ICT/ETC WORKING GROUP

WORKPLAN WORKSHOP

SANA'A, YEMEN

4 JANUARY 2018

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

A joint Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) and UN ICT Working Group workplan plenary workshop, took place for the first time in Yemen on 4 January 2018 in the UN compound in Haddah. A total of 26 participants, from various backgrounds but mostly IT, from 20 agencies, including UN agencies and INGOs attended the workshop. Please refer to Annex-I for more details.

Fatai Adegboye, Deputy Country Director, WFP Yemen officially opened the workshop by highlighting the importance of information technology in humanitarian operations especially in the context of Yemen and the significant impact of coordination in sharing of common services. Subsequently the participants reviewed and agreed the agenda. Please see Annex-II for more detail. Waheed Habib, Regional IT Officer (Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe), from WFP Regional Bureau in Cairo and Jalal Shah, Global ETC Coordinator, from WFP HQ in Rome both remotely presented the ETC strategy 2010 and road map.

The morning sessions provided strategic inputs for the workplan plenary sessions by reviewing the 2017 projects, achievements and challenges while in the afternoon participants were divided into three groups that led the workplan discussion: 1. Capacity Building, 2. Connectivity, and 3. Innovation.

2. OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this event was to call a representative from the humanitarian community (UN agencies and INGOs) preferably with an IT background to jointly review 2017 achievements, remind ourselves of the lessons learned, identify areas of concerns and 2018 priorities, and agree on common challenges around connectivity, contingency planning, technical support, applications automation in Sana'a and in the field. The outcome of this event made a significant contribution in developing the 2018 annual workplan that will be submitted to the OMT for endorsement and subsequent UNCT's approval.

3. BACKGROUND

United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is the lead agency of Logistics Cluster (LC) and the ETC in Yemen. Following the 2015 conflict in Yemen, the ETC was activated to provide security telecommunications services to the humanitarian community including INGOs. In 2017, the UN ICT and ETC working groups merged as the two groups were comprised of the same members. Despite a number of challenges and constraints the ICT/ETC working group has received a good response and contribution from its members.

3.1 ETC SUPPORT SERVICE PROVISION:

- Establish, upgrade and maintain security telecommunications services
- Provide shared Internet connectivity services
- Coordination and information-sharing
- Provide user training and orientation
- Identify WG members' learning requirements and arrange training as appropriate
- Provide preventive maintenance and technical support
- Maintaining a backup communication system in case of disaster
- Infrastructure assessment and upgrade to meet existing and future demand

- Support provision of 24x7 operational/accessible Communication Centre (COMCEN)

- Support the management of callsign/cellcall allocation

- Support in programming and installation of HF/ VHF radios

Official Opening by Deputy Country Director, WFP   Introduction and Agenda by ETC Coordinator   Overview/housekeeping by WFP IT Officer

4. PARTICIPANTS

NO	AGENCY	PARTICIPANT	STATUS
1	ACTED	Mustafa Alfalahi	**Attended**
2	CARE	Akram Alqadri	**Excused**
3	FAO	Ahmed Akhter	**Attended**
4	FAO	Tarek Hadi	**Attended**
5	Handicap International	Mohammed Al Hurdy	**Excused**
6	ICRC	Osamah Al-Wahsh	**Attended**
7	IOM	Hesham Baggash	**Attended**
8	IOM	Hassan Humaid	**Attended**
9	MEPI-YAO	Mohammed Alkohlay	**Attended**
10	MERCYCORPS	Mohammed Hatem	**Attended**
11	OCHA	Al-Basheer Al-Dailami	**Attended**
12	OHCHR	Mohammed Al Shami	**Attended**
13	OSESGY	Ghassan Noor	**Attended**
14	OXFAM	Abdowadid Alswidi	**Attended**
15	Save the Children	Abdulhafeed Shamsan	**Attended**
16	UNCAF FSCO	Petre Neacsu	**Attended**
17	UNDP	Jamal Ali	**Excused**
18	UNDP	Monther Ali	**Attended**
19	UNDSS	Abdullah Abdulrasool	**Attended**
20	UNFPA	Hussein Al-Bar	**Attended**
21	UNHCR	Alkathiri Mamdouh	**Excused**
22	UNICEF	Ali Al Dhayani	**Attended**
23	UNWOMEN	Hassan Aljabri	**Attended**
24	WFP	Saeed Hassan	**Attended**
25	WFP	Khalid Alzaba	**Attended**
26	WFP	Thamer Albatar	**Attended**
27	WFP [ETC Coordinator]	Wali Noor	**Attended**
28	WFP - ETC Service Desk UNCAF	Ahmed Alaa	**Attended**
29	WFP HQ - Rome	Jalal Shah	**Attended**
30	WFP RBC - Cairo	Waheed Habib	**Attended**
31	WFP Yemen	Fatai Adegboye	**Attended**
32	WFP Yemen	Zouhoor Alhubaishi	**Attended**
33	WFP Yemen	Abdulalem Sanabani	**Attended**
34	WHO	Kamal AlSanhani	**Attended**

5. KEY SESSION SUMMARIES & OUTCOMES

The one-day workshop comprised formal presentations, interaction, debates, Q&As, workgroup and brainstorm sessions. The workshop commenced with a strategic overview of ETC activities and its direct impact on humanitarian's operations in Yemen given by Fatai Adegboye, Deputy Country Director (DCD), WFP. He praised the level of support provided by WFP HQ and the Regional Bureau and the amount of resources provided to Yemen. The DCD also acknowledged the significance of collaboration and the opportunities to leverage and share common services together. He further assured the continued support of WFP Yemen in the event the ETC needs to further improve its service provision. The session continued with remote and onsite presentations from Jalal Shah, Global ETC Coordinator, Waheed Habib, Regional IT Officer based in Cairo, Hassan Humaid, IT focal point, IOM (Sana'a), and Khalid Alzaba, senior ICT associate and Saeed Hassan, IT officer from WFP Sana'a.

The remote presentation from WFP HQ and RB on ETC strategy 2020 and the significant impact of inter-agency strategic partnerships guided the 2018 workplan priorities. Despite the large volume of information shared within limited timeslot, the contribution from all participants was very interactive. The diversity of operations dependency on technology and the similar challenges faced, led the discussion to focus on common issues and solid solutions. The workshop adjourned with a set of recommendations proposed namely Innovation, Connectivity and Capacity Building that prioritized 2018 activities based on the needs in the context of today's emergency in Yemen.

5.1. PRESENTATIONS AND AREAS OF DISCUSSION

- ICT/ETC service provision and overview by Khaled Alzaba, Senior ICT Associate, WFP

- Yammer space by Hassan Humaid, IT focal point, IOM.

- ETC Global Strategy 2020 by Jalal Shah (Rome), Global ETC Coordinator

- Inter-Agency Coordination and RB support by Waheed Habib (Cairo), Regional IT Officer - Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia.

The themes covered during the ETC Workshop included:

- ICT/ETC service provision and overview in Yemen

- ETC knowledge sharing page on IOM Yammer space

- ETC Global Strategy 2020

- Inter-Agency Coordination forum at regional level and RB support

- Workplan plenary workgroup discussion

  - o Connectivity WG

  - o Innovation WG

  - o Capacity Building WG

5.1.1. ICT/ETC SERVICE PROVISION & OVERVIEW BY KHALED ALZABA, SENIOR ICT ASSOCIATE WFP

Khalid Alzaba kicked off his presentation with a simple question '*What do you mean by ICT/ETC?*' ICT goes beyond service provision to the sharing of common technologies in a harmonized manner. He presented the

ICT/ETC service provision by Khalid (WFP)

ETC structure including the services being provided by the ETC in Sana'a and in the field. He carried on by highlighting the 2017 key achievements such as the appointment of female IT staff, the merging of the ICT and ETC working groups, the UN compound relocation to Haddah, the ETC helpdesk, establishment of IT infrastructure in Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs), and the technical support that is available on request to agencies. All these activities were successfully done despite the many challenges such as restrictions on the importation of IT equipment, restrictions on deployment of international staff, dependency on a limited local market, and the lack of IT-certified training service providers.

5.1.2. ETC YAMMER SPACE, BY HASSAN, IT FOCAL POINT FROM IOM

Hussain Humaid is the author of the ICT/ETC Yemen page on Yammer, a social networking service used for private communication within an organisation. He offered the ETC a secure and dedicated space from IOM. His session consisted of a video clip about Yammer and a presentation which walked the participants through its history, design and security features. He also emphasised the importance of knowledge-sharing and interaction using a single platform. He confirmed the creation of individual accounts for all members, and granted

Yammer Space by Hassan (IOM)

administrator rights to the ETC to manage its account and page going forward. A parent page will be created for the UN OMT followed by each working group e.g. ITC/ETC. Participants were strongly encouraging to interact and share information on Yammer. WG's related minutes and document will be uploaded to Yammer only.

5.1.3. ETC GLOBAL STRATEGY 2020 BY JALAL SHAH, GLOBAL ETC COORDINATOR

ETC Global Strategy by Jalal (WFP HQ)

Jalal Shah, Global ETC Coordinator, joined the workshop remotely from WFP HQ in Rome. He commenced his presentation by stressing the importance of convening inter-agency coordination meetings at the beginning of each year. He praised this event as a best practices and lessons learned for other countries. He briefly outlined the history of the ETC and its available resources including the extended support being provided by HQ, the significance of information-sharing and granting access to key operational information to community and stakeholders. He mentioned the four strategies adopted by the ETC as outlined below. Although not all these strategies have been implemented in Yemen due to restrictions on the importation of telecommunication equipment humanitarian responders, relevant stakeholders and affected populations all need access to information and using local resources and capacity will help.

1. Communication as aid: the provision of ICT services to affected populations that includes but is not limited to internet connectivity and power supply in an emergency. Access to adequate information in a timely manner is key in the decision-making process and the preparation and subsequent dispatch of aid.

2. Capacity building and emergency preparedness: focus on building the capacity of first responders on the ground e.g. local partners, NGOs, government bodies. Bolstering local infrastructure and resources will ensure the required services can be provided without the ETC being onsite.

3. Increase communication resilience for community: as the team is currently reliant on local service providers, they need to work closely with mobile network operators (MNOs) and internet service

providers (ISPs) to ensure they have sufficient capacity and resilience in their networks to provide a continuous service during a disaster, or to recover quickly with optimum downtime. Their service provision is significant not only to humanitarian responders but to affected populations as well.

4. Enhance communication: in the past expectation in a disaster zone was basic communication system but today with the advancement of technology this is no longer enough and teams are expected to provide high speed internet G3/4 regardless of the impact caused by a disaster. The team is looking at various options and partners to meet these expectations.

The Global ETC Coordinator continued and mentioned the complaint feedback mechanism (CFM) where the ETC is responsible for providing the tools and system which are essential in this project. Again, there is a need to engage with local operators and service providers which have the expertise and we act as a facilitator to bring them forward.

5.1.4. IA COORDINATION RB SUPPORT BY WAHEED HABIB (CAIRO), REGIONAL IT OFFICER - MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, EASTERN EUROPE, CENTRAL ASIA

After a brief introduction, the Regional IT Officer (RITO) reminded the participants of IT challenges in the old days and the emerging challenges we are facing today, especially in emergencies. He briefly explained the importance of top-down coordination and inter-agency collaboration on the ground and highlighted a number of best practices and lessons learned from the field. He appreciated the capacity and dedication of local staff in Yemen and reaffirmed the commitment and continuous support from Regional Bureau to the country office. Business engagement and integration will be one of the main focuses in 2018 as IT must be integrated and function in partnership with WFP Programme such as SCOPE, process automation and corporate systems. He mentioned business transformation and emergency preparedness, and that providing support to emergency countries remains the focus of HQ and the Regional Bureau, Cairo. Most initiatives related to inter-agency among the UN and INGOs are carried out in a cooperative manner and the RITO reiterated the importance of working with local partners especially in Yemen where there is a ban on the importation of telecommunications equipment.

5.2. PLENARY SESSION

The involvement of many agencies results in a great contribution from adequate development of preparedness to respond to a disaster. There is a need now more than ever to effectively work together to support affected communities. All agencies must have robust communication systems and access to information to support their operations. Even today, in many places we need to provide a reliable means of communication to the community and affected population. This capacity is co-opted during times of emergency and needs where all agencies and stakeholders are key responders and service providers. Participants were divided based on their expertise and interest into three groups: Connectivity, Innovation and Capacity Building to come up with solid activities and recommendations for ICT/ETC workplan 2018.

The working group session was led by following volunteers. Required materials, oversight and guidance was provided throughout the session.

1. Abdallah Abdulrasool (UNDSS), IT focal point for Capacity Building workgroup

2. Saeed Hassan (WFP), IT focal point for Connectivity workgroup

3. Khalid Alzaba (WFP), IT focal point for Innovation workgroup

5.3. Workgroup discussion

Despite the time constraint each work group was given enough time to focus on existing services provision and setup, the required infrastructure in response to emerging challenges, identify the gaps and to come up with solid recommendations. Some of the questions each group focused on are:

1. What are the common needs based on ETC 2020 strategy and agencies priorities?

2. What are the local and available resources?

3. What are the gaps and how can we overcome these gaps?

4. What are the possible constraints, challenges and alternatives steps?

This exercise resulted in a set of recommendations that will be included in the 2018 workplan.

The Capacity Building workgroup was led by Abdallah Abdulrasool from UNDSS. The discussion focused on the staff existing profile, the required competencies needed in emerging technology and the gaps. Due to the security situation in Yemen, national staff have very limited access to external learning opportunities, thus local capacity building is critical particularly during an emergency when expatriates will be evacuated. The group identified and proposed relevant training sessions which are listed in detail.

Saeed Hassan of WFP guided the second group, Connectivity. The group composition was a mixture of technical members from different areas to ensure they have the right competency. Connectivity was determined to be one of the cross-cutting issues that almost every agency is facing. The discussion looked at the current situation, best practices, local and global service providers and new opportunities. They also looked at the performance of the five ETC internet hubs in Yemen that may need to be reassessed in terms of usability and location.

Innovation is and should be at the heart of any business in order to survive, stay competent and abreast of new technologies. This third group was led by Ali Al Dhayani from UNICEF. The discussion commenced with participants brainstorming on how to do better and identifying the quick wins that could be applied without extra efforts. Business will not continue as usual because the competitors and partners are integrating new business models.

5.4. WORKGROUP PRESENTATION

Group Name:	Group discussion
Capacity building	Learning is a continuous process and critical in satisfactory

	External learning opportunities:
	• National staff to experience external learning opportunities • Bringing expertise in to the country
	Training within Yemen:
	• Sharing experience and creating talent pool • Engage and explore local institutes and certified training centres
	Online training:
	• Identifying and sharing appropriate online courses among the group's members • Agency-specific online courses • Online courses that could be shared with other organizations
	Types of training:
	• Management • Technical • Soft skills • Security awareness • Language skills
	Audience/Users:
	• Training for ICT staff • Training for end users
	Considerations:
	• Certification of training courses to motivate the trainers • Mandatory training for important courses • Sharing of experience in training • Learning needs must be prioritized
	Challenges:
	• Security related problems • Simulation – testing and feedback • Limited in-house and in-country knowledge • Lack of resources • Absence of common operating platforms

Group Name	Group Description
Connectivity	

ETC assessment and improvement	
• Connectivity	Overall assessment of connectivity e.g. ADSL, satellite, microwave, leased line, satellite etc from technical and financial perspectives
• IT services, office space and accommodation	Sharing of IT common services, office space and accommodation mainly in the field.
• ETC link at UNCAF	Needs expansion and further improvement
• Connectivity for critical staff in disaster	Share detail of critical staff support e.g. solar system, internet connectivity
Backup solution sharing	
• In/outside the county	Identify and set up one location for data backup inside and outside the country, cloud storage perhaps an alternative option
• Documentation (data, network, system, security)	Sharing of data storage like cloud space and network documentation and good practices
LTAs	
• In/outside the country	Sharing of LTAs for common services and purchase of equipment
Financial support	
• ETC • Inter-agency cost-shared • Donor appeal • Other	Most of the small agencies are facing a lack of financial resources for IT support and projects. Common services may be explored as an alternative means of funding the projects
Regulation	
• License and authorities' approval	This is a sensitive topic due to restriction from the authority on use of telecommunication systems. Agencies are taking different approaches, but the process may be facilitated by having one UN voice. Alternatively, to share tips and guidance of those who have worked well.
Other important issues	
• Internet for youth • New ETC hub in Aden • Negotiate with mobile service providers to come up with special package for affected populations • Joint approach in deploying fibre link when possible • ICT profile mapping in the country	

- ETC/ICT WG profile mapping
- Identify and agree on sort of standards in terms of service provider, bandwidth package
- IT infrastructure needs assessment by ETC experts
- ETC support in improving connectivity improvement in Sa'ada and Ibb

Group Name	Group Description
Innovation	
Issues and suggestions	

This topic seems to be new to most of the members. The group looked at various areas of improvement of common systems but also tried to identify the gaps. They came up with the following that needs further discussion and analysis.

- Assess the country IT and ETC profile to identify best practices and services for sharing

- Create an environment and culture for promoting innovation among the members

- Develop a common beneficiary feedback and complaint platform to link affected populations with humanitarian service providers

- Identify (if exist) otherwise develop SMS based broadcast platform

- Sharing of application development resources and expertise in harmonized manner

- Review of existing applications automation to assess their feasibility for sharing

- ETC engagement and oversight in agencies specific projects e.g. solar energy, data collection and capacity building

- Develop humanitarian staff tracking database

- Create/deploy a platform for knowledge sharing and interaction, fingerprint system, inventory and payroll system

- Emergency response joint preparedness
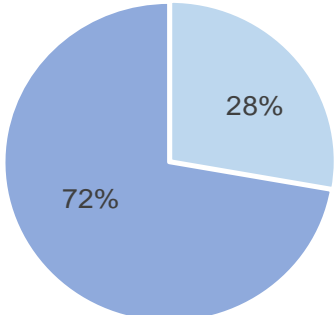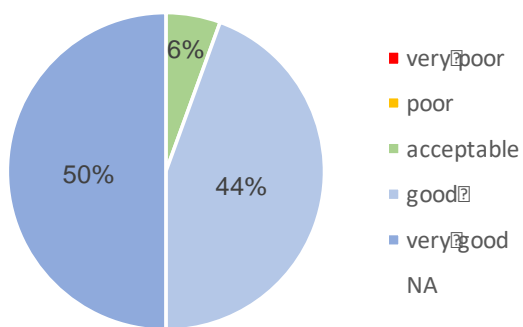
6. WRAP-UP AND FOLLOW-UP

At the end of the workshop, the ETC Coordinator summarized the discussions, recommendations, main action points and expected outcomes of the day. He thanked everyone for their participation and added that many topics were covered, and many new relationships were developed which it is hoped will lead to collaborations well beyond the workshop.

The draft report which will contain the detail of today's discussion and outcome which will be shared in four weeks' time. Members will have the opportunity to review and finalize the report which will basically shape the ICT/ETC annual workplan 2018 for OMT submission.

ANNEX

ANNEX I - FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

1 - Very Poor, 2 – Poor, 3 – Acceptable, 4 – Good, 5 - Very Good, NA – Not Applicable						
Rating	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1. Administrative arrangement						
1.1 Workshop venue and room setting				5	13	
1.2 Workshop facilities e.g. projector, charts etc.				3	15	
1.3 Services e.g. lunch, water, coffee, tea		1		4	13	
1.4 Environment				2	16	

Rating	1	2	3	4	5	NA
2. Topics and presentations						
2.1 Overall objective clarity			1	8	9	
2.2 Topic relevance to my job			2	2	14	
2.3 Meeting my expectations			1	8	8	1
2.4 Work Group activities				6	12	
2.5 Allocation of time			2	4	12	
2.6 Overall presentation content and quality			1	6	11	
2.7 Interaction and engagement				8	10	
2.8 Teambuilding exercise			3	4	11	

ANNEX II - ETC AGENDA

Thursday, 4 January 2018

Time	Session	Moderator
09:30- 09:45	Registration/Seating	Zouhoor
09:45- 10:15	Meeting Opening:	
	- Welcome Remakes	Fatai
	- Overview/housekeeping	Saeed
	- Introduction and Objectives	Wali
10:15- 10:35	ICT/ETC service provision & overview	Khaled
10:35-10:45	ETC Yammer space	Hassan (IOM)
10:45-11:00	Coffee break	
11:00- 11:30	ETC Global Strategy 2020	Jalal (Rome)
11:30- 11:45	IA Coordination RB support	Waheed (Cairo)
11:45- 12:00	Q&A & Discussion	Wali
12:00- 13:00	Lunch	
13:00- 13:45	Workplan Plenary - Workgroup	
	- Connectivity WG	Saeed
	- Innovation WG	Ali (UNICEF)
	- Capacity Building WG	Jamal (UNDP)
13:45 – 14:15	Group presentation, 10 minutes each	Group rapporteur
	- Connectivity WG	
	- Innovation WG	
	- Capacity Building WG	
14:15 - 14:20	Wrap-up	Wali
14:20 – 14:30	Closing remarks	Fatai