CARIBBEAN: Hurricane Irma & Maria

Final ETC Situation Report #7

Reporting period 01/09/17 to 22/03/18

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has not been activated in response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria 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

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), concluded its operations in Caribbean at the end of March 2018.

- ETC operations in the Caribbean provided Internet connectivity to over 2,900 registered users in 8x locations in Dominica and Saint Martin including Delices, Good Hope, La Plaine, Marigot, Roseau, Saint Sauveur, Wesley and Philipsburg.

- The ETC led the lessons learnt workshop in Roseau, Dominica at the end of March with the participation of the Government, ETC partners and donors.

Participants from the ETC lessons learnt workshop and field visits during the closure of ETC operations in Dominica. *La Plaine, Dominica. Photo: Aldo Vera/WFP*

Situation Overview

In September 2017, the Caribbean region was hit by two powerful, category-5 hurricanes – Irma and Maria, with Barbuda, Dominica, and Sint Maarten amongst the worst-hit areas. The hurricanes caused vast devastation with severe Internet service and mobile network disruptions. Following Hurricane Irma's devastating trail through the Caribbean islands, the global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) coordinated resources under the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency's (CDEMA) lead deploying shared Internet services to government, humanitarians and affected populations in Dominica and Sint Maarten where the infrastructure was heavily damaged. The ETC partners joined efforts with local partners and the Ministry of Telecommunications to help restore local telecommunication infrastructure and provide Internet connectivity throughout Dominica. The ETC concluded its operations in March 2018.

Summary Response

- ETC partners Ericsson Response, the Government of Luxemburg and the World Food Programme (WFP) deployed staff and equipment to support the humanitarian response.

- The ETC connected over 2,900 users from 50 humanitarian organizations and local communities in Sint Marteen and Dominica.

  - In Dominica, the ETC provided shared Internet services to humanitarians in **Delices**, **Good Hope**, **La Plaine**, **Marigot**, **Roseau**, **Saint Sauveur**, and **Wesley**.

  - In Sint Marteen, the ETC provided shared Internet services in **Philipsburg.**

- Following a needs assessment, the ETC deployed a Services for Communities (S4C) project to provide Internet connectivity to local affected communities in **Wesley**, **Marigot**, **Good Hope**, **La Plaine**, and **Delices** (click here to view the ETC S4C video in Dominica).

- The ETC carried out capacity building sessions with the Government of Dominica on the use of emergency telecommunications equipment ensuring sustainable use of solutions and services that were handed over to the Government.

- Ericsson Response and the World Food Programme (WFP), on behalf of the ETC, won the 2018 Global Mobile (GLOMO) award for "Best Mobile Innovation supporting Emergency or Humanitarian Situations" for their joint IT emergency response efforts in Dominica. The award was given during the 2018 GSMA Mobile World Congress in Barcelona.

- On 22-23 March, the ETC led a two-day lessons learnt workshop in **Roseau**, with the support of the Government of Dominica. The workshop gathered participants from the ETC network, NGOs, government representatives and private sector entities involved in the Caribbean emergency response. The aim of the workshop was to review ETC activities, demonstrate technologies used and discuss the way forward to strengthen collaboration mechanisms (you can click here to read more about the lessons learnt workshop in Dominica).

- The following are three key recommendations identified during the lessons learnt workshop:

  - Establish a usage control system for Internet connectivity provided for affected communities to help control bandwidth saturation and minimize impact on network use for humanitarians.

  - Establish a resilient emergency plan and store ready-to-deploy equipment including very small aperture terminals (VSATs) and alternative power solutions to be used in the aftermath of a disaster.

  - Implement reliable sources of communication (e.g. radio) to warn, inform and update local communities regarding emergencies (e.g. hurricane category updates) and relevant information (e.g. shelter) on safety and recovery measures.

Funding

• ETC operations in Dominica during 2017 and 2018 received USD$850,000 out of the required USD$1,900,000 for a six-month operation.

• These funds covered:

  o The provision of shared Internet connectivity for humanitarians and the Government in Dominica in 7x Locations and 27x sites; in Saint Martin in 1x location and 1x site.

  o The provision of shared Internet connectivity in 5x locations and 12x sites as part of the Services for Communities (S4C) project in Dominica.

  o A dedicated ETC Coordinator.

Information

• Information on the ETC operation in the Caribbean can be found on:
https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/caribbean-hurricanes-irma-and-maria

• A summary map of all ETC services in the Caribbean can be found here:
https://www.etcluster.org/document/caribbean-hurricane-irma-etc-services-map-september-2017-march-2018

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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
GLOMO	Global Mobile
GSMA	GSM Association
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISP	Internet Service Provider

IT	Information Technology
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
RBP	Regional Bureau in Panama
S4C	Services for Communities
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontièrs
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSAT	very small aperture terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

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