



Philippines – Typhoon Rai / Odette

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 22/12/21 Time: 13:00 UTC

Attendance

Chair: Caroline Teyssier (Deputy Global ETC Coordinator)

| Organisation | Name | Organisation | Name |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| ACF | Thomas Gerard | WFP | Martin Kristensson |
| CDAC Network | Fanman Tsang | | Claire Roach |
| Cisco Crisis Response | Matt Runyan | | Caroline Teyssier |
| | Joseph Harrison | | Emma Wadland |
| Ericsson Response | Mike Duffin | | Oscar Caleman |
| | Lars Ruediger | | Ozdzan Hadziemin |
| Gov't of Luxembourg | Bram Kriepps | | Omar Namaoui |
| | Gilles Hoffman | | Brent Carbno |
| GSMA | Isaac Kwamy | | Prakash Muniandy |
| ICRC | Dennis Burcer | | Ria Sen |
| ITU | Paul Hamilton | | Maria Saleh |
| | Vanessa Gray | | Maria Gonzalez Garcia |
| MSB | John Isaksson | | Arnel Penaverde |
| | Daniel Hjarne | UNHCR | Alexander Thomas |
| NetHope | Dagbjartur Brynjarsson | | Min Sun |
| | Stephanie Siy | Save the Children | Cristian Alfaro |
| Plan International | Bhavin Patel | | Donald Borja |
| | Jake Serna Jr. | | Mark Hawkins |
| | Albert Nabong | | Shakil Gurung |
| US Department of State | Joe Burton | WVI | Anthony Kimani |

Teleconference / Meeting started at 13:00 UTC

Agenda

1. Situation Update
2. Partner Update
3. AOB

Minutes

1. Situation update

- Super Typhoon Rai/Odette made landfall in the Philippines on 16 December and passed through several islands in central / southern Philippines. The impacts are spread out over a wide area. The hardest hit areas are the eastern islands of Dinagat and Surigao Island. Initial photos show that all telephone poles and towers have been blown away, as well as many buildings destroyed.
- Many of the smaller islands have not been assessed yet and most locations are heavily populated areas which means there are probably many people who need assistance.
- Most of the island of Mindanao, south of the typhoon's path, lost electricity and communications (connectivity) for almost a day. Electricity and connectivity are in the process of being restored.
- On the mainland of Visayas, north of the typhoon's path, most connectivity seems to have been restored already despite heavy storm impacts.
- The impacts on the western islands, including Cebu, seem to have been less as the typhoon had lost some strength by the time it hit there. However, information gathered by ITU in the Disaster Connectivity Map and by NetHope based on Facebook data and reports from members on the ground suggest that there are also large connectivity gaps on the western islands.
- The government had begun preparations several days in advance and had moved many people in the areas that were most affected to evacuation centres. However, many homes and livelihoods have been destroyed in the affected areas.
- The government Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) – national ETC lead - also had a team prepositioned with telecommunications equipment and VSATs in Maasin City and Surigao City.
- A WFP IT technician has been supporting the DICT in setting up their operations in Surigao city and has been providing information from the ground.
- There has not been limited international humanitarian support due to the strength and rapid response of the Philippines government, however they requested additional assistance on 20 December that triggered mobilization.

- An assessment was done yesterday, and initial work is underway to better define the scope of the operation. There was a decision made this morning to focus the humanitarian response on Dinagat Island and Surigao Island.

Connectivity and Electricity Situation

- Surigao City, on the mainland of Mindanao has been without connectivity and electricity for almost a week. Voice and text communications are starting to recover in most areas. In some locations, including central Surigao City, data connectivity has started to return today.
- Electricity still has not returned and as per one of the OCHA SitReps, it said that power may not be back in all areas for another 5-6 months. Sustainable power sources for any solutions ETC partners will be putting place should be considered.
- On Vasayas island connectivity services are also starting to come back along with electricity in many locations.
- On the eastern islands electricity and connectivity is completely gone. All the commercial suppliers are completely out of service. The area was previously supplied by connectivity over microwave.
- The severely impacted area stretches out over roughly 150km by 150km and it is highly densely populated.

Initial actions / support to the government

- WFP had been supporting the government working very closely with the DICT prior to the typhoon to build the Government Emergency Communications System (GECS) - Mobile Operations Vehicle for Emergencies (MOVE) solution. Several MOVE units, which consists of a mobile coordination centre with a heavy-duty off-road vehicle, motorcycle, and drones equipped with communications equipment, had been pre-positioned in various locations and are now in use for the response. More information on the GECS - MOVE solution can be found [here](#).
- Two sets are deployed in Surigao City. One is supporting the government coordination hub with comms and connectivity. The other set is on stand-by to be deployed in the field.
- Two sets are currently on the move and will be deployed in the government hubs at Iloilo City and on Cebu.
- Two small Ku terminal VSATs have been deployed to Surigao Island and Dinagat island, where there is currently no connectivity or power. They do not have the capacity to service a humanitarian or government intervention.



MOVE unit in Surigao city

Response plan

- There is no plan for formal international cluster activation. WFP was requested to support DICT - the national ETC lead in country – with additional emergency telecommunications services and coordination amongst humanitarian organizations on the ground.
- The focus of the response so far has been on supporting the government. There is need for microwave / access points equipment or any solutions that could help link remote offices and provide and distribute connectivity.
- The government is also looking at providing services to the population and would need support with access control systems and a way to register and manage users accessing Internet. VSATs are available on the local market but user management systems is the most needed requirement at this stage in order to be able to make use of them.
- In terms of support to humanitarians, so far there are very few staff on the ground. IFRC is present in the areas.
- The islands are serviced by vessels but it is very time-consuming to travel between them and the mainland. Humanitarian organisations will likely establish a permanent presence on those islands.
- The ETC partners supporting the response will be working closely with the government throughout the response. In many locations, humanitarians will likely be co-located with the government and will be sharing connectivity with each other.
- The Logistics cluster are not at this point in time planning to establish a separate humanitarian logistics hub, but rather will support the government logistics hub. Many of the vessels going to the islands will be based at the government hub.

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- While it has been possible to procure VSATs locally, there is no guarantee of the quality of service. Additional VSAT equipment is needed in order to bring connectivity to the population.
 - 30 potential sites are under discussion, however initial plan would be to support up to 20 sites.

Travel restrictions

- All COVID-19 travel restrictions remain in place so far and have not been waived for humanitarian responders and this include quarantine on arrival.
- Currently unless you are a national or already have a valid diplomatic visa, you must initiate the visa application process which under normal circumstances takes at least a month.
- WFP has been asking the government for a fast track of visa to be able to mobilize staff rapidly in the affected areas. An initial list of staff that is ready to deploy is put forward.

2. Partner Updates

- Cisco Crisis Response has depots in the Philippines and is looking into what equipment is there and how quickly it could be sent out. Cisco is looking into whether their point-to-point equipment is certified for use in the Philippines. There they have switching, router and wireless equipment that could be used. They also had a call with their staff in the Philippines and surrounding areas who have been in close contact with the national disaster management agency. The government seems to have built a solution similar to MOVE with another partner that will be deployed to a different island. More information will be shared.
- ITU has begun a data collection campaign 24 hours ago to populate the [Disaster Connectivity Map](#), which is an initiative of ITU and the ETC with support from the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA). The gaps are quite apparent across the central islands, including the western islands, compared with the baseline data gathered in May last year. ITU will provide regular updated data for the next few days.
- NetHope shared a map based on Facebook data from 19 December which confirms that there appear to be significant outages on the western islands as well as the eastern islands that are currently the focus of the humanitarian response. This data mirrors reports received from NetHope members on the ground. NetHope is assessing the needs of its 27 members currently on the ground in the Philippines. Due to a lack of connectivity in Cebu they are having difficulty getting reports back from assessment teams. There are some locations with voice connectivity but it is low speed and there are congestion problems. The next NetHope meeting will be held on 27 December, at which members will share their SitReps. NetHope may have some usable equipment in Dubai, including point-to-point and is happy to mobilize it as well to support with NGO coordination.
- Emergency.lu has asked WFP to ship three of its VSATs to the Philippines and can provide remote support for their setup. If there is a solution on the visa issues emergency.lu staff could also deploy, however this is not being planned at the moment.

- Ericsson Response are looking into a deploying two staff pending feasibility.

Teleconference / Meeting ended at 14:00 UTC

Next Teleconference/ Meeting will be held on 27 December at: 14:00 UTC

13:00 UTC
14:00 Rome
17:00 Dubai
20:00 Bangkok
21:00 Manila

Acronyms

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|------|---|
| ETC | Emergency Telecommunications Cluster |
| DICT | Government of the Philippines Department of Information and Communications Technology |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| IT | Information Technology |
| ITU | International Telecommunication Union |
| MOVE | Mobile Operations Vehicle for Emergencies |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| VSAT | Very Small Aperture Terminal |

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website:

<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/super-typhoon-rai-odette-philippines>

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: global.ETC@wfp.org

Minutes: Claire Roach, Global ETC Information Management Officer