

## Tonga

### Global ETC Teleconference #2

Date: 24/01/2022 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](mailto:Pacific.ETC@wfp.org)

## Attendance

Chair	Caroline Teyssier	UAE
ADB	Sibesh Bhattacharya	Philippines
Asia Pacific Telecommunity	Pornchai Leelapornchai	Thailand
Cisco Crisis Response	Joseph Harrison	USA
European External Action Service	Pirjo-Liisa Heikkila	Fiji
Government of Luxembourg	Gilles Hoffmann	Luxembourg
ICRC	Alfredo Bermudez Salazar	USA
Intelsat	Robert Suber	Australia
ITU	Diego Sutachan	Australia
	Ashish Narayan	Thailand
	Paul Hamilton	Hungary
	Vanessa Gray	Geneva
French Embassy	Francois-Xavier Leger	Fiji
Japanese Embassy	Iwano Taisuke	Kiribati
LifeFlight	Anthony DeWinter	Australia
NEMO	Joweli Ratulevu Cawaki	Fiji
NetHope	Dagbjartur Brynjarsson	Iceland
TSF	Sebastien Latouille	France
Save the Children	Caroline Dusabe	Australia
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Lomarda Mila Marie	Thailand
UNDP	Agus Wandu	Fiji
UNESCO	Laura Kong	France
	Jiuta Korovulavula	Fiji
UNHCR	Min Sun	Australia
UNICEF	Rajeshwar Prasad	Fiji
UNOPS	Akira Moretto	Denmark
	Ffion Conlon	Thailand

USAID	Patrick Bowers	USA
	Deborah Murphy	USA
World Bank	Shivnesh Roynendra Prasad	Fiji
World Vision	Dion Boyd	Australia
WFP	Omar Namaoui	Algeria
	Salma Farouque	Australia
	Vineet Prasad	Fiji
	Philippe Martins	Fiji
	Maria Gonzalez Garcia	Italy
	Mats Persson	Italy
	Patricia Facultad	Italy
	John Dovale	New Zealand
	Chalernpol Siripornmongkolchai	Thailand
	Oscar Caleman	Thailand
	Andrew Henze	Thailand
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	Ozdzan Hadziemin	UAE
WHO	Hassene Sidatt	Philippines
WMO	Henry Taiki	Samoa
Other	Kirath Swamy	
	Andreas Weishaupt	
	Hotavia Porter	
	Litea Biukoto	
	Michael Taurakoto	
	Takashi Oba	
	Ondrej Hovadek	
	Suzuki Kazunobu	
	Teburoro Tito	
	Yong Qing Chen	
	FI Heini Korhonen	
	Noa Seru	

## Agenda

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

## Minutes

### 1. Situation update

- From 22-23 January, it was confirmed from sources within the Tonga National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) that voice, SMS, and limited internet services have been restored by both telecommunications service providers in Tonga—Digicel and the Tonga Communications Corporation (TCC).

- Due to limitations on the capacity of its network, Digicel is limiting calls to the Digicel network only. As NEMO operates exclusively through the TCC network, this means it is only possible to call or SMS NEMO staff via non-Digicel networks, both inside and outside Tonga.
- The cable repair ship, Reliance, has been dispatched to Tonga to repair the undersea communications cable. The ship will need to stop at Samoa on the way to pick up additional supplies, including a repeater to assist in damage assessments near the break in the cable. The rate of repair will depend on weather and seismic conditions.

## 2. Global ETC update

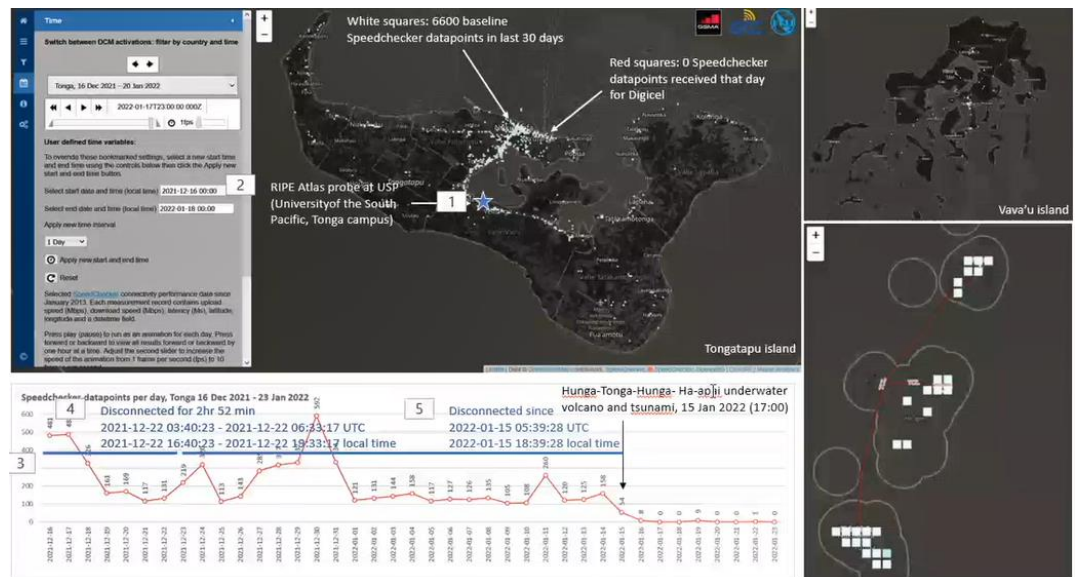
- The ETC held a call with the NEMO Director of Communications, who confirmed its immediate needs, focusing on satellite communications. One priority is the six satellite phones committed to be shipped to Tonga by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The ETC has confirmed with the NEMO Director of Communications that he will be able to receive and operationalize the equipment on arrival.
- The ETC is awaiting feedback from the WFP logistics unit on the estimated time of arrival for the consignment of two VSATs sent in partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP) on 22 January by commercial airline (via Sydney-Brisbane), and a consignment of three BGAN satellite terminals shipped on 22 January from Fiji to Tonga directly with LifeFlight. There is a three-day quarantine period in place for any goods shipped into Tonga, in line with the 'no contact' policy in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The BGAN terminals will be received by NEMO on Tongatapu island. One VSAT terminal will be set up in the USP Tonga Campus in Nuku'alofa to bolster existing connectivity services, while the other can possibly be used to deploy for the wider response community in another location, if needed.
- NEMO has expressed interest in using the satellite phones and incoming VSATs for deployment to some of the outer islands in Tonga to facilitate damage assessments.
- A Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) meeting was held on 24 January in which a report issued by NEMO indicated interest in using Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) to assist in conducting damage assessments. The report indicates that licensed drone operators are in place in Tonga, and NEMO is only looking for support in acquiring drones. The most optimal drone for this response has been identified as the Mavic 3 – the ETC is exploring this option.
- Although the communications equipment en-route to Tonga is sufficient to provide connectivity in this emergency response, there is a need to further engage in the longer term with the Tongan NEMO on preparedness measures in country and in the region more widely. The ETC is ready to engage in these conversations with NEMO. A meeting is being held this week between the ETC and NEMO to discuss this further, and to get clarity on their status and needs in country.
- The ETC and partners are using existing stock in the response to Tonga as there is no funding appeal. There will be a need across the region to replenish these stocks in preparation for the next emergency.

## 3. Partner updates

### *ITU*

- **Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM):** As of 15:00 UTC time on 23 January, only one new data point in the last four days was detected, on 22 January in Nuku'alofa. This is compared to a

daily average of approximately 150 data points before the eruption on 15 January (see bottom right of the chart below). Eight data points had been detected on 16 January and nine on 19 January, but this has dropped significantly in the past few days. Further, the [RIPE Atlas probe](#) based in the USP campus in Nuku'alofa remains disconnected since the eruption. The DCM will be updated once every day for the next week to further map out the status of connectivity in Tonga.



- ITU is requesting Iridium to send three extra SIM cards to the ITU office in Geneva, Switzerland, for the use in the three satphones sent by WFP from Fiji. Once received, the six satellite phones discussed above, and the three extra SIM cards equipped with free credit will be shipped to Tonga. ITU is liaising directly with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to ship equipment from Australia to Tonga via airfreight. WFP is also working with DFAT to ship any items.
- ITU continues to work with the satellite group, Kacific, to potentially support the government of Tonga with satellite communications by activating its services in Tonga.
- Intelsat and the ITU regional office in the Pacific are working to operationalize their connectivity equipment on the ground and test its capacity. There are some technical bottlenecks, primarily with the modem compatibility, and there is a need for a C-Band rather than the KU-band frequency on the ground to reach sufficient satellite communication capacity. There is also a need for more technical staffing capacity on the ground to resolve these issues. The Tongan Ministry of Communications is in touch with Digicel satellite engineers to find a solution to this capacity issue. The team will continue to test equipment on the ground to find a workable solution to provide some connectivity to the government.

### World Food Programme (WFP)

- WFP has sent an expression of interest to partners to establish the need for shipping assistance to Tonga. WFP encourages partners to keep in touch with the logistics unit when the need for equipment shipping arises. WFP is able to confirm with partners when flights are available from Australia and New Zealand and explore options to chart flights based on needs and minimum cargo requirements.

### *World Meteorological Organization (WMO)*

- The WMO based in Samoa has made contact with counterparts in Tonga (primarily in Vava'u and the outer islands) via their messaging system in Hawaii to communicate weather reports since telecommunication systems were disrupted by the volcano on 15 January. This line of communication remains challenging.
- The Fiji Meteorological Service are holding daily briefing sessions via satellite phones with the Tonga Meteorological Service to receive weather forecasts.
- The ETC Coordinator will provide WMO based in Samoa with the contact of key Tonga NEMO focal points to confirm requirements between the meteorological services to be able to receive severe weather warnings in Tonga.

### **The next teleconference meeting will be held on Friday 28 January 2022 at 06:00 UTC**

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

## **Acronyms**

ADB	Asian Development Bank
DCM	Disaster Connectivity Map
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
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
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team
PNG	Papua New Guinea
TCC	Tonga Communications Corporation
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft System
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USP	University of the South Pacific
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WVI	World Vision International

**Minutes: Elizabeth Millership, Global ETC Information Management & Communications Officer**