

## **Bangladesh, CAR, Nigeria**

### **Global ETC Teleconference**

**Date: 31/07/19**

**TIME: 13:00 UTC**

#### **Attendance**

Chair	Caroline Teyssier	(Global ETC), UAE
ACF	Thomas Gerard	France
UNHCR	Alexander James Thomas	Denmark
UNICEF	Antonio Gomes	US
	Paulin Kantshiana	Mozambique
WFP	Ekue Ayih	Nigeria
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	Mohamedou Ndiath	Central African Republic
	Ozdzan Hadziemin	UAE
	Ryan Twitney	Bangladesh

Teleconference started at 13:03 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. Venezuela**
  - a. Country updates
  - b. RETS response
- 5. AOB**



## Minutes

### 1. BANGLADESH

#### Security situation

- The security situation remains stable.

#### Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) response

- The recruitment of an ETS Coordinator position has been launched. The Vacancy Announcement closes on 2 August. One staff member from WFP's Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team (FITTEST) staff is covering the position until the candidate is appointed.
- The ETS is proposing an assessment of the response and recovery times of each Mobile Network Operator (MNO) to identify gaps and needs in existing connectivity to improve services in the camp and for host communities. The humanitarian community would also benefit from an ETS-brokered agreement with MNOs.
- Discussions with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) are ongoing to install communications equipment for 11 Operations Centres in the camps for emergency preparedness. ISCG is seeking Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for this activity.
- The ETS is proposing to hold a desktop simulation involving MNOs, ETC partners and government entities to inform preparedness planning in Bangladesh.
- The ETS has identified a need to digitize the information hubs throughout all camps used by affected communities.
- The ETS Coordinator is exploring the set-up of an ETS feedback mechanism to assess ETC service user satisfaction rates, gaps and needs.

### 2. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

#### Security situation

- The security situation remains stable except in Batangafo where security incidents have been reported.

#### ETC Response

- The ETC in CAR has received US\$300,000 from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) to implement recommendations issued by the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) project team in early 2019. The ETC Coordinator is working with the TESS team to define specifications for the first order of equipment to implement the recommendations. The ETC is also preparing to hire a Senior Telecommunications Specialist for a period of three months to manage the project and assist in building

local capacity to carry out the recommendations. For capacity building purposes, Let's Comm training has been confirmed, to be held in Bangui from 15–20 September. The training will equip 12 inter-agency IT staff with the skills to deploy and upgrade security telecommunications infrastructure across 14 locations in CAR according to new UN standards. The training will be delivered by two WFP FITTEST staff.

- The ETC has also received US\$300,000 from CHF to pilot three Services for Communities (S4C) projects in CAR, as follows:
  1. Establishment of a Community Learning and Information Centre in Bangassou for communities to learn digital skills and connect with people outside CAR and with humanitarians via the Internet;
  2. Establishment of designated free-of-charge phone booths in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bria to allow the community – particularly women – to communicate with their families and to contact humanitarian hotlines;
  3. Provision of a common application tool for the implementation of a Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) for the affected population in Kaga-Bandoro to provide feedback on humanitarian assistance. Humanitarians will use this information to provide more efficient communications services.
- The ETC carried out an S4C assessment mission at the IDP camp in Bria from 22–24 July to identify an appropriate site to host the designated free-of-charge phone booths. The ETC Coordinator also met with potential local partners to discuss project implementation and management. The ETC Coordinator will conduct a second S4C assessment mission in Bangassou from 2 August to begin preparations for setting up the Community Learning and Information Centre.
- The ETC Coordinator is working with the S4C team to identify a Project Manager who will be responsible for overseeing the projects at the three locations.
- 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 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in August 2019.
- The ETC went on mission in N'Dele to support the set-up of a Security Operations Centre (SOC) at the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) office in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) compound. The installation was carried out by UNDSS and WFP staff.
- The ETC Coordinator is holding discussions with partners to host planned ETC services in Amada Gaza, Berberati and Gamboula. An agreement has been set up with OCHA to host Internet connectivity services in Berberati and with MINUSCA to host a UNDSS-managed SOC.

### 3. NIGERIA

#### Security situation

- The security situation remains unpredictable. On 18 July, a humanitarian convoy on the way to Damasak was attacked and six humanitarian staff were held hostage. As a result, that road is temporarily closed. On 28 July, there was an attack near Maiduguri where 62 civilians were killed.

#### ETS Response

- The ETS is now 79% funded due to additional funds received (total requirement for 2019 is US\$3.4 million).
- The ETS continues to provide Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services in nine common operational areas. Since the beginning of the year, the ETS has provided Internet connectivity services to more than 2,740 humanitarians from 92 organizations at the hubs deployed across North-East Nigeria and has held capacity building sessions for over 214 UN and NGO staff to develop satellite communication systems and security telecommunications skills.
- In early July, the ETS supported the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Emergency Directors Group (EDG) mission by providing all necessary telecommunications assistance. A key recommendation from the mission report is to streamline the coordination mechanisms of UN agencies, including those of the ETS.
- The ETS continues to coordinate the rotation of 16 radio operators at seven humanitarian hubs to ensure the SOCs are operational to support the humanitarian response, improving the safety and security of responders.
- The ETS has benefitted from staffing assistance thanks to partners Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) who each assigned a member of staff to the ETS for a period of six months, from March until the end of August.
- The team plans to deploy an additional Internet connectivity link in Monguno provided by a local Internet Service Provider (ISP).
- The ETS is preparing to set up a SOC in Yola following the assessment mission carried out in late June.
- The ETS will continue working on the activation and testing of connectivity equipment as part of the Crisis Connectivity Charter before deploying it to field hubs.
- The procurement of a hybrid power system is ongoing. The system will be deployed at the humanitarian hubs to ensure a constant provision of ETS communications services.
- Due to the security situation on the ground in Nigeria, the S4C assessment mission was not able to go ahead. The team will take future opportunities to conduct the needs assessment to explore possible S4C projects.

## 4. VENEZUELA

### Overview

#### 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.
- UNHCR is operating under a Level 2 emergency in Venezuela. Level 1 and 2 emergencies are declared in 12 other neighbouring countries.
- All land borders are currently open including those of Colombia and Brazil.
- Recurring blackouts have seen an increase in military presence in the streets. Whilst no major protests are reported, the situation remains extremely tense.
- UNDSS provides daily security updates via email as well as flash security information (protests, road closures, areas to avoid) via WhatsApp.

#### Power and mobile communication services

- The country has suffered widespread blackouts, affecting 14 of the 24 regions including Caracas and leaving millions of households without running water and telecommunications.
- Voice and data services are available across the country. However, their operability is entirely dependent on electricity which in many provincial towns remains scarce.
- There is some network penetration between Colombia and Venezuela border regions, allowing residents of the Apure and Zulia region to receive signal from Colombian ISPs.
- MNOs and landline telephony providers are no longer routing outgoing international calls, as they are unable to maintain the service. Only calls within Venezuela can be made.

#### ISP connectivity

- The national government-owned service provider CANTV Internet connectivity is functional in most parts of the country but are not reliable due to the electricity situation.
- Other private ISP's are also available (power allowing) in big cities only.
- UNHCR offices based close to the Columbian border are now receiving connectivity via ISPs from Colombia which are more reliable than the connectivity options in country.



---

## Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector (RETS) response

### Shared connectivity services

- Shared connectivity services in Guasdualito are now operational due to support from the Government of Luxembourg through the emergency.lu platform. 40 partners from seven organisations currently benefit from the service, primarily to provide protection assistance for the affected population.
- UNHCR is providing on-site connectivity services to partners in San Cristobal (OCHA, UNFPA, IOM) and Maracaibo (UNFPA, UNICEF and partners).

### Security communications

- All five UNHCR offices in country are now equipped with generator backup for reliable power and increased security communications frequency backup.
- A UNHCR project in the capital of Caracas is ongoing to take full control of the corporate VHF network which at present is partially reliant on service providers. The project will take a further three months to complete. The scope of UNHCR's project will focus on UNHCR's operational areas between Maracaibo, San Cristobal and Guasdualito in the west of the country, including Ciudad Guayana in the east.

### Neighbouring countries

- There is an ongoing needs assessment in Argentina, Chile, Trinidad and Tobago.
- There is an ongoing assessment specifically for implementation of Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector (RETS) services in Argentina and Chile.
- UNHCR Innovation Service is assessing the need for Connectivity for Refugees services across the region in close collaboration with the Regional Coordination Platform led by UNHCR and IOM in Panama.

## **AOB**

Gear.UP 2019 applications are open until 15 August. Gear.UP is a large-scale inter-agency operational exercise and functional training event designed to further advance emergency response capabilities of the global ICT and Logistics humanitarian community. It integrates aspects of the full-scale field simulation exercise (OpEx Bravo) for the ETC and the Logistics Response Team Training for the Logistics Cluster. The list of criteria and application instructions for candidates with an ICT background and Emergency Response managers is on the [ETC website](#).

Teleconference / Meeting ended at 12:30 UTC

**Next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on Wednesday 25 September 13:00 UTC.**



---

## Acronyms

CAR	Central African Republic
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFM	Complaints and Feedback Mechanism
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
EDG	Emergency Directors Group
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
FITTEST	Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
HF	High Frequency
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ISCG	Inter-Sector Coordination Group
ISP	Internet Service Providers
IT	Information Technology
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
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
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](http://www.ETCluster.org)

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

**Minutes:** Elizabeth Millership, WFP