

Tonga

Global ETC Teleconference #12

Date: 18/05/2022 Time: 06:00 UTC

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

<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/tonga-volcanic-eruptionsunami>

For more information or to be added or deleted from the mailing list please contact:

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Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	UAE
Government of Luxembourg ITU	Roland Nurenberg Paul Hamilton Vanessa Gray	Luxembourg Geneva Geneva
Northwest BPO WFP	Joshua Kimbrow John Dovale Kehinde Adewara Aramais Alojants Omar Namaoui Clara Aseniero Patricia Facultad Marc Dieng	Philippines Fiji UAE UAE Algeria Italy Italy Spain
UNICEF		

Agenda

1. Disaster Update
2. Global ETC update
3. Partner updates

Minutes

1. Disaster Update

- Tonga and Fiji experienced a minor earth tremor on a scale of 3.6 to 3.9 starting on Friday 13 May. The impact was felt in Fiji, even though the epicentre is 120km away. The situation is being closely monitored.

- Progress to repair the damaged domestic undersea fibre optic cable severed during the volcanic eruption in January is ongoing. The replacement cable for the approximately 100-110 km broken segment of the cable is being manufactured and is expected to be completed in four and half months, before being transported to Tonga.
- Due to ongoing volcanic activities in the region, the current repair efforts on the domestic fibre link may be hampered. A VSAT solution is considered appropriate to address the connectivity shortfall on the outer islands of Ha'apai and Vava'u.
- The Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) has confirmed that there are ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns in some of the remote islands of Tonga, including on Ha'apai. The ongoing lockdown is impacting the deployment of satellite equipment to the outer islands.

2. Global ETC update

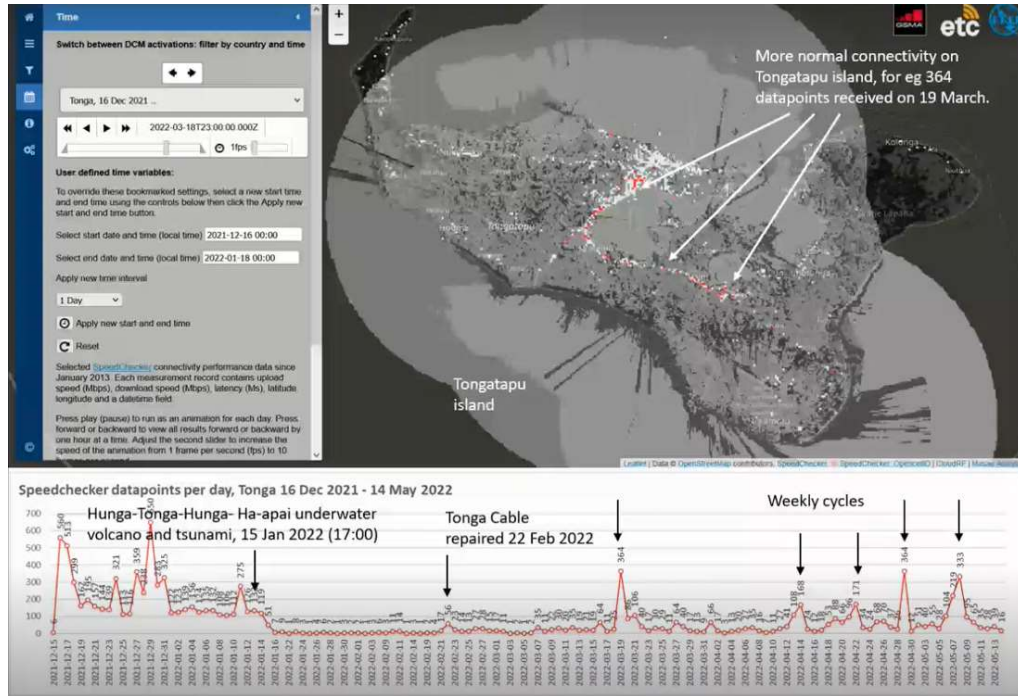
- The ETC in the Pacific is coordinating closely with MEIDECC and the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) for the emergency telecommunications response in Tonga. The ETC in the Pacific will meet with government counterparts from MEIDECC and NEMO on 23 or 24 May as part of ongoing planning and response efforts.
- The response team is planning to deploy various communications solutions as part of the response in Tonga, including:
 - High Frequency (HF) and Very High Frequency (VHF) network equipment is in the final stage of procurement while VHF antenna standards are being confirmed. The delivery date of these items is yet to be confirmed by the vendor;
 - Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) – equipment is in transit to Tonga;
 - ICT solutions – the ETC in the Pacific is liaising with the vendor to procure nine laptops and one tablet device for direct delivery to Tonga to support MEIDECC.
- A technical mission specialist has been identified from NORCAP to deploy on a 90-day installation, capacity building, and coordination mission to Tonga. Briefing meetings with the specialist are ongoing in preparation for his deployment when the equipment arrives. The mission specialist will install the required communications equipment and conduct capacity-building sessions with critical stakeholders on the ground to ensure services are maintained.
- The ETC in the Pacific continues to explore an interim solution to the delay in operationalizing the Government of Luxembourg VSATs, caused by the loss of the required modems while in transit to Tonga. One interim solution includes the consideration of utilizing commercial options to bridge the connectivity gap until new modems are dispatched from the Government of Luxembourg's emergency.lu that will enable the longer-term offering to be brought into service.
- To address the need for replacement modems, the ETC in the Pacific is working with global partners. Responders are aiming to roll out a new migrated solution by the end of June.

3. Partner updates

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- **Disaster Connectivity Mapping (DCM):** ITU continues to share insights on the status of connectivity on the main island of Tongatapu by mapping the data points detected. Following the repair of the undersea fibre international communications cable on 22 February, Tongatapu has

experienced a gradual return to normal connectivity levels. However, the availability of national data connectivity services will not return to the levels seen before the volcanic eruption until the second section of undersea fibre domestic cable is repaired. There was a minor decline from 364 data points received on 29 April compared to 333 (8.5%) received on 8 May.



4. AOB

- N/a

The next teleconference meeting will be held on **Wednesday 15 June 2022**.

Acronyms

DCM	Disaster Connectivity Mapping
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HF	High Frequency
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MEIDECC	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change, and Communications
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft System
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
SBP	Standby Partner

Minutes: Kehinde Adewara, Global ETC Information Management & Communications Officer