

## The Bahamas – Hurricane Dorian

### ETS Situation Report #2

Reporting period 05/09/19 to 09/09/19

The ETS is not activated in the Bahamas. Information is preliminary and is subject to change as the situation on the ground evolves.

### Highlights

- A member of the Global ETC team travelled to the Bahamas on Saturday 7 September as ETS Coordinator for the Bahamas response.
- Global ETC partner, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) is providing connectivity to the military Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and humanitarian visitors at Maxwell Supermarket, Abaco Island as of 6 September.
- The Crisis Connectivity Charter has been activated. Satellite equipment prepositioned in the UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Panama has now arrived in the Bahamas and has been partially used on Abaco Island.
- The ETS network of partners is currently providing connectivity in four sites on Abaco island: the Maxwell Supermarket used as the military EOC, the Marsh Harbour port, the international airport and a healthcare facility.



ETS partners install equipment to provide connectivity to humanitarian responders in Marsh Harbour, Abaco island.

*Photo credit: WFP/Angel Buitrago*

### Situation Overview

The death toll from Hurricane Dorian – a category 5 hurricane which slammed into the northern Bahamas from 1-3 September – currently stands at 43, with hundreds still missing and tens of thousands left homeless. The Abaco Islands are the most severely affected. Initial assessments for Abaco found widespread destruction, with thousands of houses levelled, telecommunications towers down, and water wells and roads damaged. There is very limited or no water, electricity or sanitation. In Marsh Harbour, most of the infrastructure is damaged. ‘The Mudd’ area – mostly inhabited by migrants, many undocumented – has been flattened.

UN agencies and humanitarian organizations are supporting the government-led response, under the leadership of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and in close coordination with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

Across Abaco Islands and Grand Bahama, airports and seaports are increasingly becoming operational, allowing assistance to be delivered. However, access to affected people, in particular in Abaco Islands remains challenging, including due to damaged roads and infrastructure.

## **ETS Response**

- The national emergency coordination is operating under a sectoral/functional approach under the leadership of the Government of the Bahamas, specifically the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).
- Under NEMA, there are 14 Emergency Support Functions (ESF) and telecommunications is under ESF 2, Communications, which is led by the Police Force of the Bahamas with the support of the two Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), BTC and Aliv.
- Abaco Islands is the most affected area and therefore is the priority of the ETS response.
- The ETS with partners CISCO TacOps, Ericsson Response, NetHope, TSF and Vodafone Foundation are providing connectivity for humanitarian responders in four sites:
  - The Marsh Harbour port and international airport (set up by Ericsson Response, CISCO TacOps and WFP);
  - Maxwell Supermarket, used as the military EOC (set up by TSF);
  - A healthcare facility (set up by Vodafone Foundation).
- Equipment has been provided by the ETS partners on the ground as well as by Eutelsat and Hispasat – and services by Inmarsat – as part of the Crisis Connectivity Charter.
- The ETS is also determining the feasibility of extending connectivity to the affected population, particularly those taking shelter in Abaco and Nassau. Assessments will be conducted first.
- Global ETC partner NetHope is supporting the gathering of information and requirements from Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and supporting the team with power and wireless equipment. NetHope partner CISCO TacOps is also in Abaco supporting the team to set up connectivity services.
- NEMA has requested ETS support with back up connectivity at the EOC in Nassau as well as a training centre for the use of NGOs and humanitarian coordination in support of the NEMA ESFs. While NetHope is looking at providing connectivity at the training centre in the coming days, the rest of the ETS team is exploring the option of setting up one of the satellite terminals at the EOC.

## Challenges

- Operational needs are changing very rapidly in Abaco with reports of hundreds of people being evacuated to Nassau on a daily basis.
- Electricity, fuel and access to clean water is a big challenge on Abaco since the hurricane struck.

## Funding

- The ETS in Bahamas is requesting USD130,000 to start coordinating and providing initial connectivity services to humanitarians, government and affected populations in up to two locations for one month. This figure is expected to be revised quickly following the newly-identified requirements.
- So far, the ETS has received USD44,000 from WFP's Immediate Response Account to kickstart operations.
- Most resources are partners' personnel and equipment.

## Meetings

- The next Global ETS Bahamas Teleconference will be held at 1000 Bahamas time on **Wednesday 11 September**.

## Information

- All the information related to the ETS response in the Bahamas can be found on the dedicated emergency page on the ETS website: <https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/bahamas-natural-disaster>
- Partners that are responding in the affected areas or have relevant information on the Bahamas operation for the wider humanitarian community can share it by emailing [Bahamas.ETS@wfp.org](mailto:Bahamas.ETS@wfp.org).

## Key ETC Contacts

### Global.ETC@wfp.org

LOCATION	NAME	TITLE	EMAIL
Nassau, Bahamas	Angel Buitrago	WFP IT EPR Officer	angel.buitrago@wfp.org
Nassau, Bahamas	Caroline Teyssier	ETS Coordinator	caroline.teyssier@wfp.org
Dubai, UAE	Elizabeth Millership	ETS IM Officer	elizabeth.millership@wfp.org

## Acronyms

CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ESF	Emergency Support Functions
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RNAT	Rapid Needs Assessment Teams
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	UN World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ETC website: [www.ETCluster.org](http://www.ETCluster.org)

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: [Bahamas.ETS@wfp.org](mailto:Bahamas.ETS@wfp.org)