

Tonga: Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai Volcano

Global ETC Teleconference #16

Date: 28/09/2022 Time: 06:00 UTC

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

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	Caroline Teyssier	UAE
Airlink Airways	Joshua Kimbrow	Philippines
Ericsson Response	Lars Reudiger	Germany
Government of Luxembourg	Roland Nurenberg	Luxembourg
ITU	Vanessa Gray	Geneva
NORCAP	Godefroy Asiamuah	Tonga
WFP	John Dovale	Tonga
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	Mufaro Masuka	UAE
	Aramais Alojants	UAE
	Salma Farouque	Australia
	Opart Ongwandee	Thailand
	Oscar Caleman	Thailand
	Omar Namaoui	Algeria
	Clara Aseniero	Italy

Agenda

1. Disaster update
2. Global ETC update
3. AOB

Action point: N/a

Minutes

1. Disaster/general update

- Data connectivity services in the outer islands of Tonga are still down until the section of undersea domestic fibre cable is fully repaired. The estimated domestic fibre cable remediation is April 2023.

2. Global ETC update

- The ETC Coordinator—John Dovale—is in Tonga from 26 September to 1 October.
- The **Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) / drones training** programme has commenced in Tonga, held from 26-30 September. Training is to certify four Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change, and Communication (MEIDECC) operators with Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) licenses issued by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This is the first certified UAS training in Tonga. The certified drone pilots will also work as part of a capacity building taskforce to support any other organisation or department interested in UAS technology, in Tonga.
- Following a meeting between ETC and MEIDECC, the **High Frequency (HF) radio** training initially scheduled for September has been tentatively rescheduled to the final week of October or first week of November to fit with MEIDECC's workplan. The aim of the training is to boost the skills and capacity of MEIDECC and the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) so that they can participate in the deployment of the HF radio solution and ensure sustainability of the solution in the long-term.
- The **HF equipment** from manufacturer Barrett Communications in Australia arrived in country on 22 September. Coordination with the MEIDECC team is ongoing to finalize clearance procedures with the national authorities. Clearance of equipment will aid in finalising the equipment deployment plans. Once cleared, one HF equipment will be deployed per location in Vava'u and Ha'apai.
- The **Very High Frequency (VHF) systems** will arrive in Tonga in a couple of weeks. The VHF antennae are estimated to arrive in Tonga around 14 October. **ICT systems** from WFP FITTEST in the UAE, including toolkits and other **HF** and **VHF accessories** are in transit to Tonga. MEIDECC has already been informed so they can plan for the expeditious clearance of equipment on arrival.
- The four Uninterruptable Power Supplies (UPS) to stabilise the power supply to the emergency.lu VSATS arrived in country on 27 September. The emergency.lu VSATS supply internet **connectivity services** in the two MEIDECC Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) on the islands of Vava'u and Ha'apai. MEIDECC has initiated clearance of the equipment.
- The UPS devices provides a minimum level of standby power for a limited period of time to ensure technical back-up from MEIDECC can remediate any further power challenges that may be experienced. The UPS systems will provide a stable and regulated power supply to avoid similar damage to the units. The UPS system are also internet enabled,

allowing the team to actively monitor fluctuations in power and receive alerts ahead of time. Once the UPS systems are installed, there is a need to coordinate with the Government of Luxembourg to test the emergency.lu connectivity equipment supported by the new power modality.

- Electrical power remediation work has been confirmed for both Ha’apai and Vava’u.
- Connectivity has been restored in the EOC in Ha’apai after unstable power supply caused electrical damages to the emergency.lu VSAT. However, there are no users until further repairs are made and the VSAT is connected to the new UPS system.
- The second VSAT on Vava’u island also suffered electrical damages and is out of service. The power system is up in Vava’u but experiencing low usage—priority to install the UPS system will be given to Vava’u. This has already been coordinated and planned by the ETC and MEIDECC team.
- Currently MEIDECC has a total of 15 **satellite phones**. Three satellite phones were received from the ETC, six satellite phones received from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and six standby satellite phones ordered to complement the installation of HF radio across six remote island locations, received from WFP FITTEST in the UAE. Some of the satellite phones were issued to the Prime Minister’s office. There is need to trace and account for the current status of all 15 satellite phones.

3. AOB

- N/A

The next teleconference meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 October 2022.

Acronyms

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

Minutes: Mufaro Masuka, Global ETC Operational Information Management Officer