

The Philippines - Typhoon Rai (Odette)

ETC Situation Report #7

Reporting period: 15/02 to 22/02/2022

Since Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) struck the central Philippine islands on 16 December 2021, the Global ETC has been coordinating with its partners globally and on the ground to support government response efforts and the needs of humanitarian responders through the national ETC led by the Philippines Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).

Highlights

- The opening of the UN hub in Surigao City on 17 February was marked with a ceremony attended by local government representatives and staff from UN agencies and INGOs. The internet connectivity service established at the hub by the ETC team has been used by roughly 50 people since its launch.
- Staff from Ericsson Response and WFP FITTEST have also established connectivity at a hotel and apartment being used as humanitarian accommodation in Surigao City.
- A WFP Philippines ICT technician deployed to Dinagat Island and Siargao Island to support the Philippine Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to install six Ku-band VSATs provided by WFP.



Staff from UN agencies wait for the opening of the UN common office in Surigao City. The ETC has established internet connectivity services at the hub.

Photo: WFP/Amirullah Syarif

Activities

General situation

The government and private sector are continuing their efforts to recover public telecommunications and electricity infrastructure across the affected area. While connectivity is now available in most of the municipal capitals and smaller cities and villages across Southern Leyte, Northern Mindanao, and the islands in the Visayas regions, progress on the recovery of telecommunications on Dinagat Island and Siargao Island remains slow. On Dinagat Island in particular, there is no data connectivity at all and only very limited 2G coverage in some locations for voice calls and SMS.

The [Disaster Connectivity Map](#) (DCM) has been gathering data from the Philippines since 21 December and continues to be updated regularly to show the status of access to connectivity in the affected area compared to baseline measurements taken before the typhoon. The map is an initiative of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the ETC with support from the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA).

Delivery of ETC services

After establishing connectivity at the UN common office location and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) compound in Surigao city using a fibre connection from a local ISP, Ericsson Response and WFP FITTEST staff have continued to work on extending connectivity to new locations across Surigao City. On 18 February two new links were established to provide connectivity at a hotel and nearby apartment being used as accommodation for humanitarian in Surigao City. Approximately 20 users have accessed the service since it was established.

The UN hub in Surigao City was officially opened with a ceremony on 17 February that was attended by representatives and staff from IOM, OCHA, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, as well as several INGOs and local government representatives from Surigao City and Dinagat Island. Since the opening of the hub, the ETC-provided internet service was used by around 50 people.

The ETC team is planning to establish a temporary source of connectivity at another UN office that is being established in Maasin City in Southern Leyte.

During a mission conducted by the WFP FITTEST IT Emergency Coordinator and Ericsson Response ICT specialist to Siargao Island and Dinagat Island from 14-16 February, several locations were identified that are being used as humanitarian accommodation. The Ericsson Response ICT specialist returned to Dinagat Island on 21 February to establish a temporary source of connectivity at one of the hotels on Dinagat Island where there is currently no other connectivity available.

A WFP Philippines technician deployed on a joint mission with DICT to install four Ku-band VSATs provided by WFP on Dinagat Island. Two were used to replace existing VSATs for which the subscription had expired, and two others were installed in new locations on the island. In total DICT currently have seven operational VSATs on the island, in Loreto, Tubajon, Cagdianao, Basilisa, Libjo, in the San Jose Municipal EOC, and at the Santa Cruz Provincial EOC.

On 17 February the team continued on to Siargao Island, where two more WFP VSATs were installed in San Isidro and Burgos, in addition to the four VSATs being maintained by DICT in Pilar, Benito, Santa Monica, and Del Carmen.

On 21 February, the WFP ICT Technician departed on one more mission to support DICT to install another VSAT in Maasin City. During the mission, training will be provided to DICT technicians to build their capacity in VSAT installation and maintenance.

Funding

The ETC has received US \$200,000 from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and US \$100,000 from the government of Brazil. The ETC has also been allocated US \$300,000 from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

With these funds, the ETC has secured 60 percent of the US \$1 million required for the response. The project and funding requirements, where are inclusive of expected in-kind contributions from WFP stand-by partners (SBP), are reflected in the updated [Humanitarian Needs and Priorities](#) launched on 2 February.

Challenges

Many government and humanitarian responders are experiencing reduced capacity due to staff ill or in isolation for COVID-19.

While ferry services have been restored in the affected islands, not all ports are fully operational and long wait-times have been reported. Accommodation on the islands and throughout the area of operations is very limited.

Normal customs clearance procedures, which can take several months, remain in place for the importation of all telecommunications equipment. Although some of the required equipment is available on the local market, stocks of some specialised equipment are limited or unavailable.

Meetings

Updates on the ETC response in the Philippines will be presented at the next Global ETC Joint Teleconference in **March 2022**.

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www.etcluster.org/emergency/super-typhoon-rai-odette-philippines

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