Bangladesh, Iraq, Syria, Yemen

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 10/10/18       TIME: 12:00 UTC

Attendance

Chair          Caroline Teyssier          (Global ETC), UAE
CRS            Dan Carr                  USA
Ericsson Response Lars Ruediger        Germany
International Medical Corps Daniel Wu  Bangladesh
InterNews      Anahi Ayala Ianucci      UK
UNHCR          Alexander Thomas         Denmark
UNICEF         Antonio Fortes Gomes     USA
              Ghassan Al Ammari            Yemen
UNRWA          Moayad Ayoub             Syria
WFP            Mark Maulit              Bangladesh
              Min Sun                   Bangladesh
              Prakash Muniandy          UAE
              Habib Shashati            UAE
              Ozdzan Hadziemin          USA
              Shahan Ara Quadir         Egypt
              Phyza Jameel              Italy

Teleconference started at 12:05 UTC

Agenda

1. Bangladesh update
2. Iraq update
3. Syria and surrounding countries update
4. Yemen update
5. AOB
Minutes

1. BANGLADESH

General Overview

- Cyclone preparedness is the top priority across Bangladesh with response planning and risk mitigation efforts continuing in coordination with Government and national partners. As of 23 September 2018, 43,640 refugees have been relocated into newly-developed sites or within their camps, mostly due to landslide and flood risks.

ETS Response

- Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) Internet connectivity in Madhu Chara Logistics hub has been extended to cover the new areas of the hub enabling more humanitarians to access reliable Internet connectivity and continue to do their work effectively.

- The ETS has handed over 64% of the equipment (power solutions, multimedia projectors and sound systems) for 29 of the Information Hubs run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Terre des Hommes and Radio Naf. This equipment will enable humanitarians to display critical information to refugees about the response and the assistance available to them.

2. IRAQ

Security situation

- The security situation is in the south of the country is tense. Several demonstrations took place in recent weeks. In Mosul, the situation remains volatile.

ETS Response

- The ETC conducted a Let’s Comm Digital training exercise in Erbil between 9 and 13 September. A total of nine participants from five organisations attended the training.

- The ETC team conducted a mission to As Salamiyah camp to relocate the main Internet service connection to a new location as requested by UNHCR and the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) teams. This will enable both organizations to maintain a database registration for all IDP families that are resident in the camps.

- The ETC attended the International Organization for Migration (IOM)’s Community Resource Centre (CRC) steering committee meeting to discuss the status of the CRC project. IOM confirmed that it plans to open CRCs in 13 camps, while exploring the possibility of opening additional CRCs in 10 other camps.

3. SYRIA AND SURROUNDING COUNTRIES

Security situation
• The security situation remains tense across the country.

ETC Response
• The ETC has submitted inputs for the first draft of the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2019 for Syria and the surrounding countries (Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon). From 2019, the Humanitarian Response Plan will now include returnees.
• Three new humanitarian hubs are planned in newly-liberated areas: Deir El Zour, Raqqa and one other location which is yet to be confirmed.
• The ETC continues to participate in talks with the government over the importation of certain security telecommunications equipment. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior have now given the ETC permission to import some equipment into Syria which will enable the ETC to improve the telecommunications infrastructure in the country.
• The ETC is planning to conduct a number of teambuilding and inter-agency capacity building exercises in 2019. The ETC hopes to conduct the first inter-agency ICT training in November 2018.

Whole of Syria
Turkey
• The ETC is planning a mission in mid-November to review the needs for ETC services at the UN hub in Gazientep as some agencies have now left the common area.

4. YEMEN
Security situation
• The security situation is deteriorating across Yemen, especially in Al Hudaydah. Aden is being significantly impacted as the demand for connectivity and IT support is increasing rapidly.

ETC Response
• The ETC held an inter-agency ICT capacity building training in Aden. 19 participants from eight organisations attended. The ETC received positive feedback and another training session is now planned in Sana’a in November pending visa approvals.
• The ETC completed assessments of all its ETC hubs and will proceed with upgrading the bandwidth in some of these hubs including Al Hudayah where ETC connectivity is the only available network. The ETC will also open four new hubs to help address the needs of the increasing number of humanitarians. New hubs include one in Aden, one in Sa’ada hosted by UNICEF and two new hubs in Al Hudaydah.
• The ETC will host a Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) mission in Aden between 18-24 November to assess the feasibility of deploying Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) in the country.
• The equipment needed to upgrade UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) radios and establish a new UNDSS Communications Centre (COMCEN) is now on its way to Aden from Djibouti.
• The ETC is continuing to finalize the project plan for the planned Services for Communities (S4C) project in Sana’a University.
AOB

Teleconference / Meeting ended at 12:31 UTC

Next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on Wednesday 14 November at 12:00 UTC.

Acronyms

ACF                      Action Contre la Faim / Action Against Hunger
ACLAB                   Alliance for Cooperation and Legal Aid Bangladesh
BTRC                    Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission
COMCEN                  Communications Centre
CRC                      Community Resource Centre
DMR                      Digital Mobile Radio
EOC                      Emergency Operations Centre
ETC                      Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS                      Emergency Telecommunications Sector
FITTEST                WFP’s Fast IT, Telecommunications and Coordination Support Services Team
HC                      Humanitarian Coordinator
HF                       High Frequency
ICCG                     Inter-Cluster Coordination Group
ICT                      Information and Communications Technology
IDP                      Internally Displaced People
IHP                      International Humanitarian Partnership
IM                       Information Management
IMO                      Information Management Officer
IOM                      International Organization for Migration
ISCG                     Inter-Sector Coordination Group
ISP                      Internet Service Provider
IT                        Information Technology
JRP                      Joint Response Plan
NGO                      Non-Government Organisations
OCHA                     Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RETS                      Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector
SMT                      Security Management Team
S4C                      Services for Communities
TESS                     Telecommunications Security Standards
UN                       United Nations
UNCAF                     UN Common Accommodation Facility
UNDSS                     UN Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA                     UN Population Fund
UNHCR                     UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF                     UN Children’s Fund
VHF                       Very High Frequency
WFP                      World Food Programme
Minutes: Suzanne Fenton, WFP