

Tonga

Global ETC Teleconference #7

Date: 23/02/2022 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
Government of Luxembourg	Bram Krieps	Luxembourg
ITU	Paul Hamilton	Hungary
	Walid Mathlouthi	USA
	Vanessa Gray	Geneva
	Ashish Narayan	Thailand
Northwest BPO	Joshua Kimbrow	Philippines
Pacific International Training Desk	Hotavia Porter	USA
TSF	Sebastien Latouille	France
UNESCO	Jiuta Korovulavula	Fiji
UNHCR	Min Sun	Australia
WFP	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

Agenda

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

Minutes

1. Situation update

- The international section of the undersea fibre communications cable in Tonga, severed during the eruption, has been restored by the repair ship, CS Reliance. On 22 February, the repaired cable was handed over to Tonga Cable Limited (TCL). Approximately 90% of the repair work needed on the international section of the cable has been carried out, with just 10 percent remaining. Internet, SMS, and voice services of the two national providers on Tongatapu—Digicel and Tonga Communications Corporation (TCC)—were almost immediately available to use by the population following completion of the repairs.
- A further breakdown of the services available are:
 - Digicel: Fully restored voice, SMS, and data services on Tongatapu. No reports received on 'Eau. Restored 4G in Ha'apai islands and 3G in Vava'u islands.
 - TCC: Fully restored voice, SMS, and data services on Tongatapu. Voice and data restored on 'Eau islands. Limited voice and data capacity restored on islands of Ha'apai and Vava'u.
- The domestic section of cable which was also damaged during the volcanic eruption has **not yet** been repaired. According to a report from TCL, the repairs to the domestic section will take 6-9 months, as it uses a different type of fibre which is currently not available and takes up to three months to manufacture.

2. Global ETC update

- Following the repairs to the international section of the undersea cable, the ETC in the Pacific is liaising with the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) and the two national service providers to re-assess the need for emergency communications support going forwards. As the outer islands are still not fully connected, there is likely to be a continued need. A meeting between these stakeholders will take place on 24 February.
- MEIDECC has reported that the deployment of 50 Starlink terminals for connectivity (received from SpaceX via DHL shipping) has started. During the meeting with MEIDECC on 24 February, the ETC will gather more information on the connectivity capacity provided by the Starlink terminals and where the terminals are being deployed.
- The six Iridium satellite phones and three SIMs dispatched by ITU are in the government quarantine facility in Tonga. The equipment will be cleared and received by MEIDECC and the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) by tomorrow afternoon, 24 February.

3. Partner updates

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- **Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM)**: ITU continues to map the status of connectivity in Tonga. The speedchecker data showed the cable coming back online on 22 February but data on

mobile connectivity has yet to be captured. After being disconnected for a total of 37 days (since the eruption), the DCM also shows that the RIPE Atlas probe came back online on 22 February, aligned with the cable repair. It is now fully connected. According to CloudFlare data sources, data traffic has returned to normal after five weeks.

- ITU re-offered deployment of a set of Inmarsat BGANs equipped with free connectivity which could be used in the outer islands of Tonga, if required. The ETC will update on these needs as soon as possible.

UNESCO

- Through the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) tsunami unit, UNESCO in the Pacific has shipped two satellite phones including SIM cards and external antennae to Tonga from Paris. This was a request for assistance received from the Tonga Meteorological Services. The equipment arrived in Tonga on 21 February and is likely to be cleared on 24 February following the three day quarantine period.

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
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MEIDECC	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office
TCC	Tonga Communications Corporation
TCL	Tonga Cable Limited
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
SMS	Short Message Service
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UTC	Coordinated Universal Time
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

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