

Overview

Within 48 hours of a disaster, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) provides vital security communications services, voice and internet connectivity to assist first responders in their life-saving operations. The ETC recognizes that affected communities are part of the response effort and is increasingly extending its services to them.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is the lead agency of the ETC, which is one of the 11 clusters designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

The ETC has four strategic priorities:

- 1. Enhance communications and energy** to enable a wider group of traditional and non-traditional humanitarian responders to save and improve lives;
- 2. Improve and decentralize response readiness** to ensure people, processes and equipment can rapidly activate communications in response to disasters, particularly at local level;
- 3. Increase communications resilience** to disasters to help affected governments safeguard systems and prepare for responses when disasters strike;
- 4. Enable communities** to access connectivity when they need it most – in times of crisis.

Vital Partnerships

To help respond to increasingly complex and protracted emergencies, the ETC works with a global network of partners, governments and private companies to develop and strengthen strategic initiatives and advocate for a coordinated IT response. It also collaborates with local government authorities, NGOs, mobile network operators and Internet service providers to ensure it implements sustainable solutions rooted in local context before, during and after a disaster.

Among the ETC 28 diverse partners, some provide in-kind donations, shared resources and strategic inputs to operations, while others, like Ericsson Response, have teams that are trained, equipped and ready to deploy within 48hrs of an emergency.

In 2019, Ericsson Response deployed 12 volunteers to Mozambique, including one ETC Coordinator in Pemba, 5 volunteers to Bangladesh and 2 volunteers to the Bahamas. They also support the ETC's preparedness and Services for Communities (S4C) portfolios, as well as cybersecurity.

The ETC in 2019

- Supported over 8,000 humanitarians in 9 emergencies;
- Strengthened IT emergency preparedness in 12 high risk countries;
- Activated the Crisis Connectivity Charter twice;
- 640+ participants trained in telecoms preparedness
- 88% of users satisfied with ETC services