

COVID-19 Response

ETC Situation Report #6

Reporting period – 08/07/2020 to 29/07/2020

ETC SitReps on the COVID-19 response will be distributed as the situation evolves.

Highlights

- The Global ETC continues to develop and map out the implementation process of the chatbot solution. The chatbot will enable health partners and/or humanitarian organizations to communicate and provide accurate country-specific information to affected populations during the COVID-19-related response and beyond.



Operators of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)-managed call centre, which was recently launched in Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR), answer calls on COVID-19-related issues.

Photo: ETC CAR

Situation Overview

As of 29 July, the global number of confirmed COVID-19 cases surpassed 16 million, with the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) reporting nearly 700,000 deaths across 216 countries. The United States of America led the world with 4.2 million cases, followed by Brazil and India with 2.4 million and 1.5 million cases, respectively.

Under the umbrella of the [Global Humanitarian Response Plan \(GHRP\)](#), the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations have stepped up to support 63 countries in fight against COVID-19. In July, the funding requirements rose to US\$10.26 billion to provide assistance that prioritizes the most vulnerable communities, including older people, people with disabilities, and women and girls.



ETC Activities

Global ETC

- The Global ETC continues to develop and map out the implementation process of the chatbot solution. The chatbot will enable health partners and/or humanitarian organizations to communicate and provide accurate and timely country-specific information to affected populations in the context of COVID-19 and beyond.
- Amid travel restrictions and work-from-home situations, ETC/ETS teams continued to provide vital communications services to humanitarian responders in Bangladesh, Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Nigeria, the Pacific, Syria and Yemen.
- Information on the ETC response to COVID-19 – including ETC operational guidance, the updated Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP), Situation Reports and infographics – are available [here](#).

ETC/ETS operational activities

- In **Bangladesh**, the ETS continues to provide user support in different sites across the refugee camps including regular maintenance, assessments and installations to ensure the provision of reliable internet connectivity to the response community across its three operational areas in Cox's Bazar, including Ukhiya and Teknaf.

As part of the COVID-19 response in the country, UNHCR is providing connectivity in two Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) treatment centres and Isolation and Treatment Centres (ITC) with coordination support from the ETS.

- On 15 July, the dedicated COVID-19 call centre established by the ETC in Bangui, **Central African Republic (CAR)**, was officially opened by the Ministry of Health (MoH). Five operators started taking calls on the toll-free 1212 helpline on 16 July and are providing 24/7 support and advice, and referring cases with symptoms to the national Ministry of Health. The ETC is preparing to recruit one IT Manager to oversee the call centre management system.
- In **Libya**, the ETS-managed call centre, which was established in Tripoli in February, continues to operate as a nationwide COVID-19 hotline to support the government's response to COVID-19. During the reporting period, call centre operators answered more than 1,000 calls of which 649 (64%) were COVID-19-related with most callers asking for information, such as awareness messages, useful contact numbers and location of emergency centres. Operators provided official guidelines and referred those who have COVID-19 symptoms to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).
- In **Nigeria**, the ETS delivered an online training session on ETS IT Policy user awareness to humanitarian responders amid the pandemic in North-East Nigeria.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ETS staff continue to work remotely and provide technical support to partner organizations and field locations in the North East.



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- In the **Pacific**, the interim guidance for Pacific Island Countries (PICs) on the use of digital health tools and systems to enable health preparedness and response during the COVID-19 pandemic is available [here](#). The document is the outcome of the collaboration with the WHO-led Joint Pacific COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT).
 - In **Yemen**, the ETC has extended its Internet services to all quarantine centres to support the COVID-19 response in the country.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ETC has extended its Internet connectivity service to a designated quarantine designated centre in Aden, while those in Sana'a and Hudaydah are in progress.

Challenges

- COVID-19-related travel restrictions have hampered ETC activities, including staff recruitment, deployment and field missions.
- The budget issues faced by some operations are impacting ETC activities in providing services to humanitarians and affected communities. This situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and response.

Information

- A dedicated COVID-19 information-sharing space is available on the ETC [website](#).

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