OUTCOME REPORT: SATELLITE COMMUNITY BUSINESS CONSULTATION
Satellite connectivity in tomorrow's disasters
9-10 June 2015, Luxembourg

Introduction

The Government of Luxembourg and the Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC), led by the World Food Programme (WFP), hosted a World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Business Consultation focused on the satellite industry on 9-10 June 2015 at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs in Luxembourg. The consultation was attended by 21 representatives from the satellite community, the ETC and the Government of Luxembourg. Through the consultation participants identified issues, provided recommendations and made commitments around improving the coordinated engagement of the satellite community in emergency response and delivering better targeted private sector support.

This consultation built on the outcomes of the March 2015 WHS Business Consultation with the mobile industry held in Barcelona in the margins of the GSMA Mobile World Congress, where the mobile industry launched the Humanitarian Connectivity Mobile Charter. The Mobile Charter demonstrated that industries can align and commit to better support humanitarian responders, affected people and governments in emergency preparedness and response. The ETC network of humanitarian, private sector and government organizations has commenced implementation of ETC 2020[1] - its newly endorsed strategy to create a communications environment for quick, effective and accountable humanitarian action. ETC 2020 priorities four key areas comprising enhanced communications and energy; improved and decentralized response readiness; increased communication resilience to disasters; and communications as aid. This Business Consultation provided an opportunity to identify ways in which ETC 2020 can be operationalized and to enhance the role of the satellite industry within this new strategy.

Issues

Following the planning meeting that took place in Dubai during Humanitarian ICT Week (26-30 April 2015), the ETC elaborated requirements in a White Paper for the satellite community to consider ahead of the Business Consultation. The White Paper served as a point of departure for discussions, during which the following Issues emerged:

1. The scale and nature of emergencies is stretching the capacity of the humanitarian system like never before. There is a need for the humanitarian architecture to evolve accordingly towards a better coordinated multi-stakeholder approach and account for the substantial capacity of the private sector, and in particular the satellite industry.

2. The satellite industry and the ETC have already demonstrated the vital contribution they bring to humanitarian responses by providing connectivity to actors after emergencies. However, complex demands associated with the evolving operating environment, new humanitarian challenges and rapid technology innovation will challenge the way the ETC will deliver services in the future. As outlined in the ETC 2020 strategy, in order to best serve affected populations and host governments prior to and during crises, the Cluster must transform the current service delivery model, and operationalize one of enhanced connectivity based on a network of predictable partnerships.

3. In order to meet the demands of providing forms of digital aid during crises, enhanced connectivity solutions are required that can cater to at affected communities and host governments. This connectivity will facilitate more effective aid delivery and enable two-way communications amongst and with affected people, the government and the response community.

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[1] See http://ictemergency.wfp.org/web/ictepr/etc/etc2020

4. Opportunities exist for greater and more predictable engagement by the satellite industry in emergency preparedness and response. The future ETC operating model should seek to expand on available satellite equipment and existing networks.

Challenges

In identifying ways in which the Satellite industry can partner more effectively with humanitarian actors, several structural issues were raised that require further consideration:

1. The current UN models for engagement with the private sector need to evolve in order to address the potential dual pro bono and commercial aspects of partnership relationships. Partnership mechanisms need to be clearly defined that adhere to UN procurement rules and permit these 'hybrid' relationships to co-exist. The shared value in engaging in public-private partnerships was highlighted.

2. Businesses seeking to engage with the international humanitarian community in emergency preparedness and response have difficulties in identifying humanitarian needs and entry points for collaboration. In this respect, further coordination and information-sharing is required between the humanitarian and satellite communities.

3. The satellite industry as part of the proposed charter commitments can provide connectivity to the humanitarian community at no cost for a limited period, however being a commercial service, cannot sustain this level of support indefinitely and it was acknowledged that the industry requires compensation. The industry cannot fund the connectivity requirements for the entire humanitarian response lifecycle; there is a need to identify alternative funding sources such as traditional humanitarian and development donors.

4. The satellite industry has a complex, vertical architecture that makes it difficult to provide globally operable end-to-end solutions through the same equipment providers. This poses a coordination problem and means that the interoperability of solutions provided by multiple actors needs to be duly tested and integrated.

5. The satellite industry is willing and able to make its resources available and to share information regarding the location and nature of its equipment with the humanitarian community for emergency response purposes. However, there is a need to ensure the protection of companies' vital commercial information.

Recommendations and Commitments

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants had made a variety of recommendations and commitments on the way forward. Overall there was unanimous endorsement and commitment by the industry to collectively develop a Humanitarian Satellite Connectivity Charter in order to more effectively support future humanitarian crisis. The overarching commitment to the process and vision was expressed explicitly as;

'Signatories [to the Satellite Charter] will contribute to the creation and implementation of a mechanism that can be triggered by the ETC when required that leads to the coherent, predictable, scalable and principled implementation of an end-to-end satellite-based response for the humanitarian community'

In order to achieve this outcome, participants had agreed on the following:

1. In order to maximize the impact of the satellite industry, the ETC must define a standard and predictable partnership model. This model should detail guidelines for the pre-positioning of equipment (for example in the Dubai Humanitarian Response Depot), the various responsibilities of each partner of the ETC, and the transition between the initial response (phase 1 -first 90 days) and the longer term recovery period (Phase 2 -beyond 90 days).

2. There is a need for mapping of global satellite assets and sharing commercial datasets with the humanitarian community. The management of this information must be well-coordinated and

streamlined through industry associations such as the EMEA Satellite Operators' Association (ESOA) and the Global VSAT Forum (GVF).

3. As support from the industry should be predictable and well-aligned to humanitarian needs, the ETC should act as an information-sharing platform; provide information about the situation on the ground while capturing capacities and available assets of the industry globally, regionally and locally, with a specific focus on high-risk countries.

4. Governments should seek to promote enabling environments for the private sector, and in particular the satellite community, in order to make the best use of their substantial capacity to contribute to emergency preparedness and response. Potential measures for government consideration include implementation of adequate regulatory environments, facilitation of customs clearance and targeted incentives for private sector engagement in humanitarian action.

These recommendations have segued into the commitments made by the industry during this WHS consultation.

1. The development of a Humanitarian Satellite Connectivity Charter to be signed by ESOA/GVF on behalf of the Satellite community. This Charter will capture the roles and responsibilities of the Satellite industry in emergency preparedness and response in a coordinated, standardized and predictable fashion. Workshop participants had committed to the process of developing the charter with a planned launch of the charter during the World Radio communication Conference 2015 (WRC-15) to be held in Geneva in November 2015.

2. The development of a mapping exercise by the satellite industry leading to a matrix outlining the geographical position of service providers, trained staff and equipment so as to provide an overview of resource availability for emergency response. (ESOA/GVF)

3. The creation of specific contingency plans and tailored solutions for the 20 high risk countries, where the Satellite community can offer support. (ETC)

4. The launch of a limited number of pilot programmes (three) to demonstrate the role of the satellite industry to facilitate humanitarian response and provide groundwork for the implementation of the ETC 2020 Strategy. (WFP)

5. Continued support to the WHS process to help refine and develop the voice of the private sector section business in the lead-up to the Summit in 2016, including a potential industry-specific side-event at the Istanbul Summit in May 2016.

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