

South Sudan

Local ETC Working Group meeting

Date: 06/08/2015

Time: 10:00 UCT+3

Venue: WFP office

In attendance:

Chair:	Nono Kukimunu
ETC:	Blessing Dzambo Sofia Grivet Brancot Loro Wani
ACF:	Taban Kennedy
AMREF:	Aligo Jerry
CRS:	Francis Duku
IMC:	Bilton Muramba
IOM:	Akim Bosco
Mercy Corps:	Moses Jaden
MTPS:	Baranya T. C. Jibi Elia
OCHA:	Samuel Keri
UNICEF:	Joseph Odwogo Pawan Tuladhar
WFP:	Espinola Caribe Lachezar Lechev Tenson Majaraunga Deepak Shah Solomon Welle

Agenda:

1. Security update
2. ETC response update
3. HISP sites update
4. Roundtable discussion
 - ETC 2015 revised strategy and way forward
 - ETC User Feedback Survey
5. AOB
6. Agenda for next meeting

Minutes:

1. Security Update

- A security update was provided by the WFP Head of Security, highlighting the challenges of responding in the conflict-affected states.

2. ETC response update

- Following the deactivation of data connectivity services in three sites, the ETC is currently operating 7x data connectivity sites across the country, prioritizing Unity and Jonglei state.
- The ETC continues to support 24x repeater sites and 15x Communications Centres, including the 10 state capitals and Abyei, for the provision of security telecommunications services.
- In Bentiu (Unity State), a three-week mission to provide on-site ICT support and system monitoring services to all humanitarians and improve the data connectivity services is ongoing.
 - The onsite ETC technician resolved unstable data connectivity and account registration issues experienced this week, supported by the Ericsson Response team. The service is now fully operational.
 - The ETC guarantees a constant presence in Unity State to promptly respond to the high emergency telecommunications needs.
 - A comprehensive radio training session will be given to humanitarians responding in Bentiu. Partners in this location have identified emergency telecommunications awareness as a priority.
 - In line with the assessed needs, the ETC security telecommunications team will install an additional radio repeater to enhance communication capabilities among the humanitarians responding in this area.
- In Juba (UNMISS - United Nations Mission in South Sudan-Tomping site) and Yida (Unity State), ETC data connectivity services have been deactivated as most organizations are managing their own data connectivity needs.
- In Mingkaman (Lakes State), due to funding constraints, the ETC deactivated its data connectivity site at the Save the Children compound. Humanitarians will be able to access data connectivity at the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) hub.
- In Old Fangak (Jonglei State), a new ETC site has been established. Reliable internet connectivity is now available to all humanitarians responding in this area. The Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG) identified this as a priority location for emergency response.
- In Akobo (Jonglei State), the ETC deployment mission planned for this week has been further postponed to next Monday due to the unavailability of seats on flights.
 - The deployment of data connectivity and security telecommunications services in Akobo is vital due to the growing number of humanitarians responding in this remote yet strategic location.
 - A security telecommunication assessment mission is planned next week. Due to the lack of mobile services in this area, radio communication is high priority for an efficient humanitarian response.

3. HISP sites update

- In 2015, the ETC is focusing on the implementation of the Humanitarian Internet Support Project (HISP), a reliable, low-cost and long-term solution to meet the internet connectivity needs of humanitarian actors in remote and hard-to-reach locations.
- The implementation of HISP services has been fully completed in three sites: Aweil (Northern Bahr el Ghazal State), Malakal (Upper Nile State) and Bor (Jonglei State).
- A total of 30 organisations are connected to HISP, including six in Aweil, 14 in Malakal, and 10 in Bor.

- In Bor (Jonglei state), the Humanitarian Internet Support Project (HISP) cost-sharing mechanism was inaugurated on 01 July 2015.
 - Due to network interferences, most HISP partners are currently unable to fully access the service. It has been clarified that they will not have to incur any cost until the service will be restored.
 - A mission to Bor will be carried out next week in order to identify the issue and meet the partners.
- The next HISP sites will be Bentiu and Mingkaman.
 - The new HISP equipment is expected to arrive in Juba by the end of August and the implementation is planned for early September.

4. Roundtable discussion

ETC 2015 revised strategy and way forward – Sofia Grivet Brancot, ETC Information Management Officer

- The presentation was shared with all ETC partners.
- The ETC in South Sudan is suffering from funding constraints. From the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) 2015 first standard allocation, the ETC has received around US\$900,000 for the first six months, out of a US\$4.3 million annual budget.
 - To meet funding requirements, the ETC revised its strategy and applied for a CHF second standard allocation. However, the CHF was unable to provide funds to the ETC under this allocation.
- All meeting participants agreed that the delivery of ETC services shall be prioritized in locations mandated by the Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG) and identified by the ETC user group, according to the User Feedback Survey results.
 - As most areas of South Sudan do not have access to a mobile network, the importance of security telecommunications services has been stressed.
- In order to gain greater visibility and promote its services, the ETC team will actively reach out to the ICWG, providing useful updates and presentations on the Cluster achievements and constraints.
- Due to the ETC funding constraints, it has been agreed to draft an Exit Strategy for 2016.

ETC User Feedback Survey

- The survey draft was shared with all ETC partners.
- In order to promote the survey, it was proposed to create a pop-up option when new users subscribe to the ETC network.
- The final survey will be shared with the ETC partners, who can then share it with the ETC users in their respective organisations.

5. AOB

- Baranya Jibi Elia, representing the Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services (MTPS), stressed that the preparation and enforcement of telecommunications policies will remain under the responsibility of the MTPS.
 - However, the National Communication Authority (NCA) will be responsible for the frequency spectrum licensing and registration of communication equipment. The NCA Director General has recently been appointed.
- The ETC is organising two Let's Comm Digital training sessions on MotoTRBO Digital VHF radio infrastructure deployment to be held in South Sudan in November 2015. According to the needs and prioritising women, the ETC will invite 24 participants from UN agencies, NGOs and the Government will invited to participate in the training. Expressions of interest may be shared in writing to SouthSudan.ETC@wfp.org.



6. Agenda for next meeting

- The next Local ETC Working Group will be hosted by UNICEF.

Next Meeting

The next Local ETC meeting will be held on **Thursday 20 August 2015** at 10:00 UCT+3.

Acronyms

AOB	Any Other Business
DMR	Digital Mobile Radio
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HISP	Humanitarian Internet Support Project
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MTPS	Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website:
www.ETCluster.org

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact:
SouthSudan.ETC@wfp.org

Minutes: Sofia Grivet Brancot, IM Officer, ETC