

Bangladesh, CAR, Nigeria, Syria, Yemen

Global ETC Teleconference

Date: 12/10/2022 Time: 12:00 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:

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Attendance

Chair	Omar Namaoui	Algeria
CDAC Network	FanMan Tsang	United Kingdom
CISCO	Eric Knudson	USA
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Government of Luxembourg	Gilles Hoffmann	Luxembourg
	Roland Nurenberg	Luxembourg
NetHope	Charles Higgins	USA
UNHCR	Alexander Thomas	Denmark
UNICEF	Raul Castillo	Senegal
	Jalal Tamimi	Jordan
	Winifredo Abulencia	USA
WFP	Phyza Jameel	Italy
	Oscar Caleman	Thailand
	Patricia Facultad	Italy
	Patrick Midy	Bangladesh
	Elmueiz BABIKIR	Nigeria
	Burak Sezgin	Nigeria
	Atmaja Sembiring	Syria
	Wali Noor	Yemen
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	Mufaro Masuka	UAE
	Mohamedouabou Ndiath	Senegal
	Nasir Khan	Senegal

Agenda

1. Bangladesh update
2. Central African Republic (CAR) update
3. Nigeria update

4. Syria update
5. Yemen update
6. AOB

Minutes

1. Bangladesh

Security situation

- The security situation in Cox's Bazar remains calm.
- COVID-19 daily reported cases rose between August and September. Reported cases have not risen in October.

ETS response

- The Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) made a first review of the 2023 Joint Response Plan (JRP). The ISCG requested documentation, illustrating the process flow for the project for year 2023.
- Approval for the VHF network in Bhasan Char has been granted by the local authorities. WFP / ETS has initiated the shipment process of the VHF equipment already purchased and stored in Dubai.
- The Purchase Order (PO) for the Teknaf VHF expansion was issued. Delivery is expected by end of October 2022. The ETS has started preparing for the mission to implement the VHF expansion.
- The ETS has completed the technical implementation of the network upgrade project. The technical project report is being finalised. The network upgrade has resulted in improved connectivity and a significant reduction of poor connectivity reports.
- The ETS provides data connectivity services to 636 users across 58 sites. Five new sites were added in September.
- There were 892 security communications users in September. Users made 8,750 calls leading to a daily average of 291 calls.
- During the month of September, physical counting of assets meant for disposal was undertaken. The report was shared with the Administration unit for the Property Survey Board (PSB) committee recommendations.
- As of October, the ETS is just 59% funded. The ETS anticipated the funding shortage and took measures for rationalized purchase planning after conducting a physical assessment of its stocks in early April. The impact of the funding shortage is therefore mitigated.
- The ETS was approached by the WFP Programme unit for a potential CFM project. Nothing has been confirmed yet. The ETS will reach out to the Global ETC if the project is confirmed. The ETS commits to support Programme colleagues and has

advised them to design a strong project proposal that will receive government approval.

2. Central African Republic (CAR)

Security situation

- The security situation in CAR remains calm, although there are some reported increases in criminal activities in Bangui and other larger towns.

ETC response

- The operation in CAR still faces major funding challenges.
- The services for communities' projects are funded by OCHA until mid-January 2023.
- ETC internet connectivity services are still unavailable in 10 sites since 01 August due to a lack of funding. Only one site—Batangafo—is operational and connected through an emergency.lu VSAT. The Global ETC is assisting the team on the ground with a connectivity mapping survey to be launched soon which will form an evidence base for a proposed cost-sharing model for ETC connectivity services.
- The ETC is working with the Central African Red Cross to establish a Learning and Information Centre in Bangassou. The ETC will provide services such as partner training and internet connectivity. Other partners involved in setting up the centre are INTERSOS, OCHA and UNICEF. The project is planned to be set up and operational before the end of 2022. A training session is set for 17 October to capacitate staff from OCHA, UNICEF and WFP.

3. Nigeria

Security situation

- The security situation remains volatile. However, the ETS is allowed to stay overnight in all humanitarian hub locations that have a UNDSS presence.
- Pre-election violence is likely to occur in the northeast, according to UNDSS reports. This may affect ETS mobility in the region. The election is scheduled for February 2023. The situation will continue to be monitored.

ETS response

- The ETS continued to provide coordination and information management services. ETS participated in field-level meetings while continuing to organize dedicated ETS coordination meetings in Maiduguri.
- The ETS continues to provide security communications services in 10 locations. Services are up and running at full capacity in all locations.
- As of 12 October, the ETS provides internet connectivity to 1,095 users from 104 organizations (17 UN agencies and 87 NGOs).

- ETS service provision covers the helpdesk, radio programming, and internet connectivity.
- The ETS team conducted a mission to Bama on 05 October to install internet connectivity equipment. Another mission to Banki was undertaken for a solar power assessment.
- Voice and data connectivity services are up and running in eight locations. However, a maintenance mission to Banki is scheduled in the coming weeks to bring the second VSAT back to 100% capacity. Dates for the maintenance mission are yet to be confirmed.
- An off-grid capacity solar system project has been initiated for a pilot in all sites, except for Dikwa. The plan is to switch from generators to 100% solar power in all humanitarian hubs to ensure a reliable power source. There is currently a hybrid power system in place.
- A procurement order has been processed to purchase and set up a public announcement system for the services for communities' project in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Bama.
- Effective from 10 October, all humanitarian actors flying via UNHAS to/from the deep field will be able to access the newly-established ETS Wi-Fi services in the UNHAS check-in lounge at Maiduguri International Airport.

4. Syria

Security situation

- The overall security situation remains volatile. Varied security incidences occurred in the past few weeks. Active conflict among parties along the frontline in north Al-Hasakah were reported, during the weekend of 07 October. The International Coalition Forces (ICF) carried out an air assault in one village south of Qamishli city.
- Secretary-General António Guterres met with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad on 22 September. The UN chief expressed hope for greater progress with the UN-facilitated political process mandated by Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). He also expressed concern over the growing humanitarian needs throughout Syria and pledged to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches all Syrians in need.
- Syria is experiencing a cholera outbreak. Confirmed and suspected cases of cholera continue to rise. 13 out of 14 governorates are now affected. 13,059 reported cases, including 60 deaths, have been recorded between 24 August and 04 October. The fatality rate is 0.46%.

ETC response

- The ETC continues to provide internet connectivity services to 350 humanitarians from 11 UN agencies, and security communications services to 660 users from 14 UN agencies across eight sites in Syria.
- The ETC conducted field missions to Tartous and Homs. The objectives of the mission were to assess the existing ETC services, areas of potential improvement,

and conduct a needs assessment for new services. The mission was undertaken from 01 to 03 October.

- Based on a recommendation from the Syrian Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (SyTRA), a new note verbale (NV) has been submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to request for VSAT licenses in 2022-2023. The NV aims to seek for the authority's final decision in using VSAT solutions for all UN agencies in Syria. The ETC awaits the MoFA response.
- An additional (fibre optic) internet link from an alternative Internet Service Provider (ISP) is being established by the ETC in Deir Ez-Zor to improve connectivity services in the UN hub. The ETC through UNICEF is following up with the ISP to establish the service, once the link has been successfully tested.
- The ETC in Syria is conducting a Technical Workshop from 10 to 14 October in Dubai, UAE, for 15 ICT staff across six UN agencies. The workshop will focus on the technical aspects of ETC-related solutions and services targeting partners' national ICT personnel based in Syria.
- The ETC is following up and waiting to clear Cisco equipment to upgrade the connectivity infrastructure in field hubs, as well as VHF handheld devices for the six Security Operations Centres (SOCs), and ETC visibility items. All items are expected to be cleared from customs by the end of 2022.
- The ETC is importing portable solar power solutions to support communications services in the SOCs and during humanitarian field missions. The ETC has received MoFA approval and is following up with the Syria Corridor office in Lebanon to ensure smooth shipment and importation clearance.
- To maintain a contingency stock of VHF repeaters in country, the ETC is reaching out to WFP FITTEST to explore the possibility of supplying the equipment. The ETC has submitted an NV to obtain importation approval through MoFA. The ETC awaits MoFA approval.
- The ETC is fully funded for activities in 2022 and the remaining funds can support the operation up to Q1 of 2023.

5. Yemen

Security situation

- In general, the security situation remains volatile and unpredictable.
- Ceasefire between the north and southern conflicting parties expired on 02 October. Negotiations are underway to extend the ceasefire. The UN Special Envoy and other stakeholders are working around the clock to ensure that the ceasefire agreement is extended.
- Spates of conflict were reported along the frontline in Taizz and Al Hodeidah in the past week.

ETC response

- The ETC in Yemen is 72% funded as of 12 October. The ETC received USD 900,000 in October from the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF). USD 219,000 is expected to be received from the cost-sharing agreement with other operational partners and UN agencies to cover the ETC network upgrade.
- In September ETC provided services to 1,000 humanitarians and 2,600 responders using radio facilities across 17 sites.
- The ETC completed the ICT infrastructure project in the office of the Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (SCMCHA), which is the government authority in the north. During the project handover, the ETC requested SCMCHA to seek government national security approval for the deployment of four VSAT stations in the north. Approval was granted within three days.
- The ETC is in the process of setting up four new VSAT station sites. Two sites will be in Sa'ada, each hosted by Save the Children and WFP respectively. Another site will be in Hajjah hosted by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the fourth in Sana'a hosted by Action Contre la Faim (ACF). It is important to note that the VSAT stations are being set up to act as a back-up to the optic fibre link which on several occasions have been damaged due to the ongoing conflict, resulting in communications challenges.
- The ETC has migrated the services of seven VSATs from international to local service providers, following pressure from the local authorities. Nine more VSATs will be migrated to local service providers before the end of 2022. Once this task is completed, all ETC connectivity services in Yemen will be compliant with local regulations.
- The ETC has successfully extended its Wi-Fi data connectivity services in Aden to cover the UN Special Envoy Office, the new UNDSS office, and the UN Clinic.
- The ETC conducted a partner learning assessment in Q2-Q3. The outcome was a decision to send 17 IT partner personnel to Amman in Jordan for specialised capacity building. This plan is on hold due to local and international travel restrictions of national staff. The ETC is exploring the availability of conducting the specialised equipment training from local institutions to overcome the travel restriction challenge.
- The ETC has assisted the Aden University services for communities project through four phases since 2017. In recent weeks, Aden University sent a request to the ETC to expand the IT services to other departments of the university and provide maintenance services to the current infrastructure. The university submitted the project proposal through the World Health Organisation (WHO). The ETC is awaiting funding to start project implementation.
- The ETC has received a request from IOM to provide solar lights in the IDP camp in Al-Mokha. While this is not within the ETC's mandate, the request would respond to an urgent need and may be included under bilateral services. The IDP camp has 23 water tanks which provide water to IDPs in the camp. The water becomes inaccessible during the night due to lack of lighting.
- The ETC continues to provide regular technical support to partners in the South.

6. AOB

- There being no other business.

The teleconference meeting ended at 12:38 UTC

Next meeting

The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on **Wednesday 9 November.**

Acronyms

ACF	Action Against Hunger
BGAN	Broadband global area network
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
FITTEST	Fast IT & Telecommunications Emergency & Support Team
GoS	Syrian Government
IP	Internet Protocol
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MPO	Micro Purchase Order
NRF	Notes for the Record
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SOC	Security Operations Centre
TDY	Temporary Duty Assignment
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Minutes: Mufaro Masuka, Global ETC Information Management Officer