

# The Philippines - Typhoon Rai (Odette)

## ETC Situation Report #8

Reporting period: 23/02 to 04/03/2022

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

- On 23 February, a WFP Philippines ICT Technician established connectivity at the UN Hub in Maasin City using equipment provided by Ericsson Response.
- Connectivity was also established at an INGO office in Surigao City shared by Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and CARE International on 1 March.
- Following the relocation of the government Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in Surigao City, the ETC re-established connectivity services at the new location and extended connectivity to the nearby logistics hub and Mobile Storage Unit on 28 February.



Connectivity is established at the UN hub in Maasin City.

*Photo: WFP/John Lobaton*

## Activities

### *General situation*

The government and private sector are continuing their efforts to recover public telecommunications and electricity infrastructure across the affected area. Connectivity is now available in most of the cities across Southern Leyte, Northern Mindanao, and the islands in the Visayas regions

Progress on the recovery of telecommunications on Dinagat Island and Siargao Island has been slower, however, over the past week improvements have been made. Nonetheless, in many areas on the islands, and in particular on Dinagat Island, there is no data connectivity at all and only very limited 2G coverage.

The [Disaster Connectivity Map](#) (DCM) ended its data gathering campaign for the Philippines on 14 February. The campaign has been running since 21 December to show the status of access to connectivity in the affected areas 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*

On 23 February, connectivity was established at the UN hub in Maasin city. The network was established using equipment provided by Ericsson Response and installed by a WFP Philippines ICT technician.

The government Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) compound in Surigao City was relocated to another premises in the city hosted by Office of Civil Defense and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on 25 February. The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) dismantled their connectivity equipment, including their VSAT, and reinstalled it at the new location.

On 28 February, the ETC also transferred its services to the new location and extended connectivity to the nearby Logistics Hub and Mobile Storage Unit (MSU). In this location, the ETC internet service is also accessible to the local population.

ON 1 March, the ETC also established internet connectivity at the INGO office shared by Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and CARE International in Surigao City. The ETC is also continuing to provide connectivity at the UN Hub and the hotel and apartment being used as humanitarian accommodation in the city.

Following a number of electricity outages in Surigao City over the past week, WFP and Ericsson response technicians installed batteries in four locations across the city to increase the reliability of the ETC connectivity services. The team is continuing to work on improving the quality of the network and creating a plan to implement long-term connectivity solutions.

In total, dedicated ETC connectivity services for humanitarians are now being provided in seven locations in the Caraga region, including at the humanitarian accommodation on Dinagat Island, at the UN hubs in Maasin City and Surigao City, and at the INGO shared office, the logistics hub, and the two humanitarian accommodation sites in Surigao City. On a daily basis, roughly 150 users connect to the internet throughout the ETC network in the Caraga region.

WFP is continuing to support DICT, the lead of the National Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) to install new VSATs and maintain existing installations across the affected areas. Next week a WFP Philippines technician will deploy with DICT to Dinagat Island to perform maintenance on the VSAT in Basilisa Municipality.

WFP is supporting DICT to maintaining 14 VSATs in total to support the emergency response. Seven of the VSATs are on Dinagat Island - in Loreto, Tubajon, Cagdianao, Basilisa, Libjo, and two in San Jose - and five VSATs are on Siargao Island - in Pilar, San Benito, Santa Monica, and San Isidro and Burgos. DICT are also operating VSATs in Maasin City, and Surigao City.

On 1 March, a locally-recruited IT Operations assistant was hired by the WFP Philippines country office. In addition to supporting the WFP sub-office in Surigao City, he will work with the ETC to support its activities in the Caraga region.

The Ericsson Response ICT specialist who has been supporting the interagency ETC response activities since 14 January completed his mission on 4 March.

## 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

Due to rainy weather in the Caraga region, mobile network and microwave links are unstable. Frequent electricity outages, especially in Surigao City, pose a challenge for the provision of stable connectivity.

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**.

## Contacts

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All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website:

[www.etcluster.org/emergency/super-typhoon-rai-odette-philippines](http://www.etcluster.org/emergency/super-typhoon-rai-odette-philippines)

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