferencing system to facilitate remote working.



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- As part of the COVID-19 response in **Yemen**, ETC Internet connectivity services are now available in quarantine centres in Aden and Al Hudaydah.

The ETC has received the necessary funding to proceed with the upgrade of a COVID-19 hotline in Sana'a for the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP) and the establishment of a new COVID-19 hotline in Aden to support the country's response to the pandemic.

Challenges

- COVID-19-related travel restrictions have hampered ETC activities, including staff recruitment, deployment and field missions.
- The budget issues faced by some operations are impacting ETC activities in providing services to humanitarians and affected communities. This situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and response.

Information

- A dedicated COVID-19 information-sharing space is available on the ETC [website](#).

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