

Haiti Earthquake

ETS Situation Report #3

Reporting period 27/08/2021 to 03/09/2021

Following the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that struck southwest Haiti on the morning of 14 August 2021, the Global ETC has been coordinating with its partners globally and on the ground to assess and respond to the ICT needs for the response. While clusters are not activated, national sectors, including the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS), are supporting the government response efforts.

Highlights

- A radio network for security communications services in Les Cayes was established thanks to WFP and equipment provided by emergency.lu and UNDSS Haiti.
- ETS partners on the ground have established Internet connectivity at the government operations centres (COUN in Port-au-Prince and the COUD in Les Cayes) and the corresponding on-site Security Operations Coordination Centres (OSOCC) in both places.
- The ETS is continuing to engage with partners to assess the ICT needs of organisations contributing to the humanitarian response. ETS partners are providing connectivity both for humanitarian workers and the affected populations in several communes in the districts of South (Sud), Grand'Anse and Nippes, and are expanding to support needs in new operational areas.



Photo: WFP FITTEST installs a VHF repeater in Les Cayes

Situation Update

- 11 sectors, including the Emergency Telecommunications Sector, are providing support to the Government of Haiti in responding to the humanitarian needs following the earthquake. All sectors have submitted their initial plan and requirements to the Flash Appeal that was launched by OCHA on 25 August.
- Most major roads between Port-au-Prince and Les Cayes have been cleared, however security remains a major concern, with some incidents reported of armed groups looting aid trucks and even attacking

Haitian National Police stations in the most unrestful areas. The logistics sector is organising daily truck convoys from the capital to the affected areas, in addition, a barge service operates between Port-au-Prince and the major towns, including Miragoane, Jeremie and Les Cayes.

- The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) continues to provide helicopter transport for humanitarian workers. Requests from registered humanitarian organizations can be sent to haiti.unhas@wfp.org. Commercial airlines also continue to operate. Requests for the transport of humanitarian cargo by US Military helicopters can be submitted through haiti.logisticsservice@wfp.org.
- The Global ETC is liaising with REACH, Internews and OCHA's Accountability to Affected Populations' Advisor to identify if any joint assessments are planned and to include questions on connectivity, access to radios, and early warning systems. Internews and Fondation Hironnelle are also planning to conduct an assessment on local media capacity.
- Despite some reported damage to infrastructure, local Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) are still able to provide voice and data communications in most areas. However, due to poor connection quality and network congestion, VSAT may be required as a backup for humanitarian and government relief operations.

ETS Response Activities

- Runar Holen, a WFP FITTEST (Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team) coordinator arrived in Haiti on 23 August to continue the interagency coordination activities initiated by Patrick Midy, WFP Haiti Head of TEC. The first in-person ICT Working Group meeting since the earthquake was held in Les Cayes on 27 August and was attended by responders from emergency.lu, the Finnish Red Cross, Help.NGO, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), UNICEF, and WFP. A WhatsApp group (Haiti ICT working group) has been created to facilitate informal information sharing and coordination among partners on the ground. For access to the group, please contact Haiti.ETS@wfp.org.
- The WFP team has established a VHF radio channel in the town of Les Cayes, to provide inter-agency security communications services in the city, through a repeater borrowed from Emergency.lu and additional equipment from UNDSS. This is a temporary installation while the team awaits permission to install permanently at a local ISP's tower in centre of town. On the ground testing shows relatively good coverage over the key parts of Les Cayes town but coverage in other parts of the district will be limited due to the antenna installation's low physical height. (Coverage map below.) The repeater uses the same channel/frequencies used in Port-au-Prince. In addition, other duplex and simplex frequencies have been identified and will be utilized in VHF radio network to be established in the town of Jeremie, through a joint effort from UNDSS, WFP and the ETS.

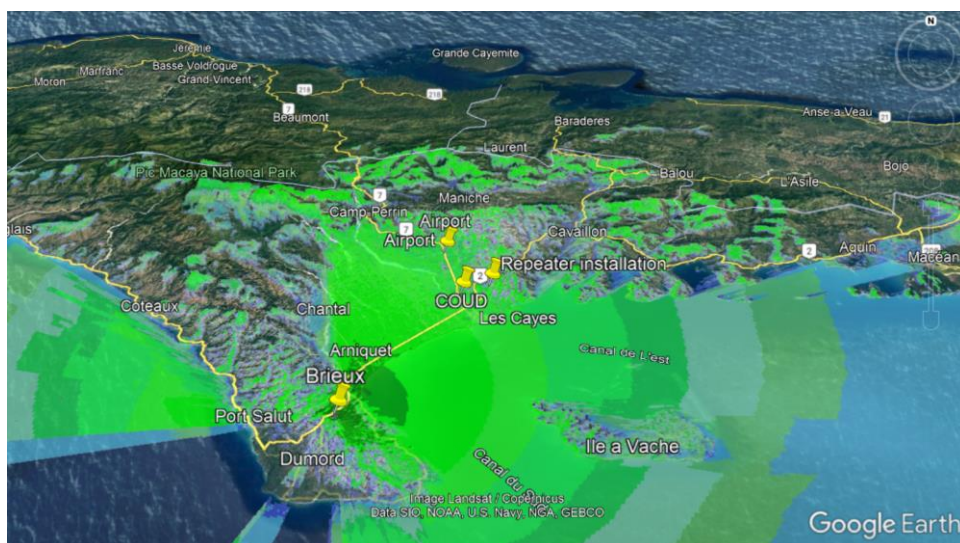


Fig 2: Coverage map for VHF repeater installed temporarily in the city of Les Cayes

- Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) has established Internet connectivity through a local ISP at the sub-OSOCC in Les Cayes, while keeping the initial connection tool, a Global Xpress terminal, as back-up connectivity. With a generator provided by WFP Haiti and assistance from emergency.lu and Ericsson Response, a link was established from the sub-OSOCC to the Les Cayes Departmental Emergency Operations Centre (COUD) on 31 August.
- UNICEF has established an office in Les Cayes where it will host other UN Agencies, including UNDSS, WFP, IFAD, and WHO. Help.NGO is providing temporary VSAT connectivity for the office while installation of local ISP connections is pending. UNICEF will provide guest Wi-Fi services for visiting partners and the ETS jointly with UNDSS may seek to establish also a radio communications support function at same office.
- The Disaster Connectivity Map for Haiti, available [here](#), is being updated regularly to show the current state of the telecommunications network in the country. The map is an initiative of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the ETC with support from the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA). Partners on the ground are encouraged to provide feedback on the accuracy of the map and download the SpeedChecker App (available for [android](#) or [iOS](#)) to anonymously upload data to the DCM data gathering platform.

Additional activities

- Emergency.lu, with the help of Ericsson Response, has established VSAT connectivity at the water treatment plant in Cavailon in support of a French Civil Protection team.
- The Finnish Red Cross has completed their assessment in Port Salut and is now planning to establish Internet connectivity and secure radio communications for the Haitian Red Cross at Camp-Perrin, north of



Les Cayes. The Finnish Red Cross is also planning to support a field hospital in Les Cayes with Internet Connectivity.

- In response to a request from IFRC, Help.NGO has performed air-based assessments using drones over Port-a-Piment, Chardonnières, and Les Anglais areas to gather imagery to support IFRCs operational planning. Help.ngo has also provided useful information about status of telecoms towers in Jeremie (a town which is currently difficult to access by road due to a key bridge destroyed.)
- TSF and Help.NGO have been conducting itinerant operations in isolated communities in various communes of the South district (based out of Les Cayes) to assess connectivity needs and provide access through LTE mobile hotspots and satellite communications. In most conditions voice and data connectivity was poor or non-existent, and ETS partners assistance welcomed. In other and more remote locations, populations never had voice or data communications even before the earthquake.
- ITDRC has been providing Internet to responding organisations in Tivernil, Fond de Negres, Melon, Lambe, Maniche, Camp-Perrin, and city of Les Cayes and supporting teams going on mission to rural areas with portable connectivity and telecommunications equipment. ITDRC is also providing communications support to small community groups organizing recovery efforts.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC teleconference on the Haiti Earthquake will take place on **7 September 2021**.

Information

- Humanitarian ICT responders supporting the Haiti operation across the region are encouraged to share their contact details with Haiti.ETS@wfp.org to facilitate coordination efforts.
- A dedicated information-sharing space on activities in Haiti can be found on the [ETC Website - Haiti Operation page](#).

Contacts

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