## Bangladesh, CAR, Nigeria

## Global ETC Teleconference

## Date: 26/06/19        TIME: 12:00 UTC

## Attendance

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Chair | Prakash Muniandy | (Global ETC), UAE |
| | | |
| Catholic Relief Services | Dan Carr | US |
| Emergency.lu | Gilles Hoffmann | Luxembourg |
| UNHCR | Alexander James Thomas | Denmark |
| | Christina Handle | Denmark |
| UNICEF | Antonio Gomes | US |
| World Vision | Anthony Kimani | Nairobi |
| WFP | Ekue Ayih | Nigeria |
| | Habib Shashati | Bangladesh |
| | Elizabeth Millership | UAE |
| | Andrew Henze | Thailand |
| | Angel Buitrago | Cuba |
| | Carlos Hilarion | Panama |
| | Omar Namaoui | Italy |

Teleconference started at 12:03 UTC

## Agenda

1. **Bangladesh**
    a. **Country updates**
    b. **Partner updates**
2. **Central African Republic (CAR)**
    a. **Country updates**
    b. **Partner updates**
3. **Nigeria**
    a. **Country updates**
    b. **Partner updates**
4. **AOB**

## Minutes

### 1. BANGLADESH

**Security situation**

- The security situation remains stable.

**Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) response**

- The ETS Coordinator met with a delegation from the Government of Luxembourg including the Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs who visited Cox's Bazar on 13 June. The ETS Coordinator briefed the minister on ETS activities including how it supports the information hubs which are a critical tool for the affected community.

- Following planning assessments, activities are underway to reduce reliance on rental towers for the VHF radio network. So far, the network for 1x UN channel has been transferred to the UN compound in Cox's Bazar.

- The ETS continues to support International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) across 4x sites in Cox's Bazar.

- The ETS Coordinator will leave the operation on 1 July. A Vacancy Announcement for an ETS Coordinator is currently open.

### 2. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

**ETC Response**

- The ETC conducted maintenance work on an NGO radio channel in Bouar to ensure efficient security communication services are available to humanitarians operating there.

- Internet connectivity services have been extended until the end of 2019 in all locations where the ETC is already providing services, except N'Dele where Internet connectivity management will be handed over to IOM in August 2019.

### 3. NIGERIA

**Security situation**

- The security situation remains unpredictable and security advisories are being issued regularly. There have been no major incidents affecting ETS operations.

**ETS Response**

- The ETS operation in Nigeria is 79% funded (total requirements for 2019 are US$3.4 million).

- Since the beginning of the year, the ETS has provided communications services to 2,200 humanitarians from 75 organisations across North-East Nigeria.

- The team successfully rolled out a new local solution that will provide user management and distribution in 7x sites where the ETS is already providing Internet connectivity to humanitarians.

- The Global ETC Coordinator conducted an oversight mission to Maiduguri from 26 May – 1 June to engage with the ETS team and key partners to discuss the response going forward on the ETS project in North-East Nigeria. He also visited the humanitarian hub in Dikwa to see the ETS infrastructure set up and services delivered to the humanitarian community.

- The Head of Infrastructure at Action Against Hunger (ACF) visited North-East Nigeria on 25 June to learn more about ETS activities and to discuss capacity building opportunities for local ACF staff.

- The deployment of a second satellite terminal at the hub in Banki was successfully completed to cope with the new connectivity requirements as part of the expansion of the hub to accommodate an additional 80+ humanitarians.

- At the request of UNDSS, the ETS conducted an assessment mission in Yola to set up a Security Operations Centre (SOC) to provide vital security services for humanitarians.

- The ETS continues to be supported by Stand-By Partners (SBP) Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) who is leading radio communications training on the ground.

## 4. VENEZUELA

**Security situation**

- The number of Venezuelans leaving the country has reached 4 million (UNHCR, IOM) and globally, Venezuelans are one of the single largest displaced population group.

- The pace of the outflow from Venezuela has accelerated from 695,000 at the end of 2015 to an increase of over 4 million by mid-2019. Since November 2018, the number of refugees and migrants increased by one million.

- Latin American countries are hosting the vast majority of Venezuelans. Colombia accounts for 1.3 million, followed by Peru with 768,000, Chile 288,000, Ecuador 263,000, Brazil 168,000 and Argentina 130,000. Mexico and countries in Central America and the Caribbean are also hosting significant numbers of refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

- The border between Colombia and Venezuela is open, but only pedestrian crossing by international bridges is allowed. The border with Aruba is currently closed whilst the border with Brazil remains open.

- UNHCR is operating under a Level 2 emergency in Venezuela. Level 1 and 2 emergencies are declared in 12 other neighbouring countries.

- Whilst there are no major protests in the capital, the overall security situation remains volatile with reinforced police and military presence on the streets. An 18:30 curfew is imposed, and staff are advised not to travel unaccompanied.

- A large portion of the international community (including embassies and diplomats) are accommodated at the Altamira Suites hotel due to its proximity to the diplomatic zone and its constant generator power supply. Not all hotels have generators.

- Credit card services are now functional but are dependent on electricity. Most shops, supermarkets, restaurants and hotels continue to accept USD. However, the conversion rate is increasing daily (currently the rate is roughly 1 USD = 7400 bolivars).

- Access to fuel is a national issue with most problems experienced in the interior of the country (Táchira, Bolívar, Anzoátegui, Zulia, Cojedes, amongst others).

- Daily power cuts continue in most areas in the interior of the country. Transformer explosions, powerplant explosions and damage to electrical appliances are commonplace. Access to reliable electricity is still a challenge across the country. Rationing is still in place with no warning of when cuts are going to come into effect.


**Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector (RETS) response**

Mobile communications

- Mobile communications services (voice and data) are available across the country, however their operability is entirely dependent on electricity which in many provincial towns remains scarce. When power cuts occur, all services are down which affects voice and data services.

- Mobile Network Operators (MNO) and landline telephony providers are no longer routing outgoing international calls as they are unable to maintain the service. Only calls within Venezuela can currently be made.

ISP connectivity

- CANTV (a national government-owned service provider) internet connectivity is functional in most parts of the country but is not reliable due to the unstable electricity situation.

- Private ISPs are available in big cities only.

Security communications

- The UNDSS-administered UHF network in Caracas and Gran Caracas will undergo migration to VHF. Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) standards have been taken into consideration for this project.

- UNHCR has provided advice and feedback on the project plan and will continue to work closely alongside UNDSS throughout the duration of the migration.

- A UNHCR radio expert has arrived in-country and is initiating the reinforcement of UNHCR VHF network. The project takes into account TESS standards and will also focus on alternative means on security communications (satellite, cross-platform communication) where possible. The scope of UNHCR's project will focus on UNHCR operational areas between Maracaibo, San Cristobal and Guasdualito in the West of the country, including Ciudad Guayana in the East.

Shared services

- Shared connectivity services in Guasdualito are now operational following support from the Government of Luxembourg through the emergency.lu platform. 40 partners from 5 organisations currently benefit from the service. Over the coming weeks, UNHCR will extend the connectivity via microwave link to partner offices whilst others will use space in the UNHCR field office dedicated to partner internet access.

- UNHCR is providing on-site connectivity services to Partners in San Cristobal (OCHA, UNFPA, IOM) and Maracaibo (UNFPA, UNICEF and other partners).

- At this point, there is no request to activate the ETC in Venezuela.

Teleconference / Meeting ended at 12:30 UTC

**Next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on Wednesday 24 July 13:00 UTC.**

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ACF | Action Against Hunger |
| CAR | Central African Republic |
| ETC | Emergency Telecommunications Cluster |
| ETS | Emergency Telecommunications Sector |
| HF | High Frequency |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| ISP | Internet Service Providers |
| IT | Information Technology |
| MNO | Mobile Network Operator |
| MSB | Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency |

| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NRC | Norwegian Refugee Council |
| OCHA | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| RETS | Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector |
| S4C | Services for Communities |
| SBP | Stand-by Partners |
| SOC | Security Operations Centre |
| TESS | Telecommunications Security Standards |
| UHF | Ultra High Frequency |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNDSS | UN Department of Safety and Security |
| UNFPA | UN Population Fund |
| UNHCR | UN High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | UN International Children's Emergency 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:** Elizabeth Millership, WFP