

## Tonga

### Global ETC Teleconference #4

Date: 02/02/2022 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
Ambassador of Tonga to UAE	Ambassador A'kau'ola	UAE
Cisco Crisis Response	Joseph Harrison	USA
Embassy of the Kingdom of Tonga	Sione Sonata Tupou	UAE
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Fiji NDMO	Shinya Abe	Fiji
French Embassy	Francois-Xavier Leger	Fiji
Government of Luxembourg	Bram Krieps	Luxembourg
ICRC	Alfredo Bermudez Salazar	USA
IMF	Leni Hunter	Fiji
ITU	Paul Hamilton	Hungary
	Vanessa Gray	Geneva
	Aamir Riaz	Pakistan
Japanese Embassy	Walid Mathlouthi	USA
JICA	Iwano Taisuke	Kiribati
OCHA	Kazunobu Suzuki	Japan
	Haruka Ezaki	Thailand
	Lepani Benijamini Vunituraga	Fiji
Pacific International Training Desk	Hotavia Porter	USA
TSF	Sebastien Latouille	France
UNICEF	Marta Castello Dabbas	Spain
USAID	Marc Dominianni	USA
WFP	Chalermpol Siripornmongkolchai	Thailand
	Omar Namaoui	Algeria
	Philippe Martins	Fiji
	Salma Farouque	Australia

WHO	Philippe Martins	Fiji
WMO	Patricia Facultad	Italy
World Bank	Phyza Jameel	Italy
	John Dovale	New Zealand
	Oscar Caleman	Thailand
	Ozdhan Hadziemin	UAE
	Aramais Alojants	UAE
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	Hassene Sidatt	Philippines
	Henry Taiki	Samoa
	Shivnesh Roynendra Prasad	Fiji

## Agenda

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

## Minutes

### 1. Situation update

- The damage caused to the Tonga fibre-optic undersea communications cable during the eruption is greater than estimated. Repairs to both the international and domestic communications lines are expected to take longer than originally anticipated. There are anecdotal reports that a second ship will join the first (CS Reliance) to assist with repairs.
- Tonga is entering its first-ever lockdown on 2 February after two cases of COVID-19 were detected in Nuku'alofa port. This is expected to impact on the emergency response, including importing and quarantine time to release equipment from the government relief supply warehouse in Nuku'alofa. Tonga had recorded only one previous case of the virus.
- Reports from the regional logistics cluster meeting indicate that the commercial airline, Air New Zealand, has been able to land one of its aircraft in Fua'amotu International Airport in Tonga. The ETC in the Pacific will seek confirmation on this report, as it may open up other cargo shipping options for the movement of communications equipment.

### 2. Global ETC update

- The key priorities for the ETC are to enhance voice and data connectivity services for international communications, and support communications with the outer islands of Tonga until national providers fully recover their services. The emergency telecommunications response is led by the ETC in the Pacific and the national ETC lead in Tonga, the Tongan Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC).
- Logistics continues to be a challenge in terms of timely shipment of equipment to Tonga, due to disruptions in global supply chains and the availability of flights for cargo.

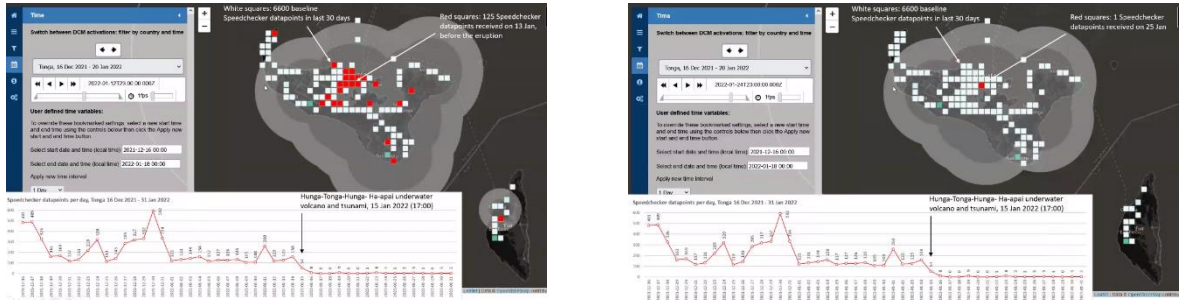
- Three consignments of equipment shipped by the ETC have been received in the government warehouse quarantine facility in Tonga:
  - Three satellite phones dispatched by WFP in Fiji, each to be credited with free airtime by Iridium. Following the quarantine period, the satellite phones will be released to the Tonga National Emergency Management Office (NEMO), to be used as part of the government response. The satellite phones were expected to be released by 1 February, but the equipment continues to be held in the warehouse.
  - Three portable BGAN terminals for connectivity pre-loaded with data provided by Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF). One BGAN terminal is committed to be deployed for humanitarian coordination purposes by staff in the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in Nuku'alofa while the two remaining terminals will support operations identified by NEMO on the ground.
  - Pre-configured VSAT connectivity equipment deployed by the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the ETC. When released, the satellite equipment will be set up in the USP campus in Nuku'alofa to provide a common communications area for responders on the ground to communicate internationally.
- The two Government of Luxembourg VSAT kits are ready to deploy from Dubai, UAE, to Tonga (via Brisbane). The confirmed date of departure is pending. Arrangements have been made to airlift the equipment as soon as possible. For the Brisbane to Tonga section of the journey, the ETC will coordinate further to ensure airlift is possible in the context of the new COVID-19 restrictions in Tonga. When received, the kits will provide connectivity services to support the response for an initial three months.
- A meeting between the ETC in the Pacific and the Director of the Ministry of Communications (who is also the national ETC lead in Tonga), due to take place on 2 February has been postponed until 3 February due to the COVID-19 lockdown, which has caused issues with access to connectivity in the Ministry's office. The ETC in the Pacific was able to communicate with the Director via email to rearrange the call. The meeting is being held to discuss specific needs and moving forward communications solutions in country to link up with the outer islands. Further points of discussion include the Ministry's request for HF radio equipment (including identifying radio equipment which may already be in country) and any support needed to further facilitate the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) by the government of Tonga for damage assessments.
- The ETC in the Pacific and WFP Regional Bureau Bangkok (RBB) are developing a proposal to submit to the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) to request support for additional communications needs in Tonga for a period of six months. Out of a US\$1 million funding envelope for the humanitarian response in Tonga, the proposed allotment for the ETC is US\$250,000.

### 3. Partner updates

#### International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- **Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM):** ITU continues to map the status of connectivity in Tonga. There has been no significant change observed over the past week, indicating no significant recovery of connectivity services. Almost all data points are found on the main island of Tongatapu.

- The two maps below show the difference in data points (in red, indicating presence of connectivity) before and after the eruption on 15 January. Before the eruption, an average of 150 data points were captured per day compared with just one or two data points after the eruption, up until today. The [RIPE Atlas probe](#) based in the University of the USP campus in Nuku'alofa has remained offline since the eruption.



- Six satellite phones and three SIM cards (to equip the three WFP satellite phones already in Tonga) credited with pre-paid airtime by Iridium have been shipped by ITU from Geneva, Switzerland, and are now being cleared by Australia’s Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Brisbane for onward transport to Tonga. The equipment will be sent to Tonga on the next available DFAT flight.
- Intelsat and the ITU regional office in the Pacific have collaborated with Wantok, Spark, and MEIDECC to operationalize a KU-band satellite connectivity terminal in Fua’amotu International Airport to provide data connectivity services to the Tonga Meteorological Services. The connectivity equipment was prepositioned in Tonga as part of a previous ITU project. At this point, the services are limited to use by the Tonga Meteorological Services, but ITU will explore options to expand/share access with the wider response community.

**The next teleconference meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 February 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
HF	High Frequency
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MEIDECC	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications

NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PHT	Pacific Humanitarian Team
TCC	Tonga Communications Corporation
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
UAE	United Arab Emirates
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**