

Pacific – Cyclone Yasa

ETC Situation Report #4

Reporting period 6 – 28 January 2021

ETC Pacific SitReps on Cyclone Yasa will be distributed in line with the evolving situation on the ground. The ETC in the Pacific has been activated since 2016 under the structure of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) to support the region's telecommunications preparedness activities across the Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

Highlights

- The ETC continues to support the response to Cyclone Yasa from Suva, Fiji, by working with regional partners and authorities to fully restore communications services across northern Fiji.
- The ETC's findings and recommendations from the connectivity assessments carried out in Vanua Levu were sent to Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to support the recovery of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs).
- The ETC is utilizing a portion of the US\$75,000 contributed by the Brazilian government to WFP for the response to Cyclone Yasa to purchase communications equipment.



ETC Coordinator for the Pacific – Shantal Boodhun – delivers training on emergency satellite terminals while in the field in December 2020.

Photo: RFMF/ETC

Situation Overview

On 17 December, Category 5 severe Cyclone Yasa barrelled into Fiji causing catastrophic damage and destruction. Most damage was caused on Fiji's second-largest island of Vanua Levu.

Essential services and critical infrastructure continue to be restored in the Northern Division of Fiji and the coordination of humanitarian assistance continues for cyclone-affected communities. Managed by Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), the inter-sector response is transitioning into the early recovery phase.

All evacuation centres have now closed following the focus by Fijian authorities on ensuring all those remaining in evacuation centres were able to return home.

ETC Activities

- In response to Cyclone Yasa, the ETC Coordinator in the Pacific deployed to the worst-hit island of Vanua Levu from 20 December-1 January to assess the availability of connectivity across multiple cyclone-affected sites. The ETC assessments focused on humanitarian assistance distribution sites. The ETC also supported Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) to conduct damage assessments as part of the country's emergency telecommunications response plan.
- ETC activities were supported by satellite equipment and bandwidth received from Inmarsat as part of the activation of the Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC) on 17 December. The CCC is now being deactivated in response to Cyclone Yasa.
- The ETC's findings and recommendations from the connectivity assessments were sent to Fiji's NDMO for further follow up with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and telecommunications providers to support their recovery.
- The ETC Coordinator returned to Suva, Fiji, on 1 January after completing the connectivity assessments and is continuing to support the response to Cyclone Yasa from there by working with regional partners and authorities to fully restore communications services across northern Fiji.
- The ETC is utilizing a portion of the US\$75,000 contributed by the Brazilian government to WFP for the response to Cyclone Yasa to purchase equipment needed to improve communications infrastructure in Fiji including satellite terminals, satellite phones, tablets and power banks to support the NDMO.

Funding

- The Government of Brazil has contributed US\$75,000 to the World Food Programme (WFP) in the response to Cyclone Yasa, a portion of which is to be used by the ETC to restore and improve emergency communications services and infrastructure in Fiji.

Challenges

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacts on various aspects of emergency response in the Pacific, including the restricted movement of equipment and personnel.

Information

- A dedicated information-sharing space on the ETC's response to Cyclone Yasa in the Pacific can be found on the ETC website: <https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/fiji-cyclone-yasa>
- On 17 December, the Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC) was activated to support ETC response efforts for Cyclone Yasa. It was the second time the CCC was activated in the Pacific in 2020, following the response to Cyclone Harold in April. The CCC is now being deactivated in the response to Cyclone Yasa.



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