

Crisis Connectivity Charter

Satellite communications are immune to natural disasters; they offer a robust and resilient solution that is independent of terrestrial networks. Satellite solutions can be deployed immediately, regardless of constraints such as geography. Satellites provide swift access to life-saving connectivity for those affected. They enable access to information and coordination between Governments, International Organisations (IOs), Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the international humanitarian community before, during and after disasters.

As the number of crises around the world and their impact increases, the unique ability of satellite solutions to help save lives becomes indispensable.

To support this vital work, members of the EMEA Satellite Operator's Association (ESOA) and the Global VSAT Forum (GVF), in coordination with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), led by the World Food Programme (WFP), have in this Charter defined and committed to a set of shared principles to improve the existing satellite-based response and enhance connectivity at times of crisis.



Crisis Connectivity Charter

Crisis Connectivity Charter Principles

The Crisis Connectivity Charter sets out principles to demonstrate and enhance the way the satellite community can enable communications for all stakeholders impacted by a disaster situation.

The Charter should result in improved access to communications for those affected by or involved in responding to disaster situations, so driving efficient solutions in the field and ultimately reducing the loss of lives.

They are:

- ▶ **To strengthen partnership** between the satellite industry and governments as well as the humanitarian sector so as to make it easier for satellite communications to be deployed in humanitarian aid or disaster situations.
- ▶ **To agree a clear framework** under which to supply equipment, services and solutions, improving coordination before, during, and after a disaster.
- ▶ **To enhance coordination** between all actors in the satellite industry that will enable the swift prioritisation of critical, humanitarian traffic, when requested.
- ▶ **To ensure continuous development and improvement** of the satellite community's response to disaster relief as disasters become more complex and as technology evolves.

Benefits of the Crisis Connectivity Charter

- ▶ **Efficient engagement** between the satellite community and humanitarian community in the initial phases of a disaster, and thereafter as needed.
- ▶ **A favourable environment** for the satellite community to work with Government, IOs, NGOs, and the international humanitarian community to identify how satellite can better support their missions during natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies.
- ▶ **Creation and implementation of a mechanism** that can be triggered when needed leading to a coherent, predictable, and end-to-end implementation of a satellite-based response.
- ▶ **Coordination between the satellite community and all stakeholders (government(s), IOs and humanitarian agencies)** that allows the humanitarian community to more effectively plan, refine and ultimately improve its response to disasters.
- ▶ **A tool with which to engage relevant governments and regulators** to ensure swift removal of regulatory barriers that hinder the deployment of satellite communications during a disaster for the purpose of disaster relief in the ETC's identified high-risk countries and beyond.
- ▶ **A foundation for enhanced global awareness** amongst governments, the general public and all relevant communities about disaster circumstances and needs; the technical solutions required and available to effectively address them and any barriers to their deployment in any country of the world.
- ▶ **A tool with which to collectively garner support for disaster relief from the global community**

Intended Outcomes of the Crisis Connectivity Charter

Charter Signatories will work towards the following outcomes:

- ▶ **Reliable information sharing** that will allow the satellite eco-system to assist the ETC in supporting humanitarian responders, governments and affected communities in a more efficient manner.
- ▶ **Clear understanding of the differing requirements** of the humanitarian community immediately after a disaster (Phase 1) and in the following weeks/months (Phase 2), noting that each Phase will have different requirements and processes for implementation.
- ▶ **Creation of an industry-led mechanism**, that can be triggered by the ETC and that leads to coherent, predictable, scalable and principled implementation of an end-to-end satellite-based response
- ▶ **Coordination between the satellite community and government and humanitarian agencies** that allows the humanitarian community to more effectively plan, refine and ultimately improve its response to disasters.
- ▶ **Provision of training and capacity building** for the humanitarian community as well as local experts, governments, and response communities.
- ▶ **Provision of reliable and robust services** that comply with the minimum standards required by the humanitarian community, and meet their diverse needs during disaster situations.

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Activities to Support the Crisis Connectivity Charter

Charter Signatories commit to working on the following activities, where permissible or possible:

Before Disaster: Working towards improved coordination and preparedness both within the satellite community and in concert with the Government and Humanitarian sectors.

► Points of Contact (POC)

Points of contact for the ETC and each Charter Signatory will be appointed as focal points to facilitate the coordination of solutions to be deployed whether for Phase 1 or Phase 2. This process will be defined in the Technical Annex.

► Information Sharing Matrix

Satellite operators will develop a central mapping of resources and proposed solutions, both technical and human, in order to create a "Disaster Relief Database" (DRD). This will allow existing resources and assets to be leveraged more efficiently.

► Operator-to-Operator Support

Satellite operators will aim to pre-identify assets, such as teleports, that could be shared in a disaster relief scenario to support efforts in high-risk countries identified by the ETC.

► Coordination

Satellite operators will be coordinated through ESOA and GVF, assuming roles and responsibilities commensurate to their respective composition, expertise and capabilities.

► Preparedness

Satellite operators will support simulations organised by governments, humanitarian and other stakeholders in high-risk countries to test the implementation of this Charter and its component parts.

Phase 1 and Phase 2

Supporting affected communities and the humanitarian response sector

► Activation of support

Upon request by the ETC, satellite operators should be able to quickly identify the services they could provide in affected countries or regions.

► Supporting access to satellite services

Satellite operators will pledge to make satellite services more accessible to those affected by humanitarian crises through provision of expertise on the most efficient solutions to restore effective telecommunications, and provision of free access, subject to availability and applicable legal and/or regulatory requirements.

► Responding to changing needs

Satellite operators will remain flexible in response to the changing communications requirements during Phases 1 and 2. The definition of Phase 1 and Phase 2 is in line with the ETC's own definition: Phase 1 being from 24 hours after a disaster up to 15 days, and Phase 2 being from 15 days after a disaster up to 3 months.

After phase 1 and / or Phase 2, as identified in the Charter, are completed, the ETC will demobilize hardware and services and will return it to the satellite operator in charge of the service to the place where it was handed over, unless other arrangements have been made between the satellite operator and the World Food Programme. This equipment, if feasible, can then be used for future disasters or crises.