West Africa Ebola Crisis

Situation Report #2

Reporting period 20/09/14 to 03/10/14

These Sitreps are distributed every two weeks. The next report will be issued on or around 17/10/14.

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has not yet been activated in response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, though discussions are ongoing. There is a clear need across the three affected countries for ETC services. At this stage, the agreement is that the World Food Programme (WFP), as global lead of the ETC, will respond as if the cluster was activated. As such the ETC, its partners and membership are responding together for a coordinated response.

Highlights

- Proposals for shared security telecommunications services across the three countries developed in partnership with the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS).

- The inter-agency ICT response for the Ebola crisis will include: Common Security Telecommunications services, Shared ICT Infrastructure Support and Communications for Affected Communities.

Achievements

- In cooperation with the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), clear roles and responsibilities for the ICT response to the Ebola crisis have been defined. The humanitarian response, to be led by the ETC community, will involve:
    - *Common Security Telecommunications services*: provision of shared 24/7 security telecommunications services in key locations across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
    - *Shared ICT Infrastructure support*: provision of radio communications and internet connectivity in Ebola Treatment Centres (ETUs) across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
    - *Communications for Communities*: support for communications with affected communities, enabling patients to communicate with their families.

- The Humanitarian ICT Needs survey was developed and shared with partners responding to the Ebola crisis. Responses from 26 different organisations were received across the three countries. Results from the survey, combined with assessments carried out on the ground, reveal clear needs for shared security communications and internet connectivity in key operating locations across the three countries.

The ETC provides timely, predictable and effective Information Communications Technology services to support the humanitarian community in carrying-out their work efficiently, effectively and safely.

Challenges and Gaps

- The Ebola response operation is experiencing staffing challenges. Humanitarian personnel are stretched across numerous concurrent emergency operations and are calling upon partner organisations to provide surge capacity. Due to the risky operating environment, and resultant insurance issues, however, requests are not being fulfilled.

Planned Activities

- Across all three countries, ICT assessments in new operational areas will continue, as well as meetings with humanitarian partners on the ground to understand requirements and prepare for roll-out of Common Security Telecommunications; Shared ICT Infrastructure support; and Communications for Communities services.

- UNMEER will deploy a TETRA radio system, as per the UN Department of Field Support (UNDFS) standards. A parallel Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) system will be deployed for the humanitarian community. The parallel DMR system will ensure that all humanitarian organisations - including UN and NGOs – will have access to a shared security telecommunications network. UNMEER will provide the bridge between the two networks.
    - The DMR system deployed for the humanitarian community will be operated in analogue mode.

- UNMEER will be responsible for its own ICT needs. It will also provide an extensive and high-speed internet backbone to provide immediate data services and ICT support to ETUs.

GUINEA

- WFP and Plan International in Guinea are working together to see how best to share connectivity from Plan's VSATs in Gueckedou and Macenta, two of the worst affected areas in Guinea.

LIBERIA

- A Logistics Cluster hub has been established in the SKD Football stadium in Monrovia. The ISP wireless connection will be installed next week and will include an inter-agency internet café.

- ETC member NetHope has been working with its membership to identify areas that need ICT support. They have been working with private satellite and networking partners to look at ways to substantially increase data connectivity in worst affected countries. Funding proposal for Liberia has been submitted to its donors. A proposal for Sierra Leone will follow shortly.

SIERRA LEONE

- Implementation modalities for an inter-agency data connectivity project have been discussed with Inter-Agency ICT Working Group. Key community requirements include cost, availability of local support, lifespan greater that the emergency timeframe and support of local business.

- Save the Children is working with Department for International Development (DFID) and the UK Ministry of Defence on an ETU in Kerry Town. Radio communications and internet connectivity will be included in the package provided by DFID.

Meetings

Global ETC teleconference: Friday 10 October

09:00	New York
13:00	UTC
13:00	Dakar / Conakry / Freetown / Monrovia
15:00	Rome
17:00	Dubai

Local ETC meeting

- *Guinea:*   Thursday 9th October, 2014
- *Sierra Leone:*   Wednesday 8th October, 2014
- *Liberia:*   Tuesday 7th October, 2014

ETC Services

Because the ETC has not yet been activated in response to the Ebola emergency, there are currently no ETC services available. Humanitarian partners are, however, working together and sharing information for a coordinated response.

Maps of proposed ETC services can be downloaded here:
http://ictemergency.wfp.org/web/ictepr/emergencies2014/ebola-outbreak

Acronyms

ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETU	Ebola Treatment Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNMEER	UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website: www.ETCluster.org

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

Background on the crisis:

In March 2014, a rapidly evolving outbreak of Ebola haemorrhagic fever started in Guinea. The outbreak subsequently spread to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal. On 1 Aug, WHO and the government of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia launched a joint US$ 100 million response plan as part of an intensified international, regional and national campaign to bring the outbreak under control. On 8 Aug, WHO declared the Ebola outbreak in West Africa a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) (WHO, 8 Aug 2014). On 28 Aug, WHO issued a "roadmap" to scale up the international response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. On 16 Sep, the Overview of Needs and Requirements document was presented to UN Member States, which covers activities in the three most-affected countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone for six months.

Sources: ReliefWeb