

Tonga

Global ETC Teleconference #6

Date: 16/02/2022 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

Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	UAE
Ambassador of Tonga to UAE	Ambassador A'kau'ola	UAE
China Meteorological Administration	Yong Qing Chen	China
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Fiji NDMO	Shinya Abe	Fiji
French Embassy in Fiji	Francois-Xavier Leger	Fiji
Government of Luxembourg	Bram Krieps	Luxembourg
ITU	Paul Hamilton	Hungary
	Walid Mathlouthi	USA
	Vanessa Gray	Geneva
	Aamir Riaz	Pakistan
TSF	Sebastien Latouille	France
Save the Children	Caroline Dusabe	Australia
UNOPS	Ffion Conlon	Thailand
UNRCO	Ashok Sayenju	Lesotho
USAID	Deborah Murphy	USA
WFP	Omar Namaoui	Algeria
	Salma Farouque	Australia
	Patricia Facultad	Italy
	Clara Aseniero	Italy
	John Dovale	New Zealand
	Oscar Caleman	Thailand
	Ozdzan Hadziemin	UAE
	Aramais Alojants	UAE
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	Chalernpol Siripornmongkolchai	Thailand

Agenda

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

Minutes

1. Situation update

- The ETC in the Pacific continues to seek confirmation with counterparts in Tonga of reports that CS Reliance—dispatched to repair the severed undersea communications cable in Tonga—is on track to repair the cable by 20 February. The extent of the expected repairs to the cable has not yet been confirmed.

2. Global ETC update

- Three Iridium satellite phones dispatched by WFP in Fiji have been activated, distributed, and are now in use by key stakeholders in the Tongan government, including the Prime Minister, the deputy Prime Minister, and the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), to facilitate critical information sharing and coordination of the response.
- The head of MEIDECC has assigned the third satellite phone to its technical team deployed to the remote outer island group of Vava'u. This team has also been equipped with two of the portable BGANs to provide connectivity during the deployment.
- The third BGAN has been activated for humanitarian coordination purposes by staff in the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in Nuku'alofa.
- All three BGAN terminals are pre-loaded with data provided by Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF).
- The pre-configured VSAT connectivity kit deployed to Tonga by the University of the South Pacific (USP) has been held in the quarantine warehouse on Tongatapu since 6 February. It was due for release on 9 February, but this has been delayed due to additional safety measures put in place by the government of Tonga, following the outbreak of COVID-19 cases. The ETC in the Pacific will receive an update from USP when the equipment is released, which is expected to take place this week. When released, the satellite equipment will be set up in the USP campus in Nuku'alofa to provide a common communications area for responders to communicate internationally.
- The ETC in the Pacific will hold a call today (16 February) with the MEIDECC technical team on the deployment of the two C-band VSATs being sent by the Government of Luxembourg from the UAE on 18 February. The teams will discuss the technical changes made to the equipment set-up (two additional satellite modems added to shipment). Once dispatched, the equipment will travel through the landing stage in Brisbane before onward deployment to Tonga.

3. Partner updates

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- **Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM):** ITU continues to map the status of connectivity in Tonga. The speedchecker data points on the main island of Tongatapu show an increase in mobile internet usage from <1 percent to up to 10 percent, as compared against the baseline. However, there are still limited or no data points detected on the remote outer islands. This correlates with the current status of national service providers in Tonga, which have partially restored services on Tongatapu only. The outer islands remain largely disconnected.
 - *Note:* No data points are tracked from connectivity provided via VSAT, as this connectivity is not related to the network of any national service provider. Therefore, connectivity provided by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) or USP in Nuku'alofa, for example, will not show on the DCM.
- Six satellite phones sent by the ITU and three SIM cards (to equip the three WFP satellite phones already in Tonga) are expected to arrive in country today (16 February), where the shipment will undergo the three-day quarantine process before being released to MEIDECC. The ETC in the Pacific will confirm the arrival of the equipment with ITU, once received in country.
- ITU has acquired a new set of Iridium BGAN terminals equipped with free connectivity for possible deployment to Tonga, if required. The ETC in the Pacific is working to confirm the extent of the undersea communications cable repairs, to identify further needs. There may be a need to further support connectivity on the outer islands of Tonga, in the case that the cable is repaired for international communications but not yet domestic communications.
- The ITU regional office in the Pacific continues to provide data connectivity services to the Tonga Meteorological Services in Fua'amotu International Airport via a prepositioned VSAT and with partnership from Intelsat.
- In addition, ITU has set up a C-band VSAT in the Tonga Geological Services centre. The Tonga Ministry of Communications is in the process of activating this connectivity capacity by linking the data centre through national service providers. Intelsat and Spark New Zealand are assisting with this activation.

The next teleconference meeting will be held on Wednesday 23 February 2022 at 06:00 UTC

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

Acronyms

BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network
DCM	Disaster Connectivity Map
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HF	High Frequency
ITU	International Telecommunication Union

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
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USP	University of the South Pacific
UTC	Coordinated Universal Time
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

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