

Amman, Jordan

Local ETC Meeting - Minutes

Date: 17-September-2014, TIME: 10:00 AM (GMT + 3)

Minutes: Salma Farouque, WFP

Attendance

Chair-WFP:	Salma Farouque - ETC Officer	Amman
WFP:	Niko Vuorenmaa - ICT Officer	Amman
WFP:	Antoine Josserand - Field Security Officer	Amman
UNHCR:	Muhanned Al-Huniti - ICT Technician	Amman
UNOCHA:	Maral Markarian - ICT Officer	Amman

Meeting started at 10:15AM (GMT+3)

Agenda

1. Update from the ETC officer
2. Updates from participants
3. Any other business

Minutes

1. Update from the ETC Officer

Update on Iraq:

- The ETC was activated in Iraq in August 2014. The Syria ETC and Iraq ETC are working together on projects in Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah to assist the Syrian refugee and Iraq IDP operations.
- A new inter-agency radio room at the UNHCR office in Sulaymaniyah has been installed. Training of new radio operators is currently taking place in that location. The Sulaymaniyah radio room will be fully operational upon completion of the training.
- UNAMI are installing repeaters in Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk, however, UNAMI services extend to UN agencies only. The Iraq ETC cluster is planning to deploy an independent ETC radio network (analogue and digital) for use by UN agencies and NGO's. Maral commented that an analogue network would be useful for parties who were left with equipment that they could not use on the UNAMI digital network.
- **Action:** Salma to clarify with the Iraq ETC team which vendor they are using for the new ETC radio network planned in Iraq. Clarification will also be sought on the plan for UNAMI's TETRA digital radio network ie. will the network remain in place.

Updates from Syria:

- The two month ETC radio training mission in Syria finished on 8 September. One hundred and ninety-one (191) UN and NGO staff received training during the mission, including 24 radio operators. Training was conducted in Damascus, Tartous, Homs and Qamishli. The mission was conducted in close collaboration with UNDSS. Feedback was very positive and the WFP trainer (Kamal Ahmed) did a very good job.
- An ETC technical agreement between WFP, UNDSS and UNDP is close to sign-off. The agreement concerns the delivery of radio services by WFP inside Syria in collaboration with UNDSS.
- WFP has received a letter of approval from Syrian MOFA to import specified telecoms equipment to Syria (restrictions apply, such as not digital equipment is allowed). The ETC has initiated the process with a logistics supplier and government authorities to send a first shipment of telecoms equipment from Beirut to Damascus. Once the paperwork is finalized the goods will be transported via truck.

Update on Lebanon:

- Salma was in Beirut last week to work on the arrangements for the first shipment of telecoms equipment from Beirut to Damascus (based on the recent Syrian MOFA approval). It is a long process with many steps but the team is working to get the equipment sent to Damascus as soon as possible.
- A local ETC meeting was held in Beirut on 17 September. The main point of discussion was the situation with the VHF radio network in the south of Lebanon (SLR). UNIFIL migrated to a digital Motorola MotoTrbo network in August and turned off their analogue VHF network. A number of agencies who were using the UNIFIL analogue network no longer have radio coverage and a solution is required.

Update on Turkey:

- The new UN hub has opened in Gaziantep. WFP, UNFPA and one other agency have relocated to the UN hub, others may join. There are plans to deploy an inter-agency radio room in the hub and ETC may provide support for this activity. The intention is to deploy ETC services at the hub and a mission is planned to Gaziantep in October to determine which services are required.

Update on Jordan:

- Salma visited the Ramtha border compound in northwest Jordan on 7 August and conducted an ICT assessment of the voice, internet and radio services available at the site. UN convoys started moving goods into Syria across the Ramtha border since early August as a result of the UNSCR 2165 passed in July 2014. **Action:** Salma to share the Ramtha ICT assessment report with the local ETC members in Jordan.
- After the last local ETC meeting in Amman, the process to issue permits for radios was confirmed by Fadi Ayoub at UNDSS in Jordan. Permits are created by UNDSS and a request can be sent to Fadi with the name of the user, model and serial number of the radio.
- The call sign allocation template for Jordan has been updated by the local Radio WG. Final approval from the members of the Radio WG will be sought before the new template is presented to the Security Cell. After the being ratified at the Security Cell meeting then the template will be sent to the SMT. **Action:** Salma to send the proposed Jordan call sign allocation template to Radio WG members for approval.
- The mission report from the assessment of the radio network in Amman conducted in June is being revised after final review. WFP will circulate the report to the Radio WG members once the report is finalized. The report proposes locations to set up repeaters to establish a private UN radio network to cover Amman.
- WFP has updated its code plugs with channels 1-6 programmed as standard.

2. Updates from Participants

Update from UNHCR:

- Azraq camp:
 - UNHCR has extended the ZAIN microwave internet link to the Red Cross Hospital. UNHCR have allocated 12 static IP addresses for use in the hospital.
 - UNHCR has resolved the internet connectivity issue to the NRC office in the Reception Area. Internet is now working ok.
 - Muhanned surveyed the WFP FDP area in Azraq camp on 16 September to assess the line-of-sight (LoS) to extend the ZAIN microwave link to the FDP. Due to the topology of the camp, a tower will be required at the FDP to establish a suitable LoS from the UNHCR mast in the Reception Area. **Action:** Muhanned to send his recommendations via email to Salma and Niko based on his survey of the FDP site.
 - Users are experiencing slowness in the speed of the ZAIN internet link at Azraq camp during business hours. One of the issues may be that users are connecting with multiple devices (eg. laptop and phones). UNHCR will monitor the usage of the internet over a set period of time to determine the root cause of the internet speed issues so that a solution can be found. The ZAIN microwave internet link is currently 8MB.
- Zaatari camp:
 - Radio training will be scheduled in Zaatari following the radio training the Muhanned conducted in Azraq in August. Dates to be determined.
 - UNHCR may install a 36m tower in Zaatari which will extend the height of the antennas. Increasing the height of the repeater may help to extend radio coverage to the Ramtha border compound although the distance to Ramtha is quite far from Zaatari and signal strength may be an issue.

Update from OCHA:

- Maral said that the information provided by Salma on the radio networks in the region was very useful.

General:

- Antoine suggested that people may want to consider using “Wickr” instead of “WhatsApp” for messaging from their smartphones because it offers higher security and encryption.

3. Any Other Business

Nil.

Meeting ended at 11:05 AM

Date of the next local ETC meeting in Amman: 10-11AM (Amman local time), 29 October 2014.



Acronyms

ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FDP	Food Distribution Point
GPS	Global Positioning System
HF	High Frequency
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SCI	Save the Children International
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website:

<http://ictemergency.wfp.org>

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: SYRIA.ETC@wfp.org