Bangladesh, CAR, Libya, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 22/06/2022 Time: 13:00 UTC

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

Attendance

Chair	Omar Namaoui	Algeria
Action Against Hunger (ACF)	Thomas Gerard	France
CDAC Network	Fanman Tsang	United Kingdom
CISCO	Abraham Adu (Abadu)	USA
UNICEF	Awsan Almamari	Yemen
	Yusuf Oloyede	Nigeria
	Jalal Tamimi	Jordan
	Haytem Elgbali	Libya
	Marc Dieng	Afghanistan
WFP	Atmaja Sembiring	Syria
	Patrick Midy	Bangladesh
	Ahmed El Sheikh	Libya
	Elmuiez Babikir	Nigeria
	Nasir Khan	Senegal
	Bijoy Barua	Bangladesh
	Mohammed Ameen	Egypt
	Sarah Eshaq	Yemen
	Kehinde Adewara	UAE

Agenda

1. Bangladesh update
2. CAR update – n/a
3. Libya update
4. Nigeria update
5. Philippines update
6. Syria update
7. Yemen update

8. AOB

Minutes

1. Bangladesh

Security situation

- The security situation in Cox's Bazar remains calm. However, a fire incident was reported in early June in a nearby district resulting in seven casualties and 450 injuries.

- An upwards trend in COVID-19 cases is being witnessed in Bangladesh as the country reported an increase in the number of active cases from less than 1% to over 6%. To this effect, the WFP Country Office (CO) has announced compliance with the existing protocols from staff members.

ETS response

- The ETS in Bangladesh hosted the monthly local ETS working group meeting on 6 June.

- In June, the number of sites connected to the ETS data network increased from 46 to 56 and the users increased from 530 to 578. This represents 22% and 9% increases in the number of sites and users respectively. A new request to connect an additional 14 sites has been received and is being considered for action.

- A total of 893 users were supported with ETS security communications services with an average of 250 calls per day. This is a slight decline from the previous month, believed to be a result of the prevailing monsoon season which impacted mission movement.

- The Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) approved the request for the establishment of the Very High Frequency (VHF) network in Bhasan Char. The ETS is working with the HQ Legal team on certain conflicting clauses on the application requirement which impacts the UN immunity and privileges. The WFP CO is currently being advised on the strategy of engagement with BTRC.

- The Global ETC is working closely with the Communication with Communities (CwC) group in Bangladesh to understand the communication needs of communities and the potential projects that can address the gap.

- The plan to upgrade the VHF network and coverage in Teknaf is currently ongoing. The tender process has been initiated and two tenders have been received in a bid to procure the desired equipment for the expansion.

- The ETS is currently responding to the impact of the monsoon season on Internet Service Providers (ISP) services and how to mitigate the impact.

- The IT specialist has joined the operation while the resumption of the Information Management (IM) officer is expected by the weekend.

2. Libya

Security situation

- The political situation in Libya remains precarious with rivalry between political groups and regional dominance, despite several peace meetings in Cairo.

- A severe power shortage has been reported in the western region, thereby impacting electric power generation. An extended power cut has been experienced as a result thereby leading to protests and civil unrest. The power cut is anticipated to extend nationwide as the employees of the power plants have announced a nationwide strike.

- New COVID-19 cases in the country continue to decline – the current percentage of new cases among the samples is 3.28%. The total number of COVID-19 infections in Libya since the start of the pandemic has reached over 502,076 with 6,430 deaths and over 60 active cases as of 16 June 2022.

ETS response

- The ETS in Libya received approval from the WFP CO for the deactivation of the ETS in Libya by the end of June. The coordination team is working to finalize the transition report, including the transition of the Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) service to WFP Libya. The next steps for other pending issues are also being addressed.

- The ETS has made progress with the rehabilitation of the VHF network in Benghazi and Tripoli. Some replacement equipment such as a VHF repeater procured from Dubai is now in Benghazi pending customs clearance. The installation of this equipment in the Benghazi hub is being planned with support from WFP FITTEST.

- Debate on the preferred security communications platform in Libya is ongoing, despite previous agreement to adopt VHF as per the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) recommendations. Tetra equipment is being considered for installation in Tripoli. An *ad hoc* meeting of the ICT working group is being scheduled to address the issue.

- The ETS is exploring potential locations to relocate the repeater installed on the roof of the Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli after receiving a request from the hotel management to remove it.
Albounya Telecommunications Company (operates under the government Post Office Holding company, which owns most of the telecommunication towers in the country), was contacted and provided with the technical specifications of the antenna and the repeater – their response is pending. Tripoli Tower, a commercial 120-meter height tower and skyscraper located in the city centre of Tripoli has also been contacted and a site visit was carried out – the ETS is now waiting to receive offers from both sides.

- The ETS is exploring a possible solution with the WFP CO to dispose of prepositioned Tetra equipment in Brindisi – due to license issues, this equipment cannot be deployed in Libya. WFP in Dubai is supporting this.

3. Nigeria

Security situation

- An increase in security incidents was reported in May, largely related to armed conflict, terrorism, and civil unrest, as well as several ongoing military campaigns in North-East Nigeria and Lake Chad Region.
- The COVID-19 situation reported by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) indicated a new surge in the confirmed cases – 244 cases were reported last week.

ETS response

- The ETS in Nigeria continues to provide security communications, data connectivity, voice communication, and ICT helpdesk support for humanitarian respondents in three metropolitan locations, namely Maiduguri, Damaturu and Yola, and humanitarian hubs in field locations, namely Bama, Banki, Damasak, Dikwa, and Gwoza.

- To date, the ETS in Nigeria has provided connectivity services to 1,275 users from 92 organizations (17 UN agencies and 75 NGOs). Approximately 1,200 users were supported by the ETS VHF network while 500 cases have been resolved by the ICT helpdesk in May and early June.

- On 14 June, the ETS worked with UNDSS to reactivate ETS services in Dikwa following its closure in March 2021 after a security incident in which ETS equipment was damaged and the hub shut down.

- Meanwhile, the decommissioned and dismantled emergency.lu VSAT equipment is being prepared for shipment from Maiduguri to Abuja via the Logistics Sector. The equipment will then continue its onward journey from Abuja to Luxembourg in coordination with the Government of Luxembourg.

- The ETS provided radio user training for 38 responders in the field last month.

- Planning to upgrade VHF coverage in Yola is ongoing with the reinforcement via a new tower. Other plans include off-grid solar solutions for the humanitarian hubs and ETS services in the field offices.

- The ETS is working to reappoint the telecommunications specialist after break. The vacant position of an IT associate has been filled. The IM associate is on a three-month Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY) mission to support the Supply Chain unit in Rome.

- Ongoing travel restrictions for UN personnel and vendors due to security situations continue to significantly impact on mission planning and other key ETS activities.

- The ETS in Nigeria is sufficiently funded out of a required US$1,600,000 for 2022 activities.

4. Syria

Security situation

- The security situation in Syria remains volatile. Several security incidents resulting in civilian causalities in northern Aleppo have been reported in the last few weeks. Roadblocks have also been reported – WFP and partners have temporarily suspended activities in this region. The situation impacted the UNHAS flight schedules, resulting in the cancellation and suspension of flights from Damascus to Qamishli and Aleppo. This service is expected to restart by 3 July.

ETC response

- The ETC in Syria continues to provide connectivity services to UN agencies across six sites in Syria.

- The ETC responded to the security situation in Al-Hol camp with the installation of the VHF network and solar power solutions to connect responders in the camp with the SOC in Qamishli. Further, data connectivity services provided by the ETC in the UN hub in Qamishli are now supported with 80 kW of solar power solutions to address the frequent power cuts.

- The ETC completed maintenance activities and antennae upgrades in Deir Ez-Zor, Aleppo, and most recently, Qamishli. All of the planned maintenance missions in Syria are now completed.

- The ETC is planning to upgrade the capacity of the solar power in the UN hub in Deir Ez-Zor to cover connectivity services. The mission is being planned for July. The ETC is following up with UNICEF to resolve connectivity issues in Deir Ez-Zor due to complications connecting the second ISP fibre link.

- The ETC received an extension on the approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to import Cisco equipment to upgrade connectivity infrastructure in all common operational hubs in Syria. The procurement and shipping processes are currently ongoing.

- The ETC is pursuing the process of re-exporting iCOM Push-To-Talk (PTT) equipment to Dubai due to recent disapproval by the in-country telecommunications authority.

- The ETC is 100 percent funded – US$150,000 out of the required US$550,000 in 2022 has been spent so far.

5. Yemen

Security situation

- In general, the security situation remains volatile and unpredictable.

- Sana'a international airport has been open since May for flights to Cairo and Amman.

- Following the extension of the truce/ceasefire, peace negotiation continues between the two conflicting sides.

ETC response

- The ETC in Aden activated the 10 Mbps leased line for the WFP guesthouse in Aden.

- The ETC team assisted the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Aden to programme six VHF mobile base radios for armoured vehicles.

- The ETC in Aden is implementing the ETC Wi-Fi user authentication system with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that will enhance user authentication, to unify and simplify the system as in Sana'a.

- ETC IT support staff based in Sana'a are conducting a mission on 20 June to Al Mokha to assess the readiness and effectiveness of ETC service provision there.

- The ETC team in Ibb plan to upgrade connectivity services in the ETC site hosted by WFP.

- Jay Muhanned, WFP Chief Information Officer (CIO), and Dalia Mansour, WFP Regional IT Officer (RITO) from RBC, paid an oversight visit to Yemen from 11-15 June. The ETC team met with the high-level mission and presented the ETC service provision in response to humanitarian partners' needs in the country. The mission had a chance to visit one of the Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) located

in the WHO office in Sana'a. The EOC team provided a brief overview of the EOC activities and its service providers.

- In Ibb, the ETC team—in coordination with UNDSS—relocated the UNDSS SOC from UNICEF to WFP offices.

- In Marib, the ETC completed the setup of the UNDSS SOC after two years of waiting for the equipment from Sana'a.

- Four ETC staff attended the Project Management Leadership training from 15-17 June provided by LearningTree.

- An ETC staff member from Sana'a is attending the global ETC Coordination Course in Luxembourg.

- An ETC staff member from Aden is scheduled to take part in the ETC Let's Comm Training of Trainers (ToT) course launched with two virtual sessions held on 31 May and 7 June in Luxembourg.

- iMMAP conducted a virtual training course on power BI from 10-22 June for ETC staff and its partners to enhance ETC information management services in Yemen. The number of participants was 11.

- The ETC in Yemen has pledged 49 percent of its required funding of US$1.5 to cover ETC activities from July to December 2022 through OCHA. The Resident Coordinator (RC)/Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) agreed to provide the required funding in two instalments. US$900,000 will be allocated from the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) contribution on August 22.

6. AOB

The teleconference/Meeting ended at 13:50 UTC

The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on 20 July 2022.

Acronyms

CO	Country Office
EOC	Emergency Operations Centres
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IT	Information Technology
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RC	Residence Coordinator
TDY	Temporary Duty Assignment
TESS	Telecommunications Security Standards
ToT	Training of the Trainer
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

YHF	Yemen Humanitarian Fund
BTRC	Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
CwC	Communication With Communities

Minutes: Kehinde Adewara, Global ETC Information Management Officer