

15 July 2024

Attendance

Chair	Arthur Sawmadal [AS] (Head of TEC Sudan)
Bangui	Ariane Nghandi [AN]
Cairo	Ossama Khattab [OK]; Hikmat Akad [HA]
Dubai (based)	Angel Buitrago [AB]; Ozdzan Hadziemin [OH]; Dane Novarlic [DN]; Aramais Alojants [AA]; Moaied Altai [MA]
Nairobi	Kesi Kalama [KK]; Moussa Sana [MS]; Sylvestre Ngoh [SN]
N'Djamena	Elizabeth Bourke [EB]
Port Sudan	Richard Egwangu [RE]; Habib Shashati [HS]
Rome (based)	Brent Carbno [BC]; Rita Oneissi [RO]; Komi Amedjonekou [KA]; Martin Kristensson [MK]; Siriporn Charoenkijgasat [SC]; Catherine Boyle [CB]; Michael Dirksen [MD]

Start time: 13:01 CET End time: 13:43 CET

Agenda

1. Situation Update
2. TEC Sudan Update
3. Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) Update
4. Surrounding Countries TEC Update
5. TEC Regional Bureau Nairobi (RBN) Update
6. AOB

1. Situation Update

- The general security situation in Sudan remains highly unpredictable and volatile with movement restrictions in place. In July, regional bodies increased their efforts to facilitate negotiations between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The Ethiopian Prime Minister and the Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister visited Sudan to explore ways to enhance negotiation efforts between the two parties.
- The RSF expanded their presence to the surrounding villages of Sinjah following their control of

Sinjah city.

- During the Heads of Unit meeting, the security team provided a brief update of an increased use of drones by SAF and RSF in Sudan.
- During the recent United Nations Country Team (UNCT) meeting, a decision was made to reduce the UN footprint in the states of Damazine, El Gadaref, and Kassala due to the current security situation. These locations are currently hosting UN operations.
- It was reported at the Heads of Unit meeting that the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) for Sudan has reached out to counterparts in Ethiopia and Eritrea in case the situation worsens, and evacuation of staff becomes necessary. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea have indicated their readiness to provide support if needed. Additionally, the team was asked to evaluate the staffing footprint in Port Sudan considering the current security situation. The contingency and preparedness plans for Port Sudan are up to date. Additionally, UNHAS has been asked to reassess its capacity to ensure full preparedness in case of further security deterioration.
- The Sudan Regional Emergency Coordinator, Betty Ka, and her team are currently hosted at the Sudan Coordination Office in Nairobi; she will travel to Port Sudan to visit the Country Office (CO).
- The siege on El Fasher continues, impacting hospitals and UNHCR facilities due to ongoing RSF attacks. The city of Sennar is at risk following RSF's capture of Jebel Moga and Sinjah. This development is disrupting road movement from Kassala to El Gedaref, Kosti, and Damazine where the ETC currently operates.
- The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report for Sudan has been released. It indicates that approximately 755,000 people are in IPC Phase 5, the most severe level of hunger. Additionally, over 25 million people are in IPC Phase 3 or above. The team is working on scaling up famine response efforts, however, this is complicated due to access and the security situation which requires reducing the operational footprint.

2. TEC Sudan Update

- **Budget revision.** The team is currently working on the budget revision for January 2025 to February 2026. Bilateral discussions within the CO are underway to finalize this budget revision which will be submitted to Headquarters for review and approval. The overall budget revision for the CO is tentatively estimated at approximately US\$1.3 billion—US\$7.5 million for TEC, and US\$11.5 million for ETC. The ETC budget is revised to reflect six months.
- **Financial Service Providers (FSPs).** There is a plan to expand the base of FSPs for Cash-Based Transfers (CBT) within the country. A cross-functional team at the CO has conducted the evaluations of three new FSPs—AIGT, Red Rose, and Dal Group—to determine if these providers should be included in the vendor list for an upcoming tender in Sudan. This is not a tender process yet but a preliminary evaluation to assess the capacity of the FSPs before formal due diligence and tendering. The team continues to support both CBT and in-kind assistance across

the country.

- **Establishment of the situation room in Port Sudan.** TEC is collaborating with the Logistics and Program teams to set up an operational situation room in Port Sudan equipped with live data dashboards to facilitate data-driven decision-making for emergency responses. The dashboards are already functional.
- **Self-registration App.** The Khartoum self-registration pilot for CBT assistance concluded on 16 July. This app has enabled beneficiaries to self-register due to security constraints preventing staff presence on the ground. Despite initial technical challenges, these issues have been resolved with assistance from the headquarters and regional bureau. The call center has addressed the complaints reported by beneficiaries.
- **Set-up of Farchana office.** The TEC team has successfully finalized the setup of a new office in Farchana, Chad. The Chad office has been actively supporting the Sudan TEC team in this effort.
- **Approval for advanced data connectivity kits.** TEC is still awaiting government clearance from the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) for importing and moving advanced connectivity kits within Sudan. Another challenge is the need for additional clearance for the local movement of equipment. This issue has been escalated to management and the team is following up.

3. Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) Update

- **Data connectivity.** Efforts are underway to secure undersea cable services from Sudan Telecom—Sudatel—expected to be completed this month. Many inaccessible locations will face challenges if the use of the advanced data connectivity kit cannot be extended.
- **Advanced data connectivity kit.** The extension for the advanced data connectivity kit in Sudan is valid until 01 August. As of the latest updates, the data connectivity service provider does not plan to shut off services in Sudan. A discussion between the government and the service provider will be held to determine if this applies to both enterprise users and individuals while focusing on supporting humanitarian operations.
- **Cash expansion project.** The ongoing cash expansion project involves the creation of hubs based on the "Hub and Spoke" approach. The aim is to establish a hub for implementing programmatic activities by OCHA.
- **Mission to Iriba, Tine, and Zalengei.** The mission is on hold due to heavy rains. In Zalengei, Al Junaynah, and Nertiti, there is a critical need for data connectivity, with full reliance on advanced connectivity kits. Discussions with the service provider and US government counterparts have focused on extending advanced connectivity services without a grace period, ensuring continuous service as the only lifeline for affected areas.

4. Surrounding Countries TEC Update

Chad

- A request for an advanced data connectivity kit at Tina is being addressed. The team is awaiting a quotation from the headquarters' connectivity services team and will contact TEC for a budget code once received.

Egypt

- There is a rising influx of refugees entering Egypt through illegal routes which requires security measures to manage distribution sites and ensure legal refugees are handled in compliance with government regulations.

5. TEC Regional Bureau Nairobi (RBN) Update

- A significant influx of refugees is being received in South Sudan, followed by Chad, with slower movement observed in the DRC. A potential second crossing point from South Sudan has been identified due to flooding. The team is awaiting further updates from Juba and Sudan to potentially activate the evacuation plan.
- The team is developing an insurance plan primarily focusing on South Sudan. A mission is scheduled for 22 July to convene all relevant actors at the CO in South Sudan. Work is ongoing to finalize and share a comprehensive regional plan.

6. AOB

N/A

The date of the next WFP TEC Sudan Task Force meeting is **05 August 2024 at 12:00 UTC**.

Acronyms

CO	Country Office
ED	Executive Director
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team
HF	High Frequency
ICT	Information Communications Technology
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
OCHA	Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Assistance
RBN	Regional Bureau Nairobi
RSF	Rapid Support Forces

SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SCS	Security Communication Systems
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

Minutes: Rita Oneissi, TECF Information Management Officer (on TDY)