

Philippines, Typhoon Rai / Odette

Global ETC Teleconference #6

Date: 31/01/2022 Time: 13:00 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

CDAC Network
Cisco Crisis Response
Government of Luxembourg
GSMA
ITU

NetHope

UNHCR
USAID
US State Department
WFP

World Vision International

Brent Carbno

Fanman Tsang
Matt Wood
Gilles Hoffman
Isaac Kwamy
Vanessa Gray
Paul Hamilton
Ingolfur Haraldsson
Dagbjartur Brynjarsson
Massoumeh Farman Farmaian
Lucia Chile
Joseph Burton
Omar Namaoui
Clara Aseniero
Patricia Facultad
Phyza Jameel
Martin Kristensson
Amirullah Syarif
Lars Peder Svensson
Lars Ruediger
Catherine Mones
Martin Winkler
Aramais Alojants
Caroline Teyssier
Ozdzan Hadziemin
Claire Roach
Anthony Kimani
Arnel Go

Canada

United Kingdom
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UAE
UAE
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Singapore

Agenda

1. Situation update
2. Global ETC update
3. Partner updates

Minutes

1. Situation update

Connectivity

- An in-person assessment conducted by the WFP IT emergency coordinator and Ericsson Response ICT specialist in Southern Leyte found that there is stable voice and data mobile connectivity along the western coast of Leyte, except in Maasin City and its surroundings where significant congestion of mobile data services was observed. Measurements were taken using a locational speedtest app.
- The town of Sogod and its surroundings also was found to have stable mobile data coverage, while the rest of the peninsula of Southern Leyte is mostly without data connectivity.
- On the island of Bohol, good progress has been made by the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) on the recovery of connectivity. It is expected that data connectivity will be restored in all major towns. The main feeder cable to Bohol island is not working. A temporary electricity solution is expected to be implemented in the next few months, but it will likely take much longer before the regular power supply is restored.
- Connectivity and electricity seem to be available in most areas on Cebu island.
- There is a lot of ongoing restoration work in northern Mindanao. There is mobile coverage in Surigao city and many other areas in northern Mindanao, however electricity is still a challenge in many areas. Power is still not fully restored in Surigao city, with many areas away from the major roads still facing outages.
- The biggest needs in terms of connectivity are seen in the eastern islands in the Caraga region. Restoration work is ongoing, but it is expected to take much longer before services are restored.
- The [Disaster Connectivity Map](#) (DCM) has been gathering data from the Philippines since 21 December and has been updated regularly to show the status of access to connectivity in the affected area compared to baseline measurements taken before the typhoon.
- From 7-18 January, the DCM showed an increasing number of connectivity data points in the eastern islands of Dinagat, Siargao and Socorro, however since 17 January the number of data points received dropped significantly.
- One possible explanation is congestion in the backhaul. The MNOs may have prioritized voice calls (limited data) in order to ensure the availability of quality voice services over limited backhaul capacity.

Humanitarian Activities

- There are significant numbers of humanitarians active in Surigao City, however there is still very little humanitarian presence in Southern Leyte.
- Several UN agencies are still looking into setting up a hub in Southern Leyte. Sogod City is now being considered as an alternative to the regional capital, Maasin city, as Sogod is closer to the area of operations and has better connectivity.
- A site has been identified for a humanitarian hub in Surigao City near several hotels that have attracted a lot of humanitarian actors.
- WFP has staff in Surigao city and Butuan city, and the logistics cluster are also providing services in the Surigao area. WFP has begun distributions on Dinagat Island and is planning to distribute cash and vouchers on Siargao island.
- It is expected that humanitarians will be setting up a more permanent presence on the eastern islands, however no locations have been identified for a humanitarian hub so far.
- Some agencies have been setting up their operations in Tagbilaran on Bohol island, which is a four-hour drive from the most affected area on the north side of the island. Ubay may be another potential location for the coordination of humanitarian activities on Bohol.

2. Global ETC update

- Over the last week the WFP IT emergency coordinator and an Ericsson Response ICT specialist have been travelling around Southern Leyte and Bohol island to assess the status of connectivity and support the infrastructure that has been deployed.
- All five staff supporting the ETC response on the ground are currently in Surigao City.
- The Ericsson Response ICT specialist has been working with PLDT, the largest fibre broker in the Philippines to identify options for establishing connectivity for the humanitarian hub in Surigao.
- There is a lot of activity going on to restore fibre connectivity in Surigao and much of the infrastructure is on track to be restored within a couple of weeks to a month.
- The impacts on the power infrastructure seem to be much more severe than the connectivity situation.
- The ETS is waiting to hear from the humanitarian organisations on the ground which areas they see as the priority and specific locations for common operational hubs on Bohol and in the eastern islands.
- Once the locations are identified, the ETC will work on establishing dedicated services there. In the meantime, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) continues to provide connectivity for the government and humanitarians in several locations across Dinagat Island, Siargao Island, Socorro Island, and Bohol Island.
- The main challenge to the operation has been COVID-19, as cases are rapidly spreading. Currently only two of the five team members are out of quarantine with no symptoms.

3. Partner updates

NetHope

- NetHope is providing DICT with five HF ham radio kits.
- NetHope is distributing satellite phone to Local Government Units (LGUs) and establishing networks in five locations on Cebu Island and Bohol Island in response to requests from its members.

The next teleconference will be held on 7 February 2022 at 12:00 UTC

12:00 UTC
13:00 Rome
16:00 Dubai
19:00 Bangkok
20:00 Manila

Acronyms

CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
DCM	Disaster Connectivity Map
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team
LGU	Local Government Units
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MOVE	Mobile Operations Vehicle for Emergencies
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
WVI	World Vision International

Minutes: Claire Roach, Global ETC Operational Information Management Officer