

Tonga

Global ETC Teleconference #1

Date: 21/01/2022 Time: 06:00 UTC

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

<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/tonga-volcanic-eruptionsunami>

For more information or to be added or deleted from the mailing list please contact:

Pacific.ETC@wfp.org

Attendance

Chair	Caroline Teyssier	UAE
ADB	Erik Aelbers	Fiji
ECHO	Sibesh Bhattacharya	
EDA LMA	Carolina Moycho	Thailand
Government of Luxembourg	Olivier Brouant	
HCTM/FSC/FSS	Lomarda Mila Marie	Luxembourg
Intelsat	Gilles Hoffmann	Luxembourg
ITU	Bram Krieps	
	Patrick Bowers	
	Renato Liwanag	
	Robert Suber	Australia
	Aamir Riaz	Indonesia
	Ashish Narayan	Thailand
	Paul Hamilton	Hongary
	Vanessa Gray	Switzerland
	Walid Mathlouthi	Switzerland
Japanese Embassy	Iwano	Fiji
TSF	Sebastien Latouille	France
UNICEF	Marta Dabbas Castello	Spain
US Department of State	Joseph Burton	USA
WFP	Aramais Alojants	UAE
	Chalermpol Siripornmongkolchai	Thailand
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	John Dovale	New Zealand
	Maria Gonzalez Garcia	Italy
	Maria Saleh	USA
	Mark Maulit	Philippines

WLG
WMO
Others

Marta Orozcomossi
Min Sun
Ozdzan Hadziemin
Omar Namaoui
Oscar Coleman
Patricia Facultad
Philippe Martins
Phyza Jameel
Salma Farouque
Vineet Prasad
Toth Tunde Maaria
Henry Taiki
Amelia Makutu
Clara Aseniero
Danielle Brunton
Dawn Tua Gibson
Erin Cozens
Francois-Xavier Leger
Guriya Kumari
Haruka Ezaki
Hassene Sidatt
Jacinta Isaacs
Jongbong Park
Joseph Harrison
Kirath Swamy
Levan Bouadze
LiisaHeikkila
Mohammad Mozeem
Radislav Cicic
Ro Iva Namela
Shivnesh Roynendra Prasad

Spain
Italy
UAE
Algeria
Thailand
Italy
Fiji
Italy
Australia
Fiji

Samoa

Agenda

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

Minutes

1. Situation update

- A large eruption of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha-apai underwater volcano on the evening of 15 January at 17:26 local time caused a tsunami and ash fall in Tonga as well as the Lau island group of Fiji.
- The undersea communications cable linking Tonga with the rest of the world was severed in two places during the eruption. Preliminary testing indicated a break in the 827 kilometre-long Tonga

cable about 37 kilometres offshore of Tonga's capital, Nuku'alofa. Another cut in a domestic cable is about 47 kilometres offshore.

- An airbridge between Brisbane in Australia and Nuku'alofa in Tonga has been opened.
- The government of Tonga has requested that any assistance delivered be "contactless", as practiced with the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, to prevent the spread of the virus. Therefore, the deployment of external personnel into Tonga is not anticipated to happen in the near future.
- 90% of power has been restored on the main island of Tongatapu.
- A repair ship from Papua New Guinea (PNG) is on the way to assess the damage to the undersea cable. The repair work—roughly estimated to commence on the first week of February—is likely to take several weeks depending on weather conditions and volcanic activity.
- Digicel—the main telecommunications service provider in Tonga—has almost fully restored its services on Tongatapu by leasing a VSAT from the University of the South Pacific (USP), but there remains little to no coverage on the other islands, which are unable to communicate with each other. Digicel optimized its service for voice only. SMS and internet services are limited.
- With the Tongan diaspora trying to reach the affected population and vice versa, the Digicel network is already congested.
- There are other pre-existing VSAT installations in-country with USP campuses on Ha'apai and Vava'u (both remote from Tongatapu) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Tongatapu available for humanitarian actors on the ground to communicate internationally and access the internet.
- Some groups are communicating via satellite phones including the World Health Organization (WHO), the Tongan Red Cross, as well as the Ministry of Environment, Information, Disaster Management, Energy, Climate Change and Communication of Tonga (MEIDECC).
- WHO Tonga is the primary UN contact on the ground. Communication with them was previously carried out via short-burst messaging on satellite phone. On 21 January however, they were able to send an email. Presumably, they availed use of the USP VSAT facility.

2. Global ETC update

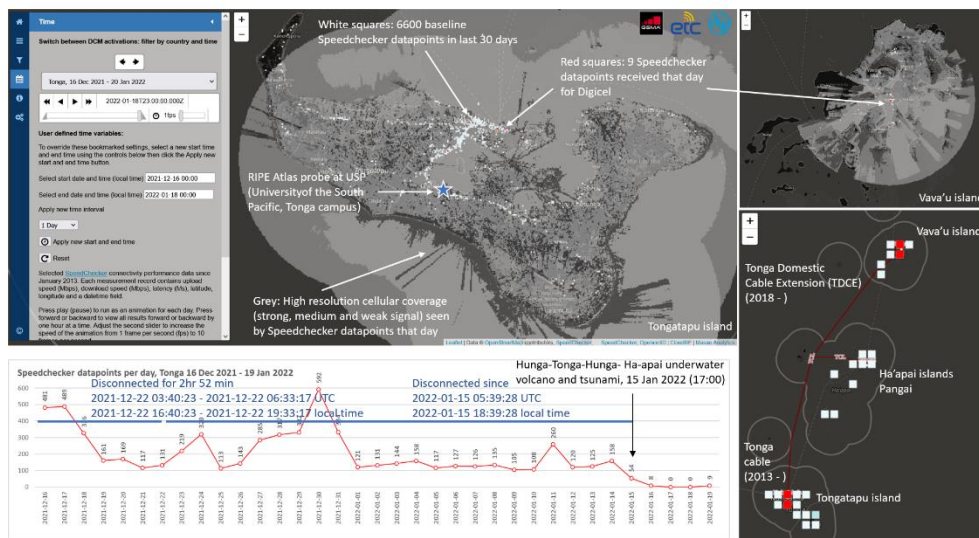
ETC Response

- Pacific ETC dispatched three Iridium satellite phones and a 1.8 metre VSAT ground station equipment from Suva on 20 January. The satellite phones are now in Brisbane awaiting transport on a Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] air bridge flight to Nuku'alofa. The equipment is part of a collaboration with USP to provide satellite connectivity services to the humanitarian community until the undersea cable is fully repaired.
- Three BGAN terminals from the ETC Pacific stock are currently being tested in Suva with Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) and will also be sent to USP in Tonga via the next available transport. The terminals will each be equipped with 30 gigabyte SIMS provided by TSF.
- The link to the ETC Tonga page is <https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/tonga-volcanic-eruptionsunami>.

3. Partner updates

ITU

- ITU disaster connectivity map was activated on Sunday 16 January 2022. It shows the much lower levels of connectivity after the eruption compared to before the eruption with an incremental increase on 19 January. White squares show baseline connectivity over last 30 days. Red squares connectivity in last 24 hours. This analysis is based on 6600 speed checker data points collected over the last 30 days.



Slide 8: Disaster Connectivity Map presentation

- ITU is exploring an opportunity to provide some bandwidth over in-country Ku-band equipment owned by the government from previous Kacific projects. A second opportunity is to respond to a request from the government to support with six Iridium satellite phones, each with three months of free connectivity which will need to be transported to Tonga with the help of ETC. Finally, a third opportunity is with C-band Intelsat equipment also present on the ground.

Intelsat

- Intelsat have organized approximately 200 megabytes of free capacity for service providers in Tonga (Tonga Communications, Digicel and Wantok) through Telstra, Spark New Zealand and Optus. This will allow international internet connectivity by the evening of 21 January, or the next morning, over the whole Tonga. ITU's C-band equipment may also be able to connect. Details of the equipment will be shared between ITU and Intelsat.

ADB

- As mentioned in the situation update, the ADB office in Tonga welcomes all humanitarian actors on the ground to use their VSAT facility for critical communications. They will be given access to their guest network connection.

UNICEF

- UNICEF is sending three Iridium satellite phones to Tonga as well and will give an update as soon as the status of that shipment is known.

The next teleconference meeting will be held on 24 January 2022 at 06:00 UTC

06:00 UTC
07:00 Rome
10:00 Dubai
13:00 Bangkok
19:00 Nuku'alofa (Tonga)/Auckland

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
DCM	Disaster Connectivity Map
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MEIDECC	Ministry of Environment, Information, Disaster Management, Energy, Climate Change and Communication of Tonga
MOVE	Mobile Operations Vehicle for Emergencies
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PNG	Papua New Guinea
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USP	University of the South Pacific
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
WVI	World Vision International

Minutes: Mark Maulit, Pacific ETC Information Management Officer