



CARIBBEAN: Hurricane Irma

ETC Situation Report #2

Reporting period 15/09/17 to 22/09/17

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has not been activated in response to the Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean region. World Food Programme (WFP), in its capacity as global ETC lead, is supporting the response activities coordinated by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).

Highlights

- World Food Programme (WFP), global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), is supporting the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDMA) and the government of the affected islands in restoring vital Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services following the passage of two hurricanes – Irma and Maria.
- WFP is coordinating response efforts of humanitarian ICT responders, including ETC members – Ericsson Response and Government of Luxembourg.
- The ETC team provided Internet connectivity to humanitarian responders in Saint Martin.
- The ETC conducted an assessment mission in Dominica and set up Internet connectivity for humanitarians at the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC).



The ETC team, Ericsson Response and Government of Luxembourg, set up Internet connectivity for humanitarians in Dominica. Photo: WFP / Gabriela Alvarado

Situation Overview

Two powerful, category-5 hurricanes – Irma and Maria – made landfall in the Caribbean, within less two weeks from each other, bringing destruction to many islands: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Martin, the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands. Thousands of people were evacuated from the affected islands, many were left homeless or displaced. The infrastructure in the areas on hurricanes' trajectory (both hurricanes had similar paths), including telecommunications equipment, was damaged in many locations, disrupting mobile networks and Internet connectivity.



Response

- WFP, is closely working with CDEMA supporting its response to the hurricane, and coordinating the activities of the ETC members and humanitarian partners.
- Following Hurricane Irma, ETC members and partners deployed staff and equipment to support the humanitarian response.
 - After Hurricane Irma, ETC members – Ericsson Response, Government of Luxembourg and WFP deployed to Saint Martin to set up Internet connectivity at the airport. For the duration of hurricane Maria, the equipment was taken down as precautionary measure, but restored immediately after the passage of the hurricane.
 - The second ETC team, which was stationed in Antigua for the duration of Hurricane Maria, deployed to Dominica which was the worst hit island. The ETC team set up Internet connectivity for humanitarians at the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC).

Planned Response

- The ETC members will coordinate with other humanitarian entities, on the location of the main coordination hub. As the needs have decreased in Antigua, it is discussed to move the main hub to Barbuda.
- ETC Services for Communities (S4C) Advisor is deploying to Dominica to conduct needs assessment and coordinate the provision of vital communication services to the affected population.

Challenges

- The original response to Hurricane Irma was slowed down by the second hurricane – Maria, which had a similar trajectory.
- Funding for this operation remains a challenge.

Meetings

Global ETC teleconference:

Global ETC Information-Sharing teleconferences are held on regular basis, as requested by partners. The next meeting is planned for Monday, 25 September at 12:00 UTC.

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

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



Acronyms

CDAC	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	WFP's Fast IT, Telecommunications and Coordination Support Services Team
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
S4C	Services for Communities
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

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