DRC, CAR, Nigeria, RETS

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 09/05/18   TIME: 12:00 UTC

Attendance

Chair	Caroline Teyssier	(Global ETC), United Arab Emirates
Action contre la Faim	Thomas Gerard	France
Catholic Relief Services	Dan Carr	United States of America
Ericsson Response	Brent Carbno	Canada
	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Télécoms Sans Frontières	Alexander Thomas	France
UNHCR	Abdala Khalil	Uganda
	Fardy Mandy	Senegal
	Frederic Bertrand	Democratic Republic of Congo
	Nizar Zeidan	Switzerland
UNICEF	Simon Genin	United States of America
WFP	Ekue Ayih	Nigeria
	Jean- Calude Kibonge	Democratic Republic of Congo
	Karim Kangbeya	Democratic Republic of Congo
	Leopold Happy	Nigeria
	Martin Dimuka	Democratic Republic of Congo
	Mohamedou Ndiath	Central African Republic
	Ozdzan Hadziemin	United Arab Emirates
	Patrick McKay	South Africa
	Phyza Jameel	Italy

Teleconference started at 12:05 UTC

Agenda

1. **Central African Republic (CAR) update**
   a. **Refugee Emergency Telecommunication Sector (RETS) update - Refugee influx from CAR in Chad**
2. **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) update**
   a. **RETS update- Refugee influx from DRC in Uganda**
3. **Nigeria update**

a. **RETS update- Refugee influx from Cameroon in Nigeria**
    4. **AOB**

Minutes

1. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Security situation

•   The security situation in Bangui and in most of the operational areas in the country continues to deteriorate.

ETC Response

•   The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) installed Internet connectivity and expanded the security telecommunications network in Bria, as part of the deployment of vital communications services in Bria, Alinda and Bangassou.

    o   In Bangassou, there are some implementation delays as the selected host agency is not ready.

    o   The ETC shipped the required equipment to Alindao to deploy Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services. This equipment is currently in Bambari, expecting to reach Alindao soon.

•   The Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) project was not fully funded by humanitarian organisations in Bangui and the ETC is evaluating solutions to overcome this challenge. The existing Very High Frequency (VHF) network in Bangui does not cover the entire city. The ETC is looking at deploying additional repeater sites in Bangui to improve the coverage.

    o   Ekue Ayih, former ETC Coordinator in CAR, pointed out that the existing security telecommunications network has some DMR features and most of the agencies have DMR-capable devices.

RETS update - Chad refugee emergency: influx from CAR

•   There was a large influx of refugees crossing from CAR to the southern part of Chad. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) declared their highest level of humanitarian emergency (L3) emergency in March and mid-March an assessment mission was carried out.

    o   UNHCR is currently providing shared security telecommunications and Internet connectivity in Gorei. Approximately 150 humanitarians are using these Internet services. There are 4x refugee camps in the neighbouring area – Amboko, Gondje, Doholo and Dosseye- where UNHCR is planning to provide Internet connectivity for the humanitarian community.

    o   There is a budget provision of US$250,000 which will be sourced internally. When these funds are received, UNHCR plans to expand the security telecommunication services from Gorei to the 4x refugee camps.

    o   The total number of CAR refugees in Chad is currently 76,653. From December 2017 to March 2018, 30,000 were received due to the conflict situation in North-West CAR.

2. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

Security situation

- The security situation remains volatile. During last weekend, there were two confirmed Ebola cases in the North-West part of the country.

ETC Response

- The ETC has deployed security telecommunications system in the Kasai region, namely Kananga, Mbuji-Mayi and Tshipaka. The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) has deployed radio operators to man the Communications Centres (COMCENs) in Kananga and Tshipaka. The equipment installed was already in country and now replacement equipment will be ordered.
    - Analogue radio repeaters were installed and digital radio will be ordered to migrate the system to digital when possible.
- A Local ETC Working Group meeting was held in the first week of May to revisit the partners' requirements in South Kivu and Tanganyika provinces. The ETC team is currently assessing South Kivi and will assess Tanganyika after.
    - UNHCR has security telecommunications services in several location in South Kivu such as Kavu and Baraka. In Baraka, UNHCR is the only United Nations (UN) agency and there is one channel dedicated to UN organisations.

RETS update - Uganda refugee emergency: influx from DRC

- The number of DRC refugees arriving in Uganda is sharply increasing since December 2017. UNHCR declared a L2 emergency in February 2018. Since then, UNHCR has carried our assessments to identify communications gaps. UNHCR has been operating for a long time in the bordering area so security telecommunications infrastructure is in place. All the COMCENs are now operational in that area, namely Hoima, Mbrara, Kisoro, Kyangwali and Kyaka. Recruitment of radio operators is ongoing.

- After initial assessments, UNHCR selected 6x operational areas – in the mid-west part of the country: Sebagoro Landing Site, Kyangwali Base Camp and Kagoma Reception Centre; in the south-west part of the country: Nyakabande Transit Centre, Kyaka Refugee Settlement, and Sweswe Reception Centre- with high concentration of humanitarians. UNHCR plans to provide Internet connectivity services using voucher system. The implementation of the project will start in the third week of May and funding has been secured.
    - Organisations operating in these areas in need of reprogramming services, please contact Abdala Kalil (khalila@unhcr.org).

3. NIGERIA

Security situation

- The security situation remains extremely volatile. There was a major security incident on 27 April in Maiduguri. Security experts are monitoring the development and planning humanitarian response accordingly.

ETS response

- The Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) completed the deployment of security telecommunications and Internet connectivity services in Damasak. The ETS is currently providing shared communications services in 8x operational areas across North- East Nigeria.

- The report on the users' feedback on satellite-based voice solution that the ETS is using has been finalised. This solution is not part of the standard ETC service catalogue but it is filling critical communications gaps. The response rate of the survey was very low- only 13 responses – so no firm conclusions can be drawn. The report will be shared soon.

- The ETS finalised the local Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) coverage maps in North-East Nigeria. The agreement with the MNOs is that these documents will be strictly shared with humanitarians to support their operations. It is posted on the ETC Nigeria webpage as members-only document.

- The ETS is liaising with MNOS to evaluate the feasibility of an inter-agency Closed User Group (CUG) to enhance communications among humanitarians. Most of the organisations have individual CUGs.

- The ETS was approached by the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) FHI360 who are working on an OpenCellular project. A meeting to discuss how the ETS can support this project will take place in the third week of May.

- ETC partners – the Government of Luxembourg and Ericsson Response - continue supporting the ETS operation with the provision of Internet connectivity services at the humanitarian camp in Maiduguri and with the tool to manage and distribute Internet connectivity in 3x sites.

- The Internet Service Provider (ISP) that the ETS is using in remote location in North-East Nigeria will visit Maiduguri at the end of May to understand the challenges on the ground. The ETS will facilitate a meeting between the ISP and ETS partners on the ground in need of a connectivity solution.
  - This ISP has an agreement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Un Children's Fund (UNICEF) and NetHope, so Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) part of NetHope can use the global Long Term Agreement (LTA) in place.

RETS update - Nigeria refugee emergency: influx from Cameroon

- The RETS is responding in the South-East Nigeria given the influx of refugees from Cameroon. The majority of the Cameroonian refugees are in Cross River, Benue and Akwa Ibom states. Up to date, UNHCR has registered 20,300 refugees who are in host communities or in temporary transit areas.

- UNHCR was granted land from the government in Kwande (Benue state) to set up a refugee camp. It is expected that in mid-May refugees will start relocating to this camp. UNHCR is trying to get additional land in Obanliku (Cross River state).

- Following an internal UNHCR declaration of emergency level L2 in February, UNHCR carried out an assessment in the affected areas of Cross River and Benue states to evaluate exiting communication infrastructure and services. It was concluded that mobile network coverage (for both 3G and voice) in South-East of Benue state was very weak and power supply was very unreliable.

- UNHCR is planning to set up a VHF network in Calabar and Ikom. UNHCR is also planning to provide Adikpo with VHF network when UNHCR has permanent offices in that location.
  - UNHCR carried out an assement mission around the new camp being established 20km from Adikpo. Mobile network coverage is quite poor. A hill was identified to deploy a VHF repeater.

- UNHCR is in contact with local ISPs for the provision of Internet services for their offices in the affected areas.
  - Currently UNHCR has an office in Calabar, in Ikom and soon in Adikpo.
- Humanitarian organisarions operating in South-East Nigeria in need of security telecommunications services, can contact Abe Sekav – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) officer based in Abuja (abe@unhcr.org).

4. AOB

- The ETC will host a plenary meeting in the third week of May where topic like the future of the security telecommunications will be discussed with partners. A report will be circulated after the event.

Teleconference / Meeting ended at 12:46 UTC

Next Joint Global ETC Teleconference will be held on Wednesday 6 June 12:00 UTC.

Acronyms

CAR	Central African Republic
COMCEN	Communications Centre
CUG	Closed User Group
DMR	Digital Mobile Radio
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
LTA	Long Term Agreement
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety & Security
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme

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

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

Minutes: Erika Iglesias, WFP