

## Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

### External ETS Situation Report #31

Reporting period 01/03/2021 to 31/03/2021

Following the increased needs to support the humanitarian efforts in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, World Food Programme (WFP), in its capacity as global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), is supporting the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) by addressing common Information and Communication Technology (ICT) needs. Through the establishment of the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) WFP and its partners ensure a coordinated ICT response and support to those working on the provision of life-saving assistance to the affected populations.

### Highlights

- Following the outbreak of a fire on 22 March across four Rohingya refugee camps, the ETS is providing connectivity in three new sites to humanitarian workers who were evacuated from the affected area.
- Many members of the affected population lost all their documents in the fire so ETS connectivity will enable humanitarian actors to connect to the biometric server to ensure all those who are eligible to receive assistance will continue to do so.
- Including the three new sites, the ETS team is now providing data connectivity to 346 users in 37 sites and security telecommunications services to 860 users from 12 UN organizations.



The ETS sets up critical connectivity services to humanitarian workers as part of the response to a fire.

Photo credit: ETS Bangladesh

### ETS Activities

- On 22 March, a massive fire broke out across four Rohingya refugee camps (8W, 8E, 9 and 10), resulting in fatalities and leaving tens of thousands of refugees displaced. 37 humanitarian workers were evacuated from the affected area and the ETS is providing them with data connectivity services in three sites and has installed video conferencing capabilities at the Madhuchara hub to enable them to continue with their work.
- The ETS conducted VHF radio frequency coverage mapping of the proposed site in Teknaf where cyclone-resilient towers are to be installed to improve security telecommunications services in the camps.
- Following a second major connectivity outage, ETS Internet connectivity services had to be restarted in several sites.
- To ensure the coordinated and efficient storage of newly procured telecommunications equipment, the ETS has received and begun to utilize a set of large storage containers.



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- The ETS continues to provide security telecommunications services to 860 users across 12 UN agencies/funds/programmes.
  - Partners plan to install solar solutions in 17 sites to power the ETS connectivity infrastructure. This ensures no interruption to connectivity when power outages occur and also helps reduce the carbon footprint in the operation.
  - The ETS in coordination with UNHCR will provide data connectivity services to staff in the Camp In Charge (CIC) government offices. UNHCR will provide the equipment and install the equipment and ETS will ensure user access controls are implemented.
  - Regular operations regarding maintenance, assessments for future activities to continue data connectivity services are continued in the camps.

## Challenges

- Low stock of equipment. Procurement process has started (with local suppliers) to scale up the operations but might take longer time than expected for the items to be delivered.
- Permission to import telecommunications equipment, use additional radio frequencies and erect the cyclone-resilient towers is still pending government approval.

## Funding

- The ETS has received no funds of the US\$3,878,072 required for 2021.

## Key Information

- All information on the ETS response in Cox's Bazar can be found [here](#).
- The latest ETS infographic is also now available and published on the website.
- For further information or to contact the team on the ground, please email [Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org](mailto:Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org)

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