

Philippines, Typhoon Rai / Odette

Global ETC Teleconference #8

Date: 21/02/2022 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:

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Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	UAE
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
ITU	Paul Hamilton	Hungary
	Vanessa Gray	Switzerland
NetHope	Ingolfur Haraldsson	Iceland
WFP	Oscar Caleman	Bangkok
	Brent Carbno	Canada
	Patricia Facultad	Italy
	Clara Aseniero	Italy
	Chiara Ascani	Italy
	Amirullah Syarif	Philippines
	Aramais Alojants	UAE
	Caroline Teyssier	UAE
	Claire Roach	UAE
	Ozdzan Hadziemin	UAE

Agenda

1. Situation update
2. Global ETC update
3. Partner updates

Minutes

1. Situation update

Connectivity

- The general situation and weather conditions in Caraga region are improving and the response is gradually beginning to shift into the recovery phase.
- There is ongoing progress being made by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and power companies to restore services across the affected areas. However, the recovery process remains slow on Dinagat Island and Siargao Island in the Caraga region.
- On Siargao Island there is some mobile network connectivity available. It has been confirmed that MNOs have towers in seven of the eight municipalities of Siargao; the eighth municipality is Socorro Island.
- On Dinagat Island there is no mobile connectivity at all in most areas based on the assessment of Ericsson Response and WFP staff last week. Responders have to go to higher ground to get connectivity for voice calls and SMS.
- The Philippine Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), as the lead of the national Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), is providing free Wi-Fi to government and humanitarian responders with Ku-band VSATs in local government premises in various locations on Dinagat Island as well as Siargao Island. Some of these VSATs were donated by WFP and installed with support from WFP technicians.
- Both islands are dependent on local MNOs and do not have fibre links. The MNO connectivity in Caraga region is congested and still in the recovery process, and some locations in the eastern islands have no coverage at all.
- There is one local Internet Service Provider (ISP) that has a microwave link from Surigao City to Dinagat and Surigao Islands. They have been fixing their links gradually, and repaired their repeater tower in Socorro Island last week. They are now able to begin providing connectivity to both Dinagat and Siargao Islands.
- MNOs and power companies are continuing to make progress on restoring services in Southern Leyte, Bohol, and Cebu.

Humanitarian Activities

- On Bohol Island so far there is no inter-agency shared office location. WFP is planning to open an office on Bohol.
- A shared office with multiple UN agencies has been established in Maasin city in Southern Leyte. The office is operational as of today, but has not yet been officially opened.
- The UN Hub office in Surigao city officially opened on 17 February. An opening ceremony was held that was attended by staff from the participating agencies and

INGOs, including WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, and UNFPA, as well as local government representatives. Internet is provided at the hub by the ETC through a fibre link established by Ericsson response and WFP staff.

2. Global ETC update

- An Ericsson Response ICT Specialist is deploying on a mission to Dinagat Island today to establish connectivity at hotel that is being used as accommodation by many responders. He will install a temporary connectivity solution with equipment provided by Ericsson Response until a more permanent connection can be established through a local ISP.
- A WFP Philippines IT staff member is deploying to Maasin City today to establish the same solution for temporary connectivity at the UN hub using Ericsson response equipment.
- After establishing connectivity at the UN hub in Surigao City last week, the ETC also extended connectivity to a nearby hotel and apartment being used as humanitarian accommodation. There was previously no connectivity available at the hotel and apartment.
- On a daily basis, roughly 20 users access the internet provided at the accommodation facility and 50 users access the internet at the UN hub in Surigao City.
- This week, the WFP FITTEST ICT Emergency Coordinator engaged with the WFP emergency coordinator and met with the WFP Cash-Based-Transfers (CBT) team to discuss possible support from the ETC for their interventions in the Caraga region, especially in the eastern islands.
- Options are being explored for extending the long-term connectivity solution that will be implemented at the hotel on Dinagat Island to provide connectivity to the required sites for the CBT activities.
- There was also engagement with Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and CARE regarding their plans for a shared office and the possible provision of ETC connectivity support.
- The WFP FITTEST ICT specialist and IT emergency coordinator will meet with a local ISP to discuss options for establishing a more permanent network to replace the existing fibre connection and link for the humanitarian accommodation in Surigao City. Options for establishing a link to Dinagat Island and Siargao Island will also be discussed.
- WFP and Ericsson are developing a plan to implement user management tools in order to monitor the number of users accessing the internet through ETC connectivity services. User management solutions will be implemented gradually based on the number of users and the stability of the connectivity.
- Contacts are being gathered from UN agencies and INGOs to establish a local ETC Working Group to identify interagency ICT needs.

- There is an ongoing recruitment process for a local IT assistant to support interagency ETC activities and WFP IT. This staff member is expected to join at the beginning of March.

3. Partner updates

International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

- The [Disaster Connectivity Map](#) (DCM) has been gathering data from the Philippines since 21 December. The campaign ended on 14 February.
- Throughout February, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of datapoints collected per day in the area within a 100km radius from Surigao city.
- There has been some improvement in connectivity on Dinagat Island, with data points collected from Loreto on the north of the island for the first time since December.
- On the other hand, fewer data points were collected in northern Mindanao than previously, possibility indicating network congestion.
- ITU has cancelled their planned shipment of satellite phones to DICT as the required customs clearance was not received and DICT indicated that there is no longer a need.

The next update on the Philippines response will be given on the Global Joint ETC monthly teleconference in March 2022.

Acronyms

CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
DCM	Disaster Connectivity Map
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team
LGU	Local Government Units
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MOVE	Mobile Operations Vehicle for Emergencies
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

Minutes: Claire Roach, Global ETC Operational Information Management Officer