

## **Fiji – Tropical Cyclone Winston**

### **ETC Situation Report #1**

**Reporting period 20/02/16 to 02/03/16**

The next ETC Fiji SitRep will be issued on or around 09/03/16.

### **Highlights**

- Category-five Cyclone Winston crashed into Fiji Islands on February 20, 2016 bringing winds of over 320km/h, torrential rain and waves of up to 12m. It is estimated to be one of the most severe ever to hit the South Pacific.
- The Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) is in charge of coordinating the international community efforts. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has not been officially activated in response to Cyclone Winston, but is working with the government to support a coordinated response.



Local markets devastated by Cyclone Winston.  
*Photo: Care Australia*

### **Situation Overview**

- Tropical Cyclone Winston caused mass destruction along its path to infrastructure including roads, power and telecommunications. Whole villages have been destroyed on the island of Koro, north-east of the main island Viti Levu where the capital Suva is located. Damage across the East Division is extensive and access is limited.
- The Government of Fiji and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) remain in charge of coordinating the international community efforts.
- As global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), the World Food Programme (WFP) is coordinating inter-agency ICT activities on the ground in Fiji in close collaboration with the government. A WFP Senior ICT Emergency Preparedness Consultant is the ETC focal point in Suva with support from WFP Regional Bureau in Bangkok and the WFP Fast IT and Telecommunications Support Team (FITTEST) in Dubai.



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- The ETC continues to meet with its NDMO counterpart and national Mobile Network Operators – Digicel and Vodafone – to update network status on a daily basis. All national and commercial operators are working overtime to reconnect services in devastated areas.
  - The Government of Fiji's microwave connection between Viti Levu and Vanuea Levu islands which was damaged by the cyclone has since been restored.

## **Planned Response**

- The ETC is focusing on collaborating with the Government of Fiji on the response, identifying solutions to ICT needs. Through the provision of portable satellite equipment, the ETC will assist the NDMO to regain basic and essential communications links with outer islands severely impacted by Tropical Cyclone Winston, namely Koro, Taveuni, the Lau Group and the Yasawa Group.
- The ETC plans to provide shared basic voice communications and internet connectivity services to the response community working in up to three common operating areas. The project is initially planned for two months, pending restoration of local infrastructure and requirements of the NDMO and response community.
- The ETC is also exploring the need for security communications – HF radio – in outlying islands affected by Tropical Cyclone Winston.
- A Local ICT Working Group has been established in Suva to support coordination of relief efforts. To be added to the list, contact: [Fiji.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Fiji.ETC@wfp.org)

## **Challenges**

- Fiji is an archipelago of more than 300 islands. Assessments continue to be carried out to determine the impact and needs across the numerous remote areas. Connectivity to outer island areas remain problematic for the near term.
- Severe power line destruction across the path of the cyclone's east-to-west course, and the subsequent lack of power in remote communities, hampers connection of end-user cellphones to restored telecommunications networks.

## **Funding**

- A humanitarian Flash Appeal is currently being developed. The ETC is appealing for US\$695,000 to support inter-agency response.



## ETC Meetings

- Local ETC meetings are held according to needs on the ground. The next meeting will be held Saturday 5 March. For further information, contact: [Fiji.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Fiji.ETC@wfp.org)
- Global ETC teleconferences are held according to needs. To be added to the mailing list, contact: [Fiji.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Fiji.ETC@wfp.org)

## Information

- ETC Fiji emergency page: <https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/fiji-tropical-cyclone-winston>
- ETC Fiji discussion forum and updates: <https://www.etcluster.org/discussions/fiji-tropical-cyclone-winston>

## Key ETC Contacts

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## Acronyms

ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HF	High Frequency radio
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
WFP	UN World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website: [www.ETCluster.org](http://www.ETCluster.org)

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: [Fiji.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Fiji.ETC@wfp.org)