

**TRAINING WORKSHOP ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT FOR THE INTEGRATION  
OF EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATION PLANS INTO  
DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLANS**

**Kigali, Rwanda, 9-11 July 2008**

**FINAL REPORT**

Various resolutions adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Conference held in Doha, Qatar, from 7 to 15 March 2006 - namely, Resolution 34 (Rev. Doha, 2006) - and by the Plenipotentiary Conference held in Antalya, Turkey, from 6 to 24 November 2006 - namely, Resolutions 36 (Rev. Antalya, 2006) and 136 (Antalya, 2006) - call upon ITU to assist and support administrations in their work on emergency telecommunications and on implementation of the Tampere Convention.

Within this context, from 30 May to 1 June 2007 ITU organized a subregional workshop for Central Africa in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on the role of telecommunications/ICT in disaster management.

Within this same framework, a training workshop on disaster management for the integration of emergency telecommunication plans into disaster management plans, jointly organized by the Government of Rwanda and ITU-D, was held from 9 to 11 July 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda.

The purpose of the workshop was to draw up concrete strategies and adopt practical measures for using telecommunications to save lives, through the establishment of emergency telecommunication plans incorporated in national disaster management plans.

The official opening ceremony of the workshop was chaired by Mr David Kanamugire, representing His Excellency Mr Romain Murenzi, Minister in charge of Science and Technology in the Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda. Thanking ITU for organizing the workshop, Mr Kanamugire highlighted the importance of the event, which aimed to facilitate disaster management and save lives in the subregion, which was the top priority for all governments, including Rwanda's.

The ITU representative, Mr Vincent Sakanga, speaking on behalf of the Director of BDT, Mr Sami Al Basheer, first of all extended ITU's thanks to the Rwandan Government for agreeing to host the meeting in Kigali. He then went on to emphasize the importance of the training workshop, which would provide Central African States with the opportunity to develop their national emergency telecommunication plans to be integrated in national disaster management plans.

The workshop was attended by around 50 delegates from the countries of the ITU Central Africa region and from international, regional and subregional organizations. The list of participants is attached in annex hereto.

Taking the floor during the first session of the workshop, Mr Cosmas L. Zavazava, Head of BDT's Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and Emergency Telecommunications Division, presented an overview of emergency telecommunications and in particular the associated challenges and opportunities.

In the course of the workshop, discussions focused on the following topics:

- The role of telecommunications/ICT in disaster management, in the face of increasingly serious and frequent disasters.
- Assessment of country implementation of the Yaoundé Action Plan.
- Presentation of a model national emergency telecommunication plan covering all phases of disaster management.
- A multistakeholder approach to disaster management and emergency telecommunications.
- Status of emergency telecommunications in the countries of Central Africa.

It emerged from the discussions that:

- Telecommunications/ICT play a crucial role in all phases of disaster management and the management of crisis situations.
- All Central African countries participating in the workshop are in the initial phase of implementing the Yaoundé Action Plan.
- Telecommunication operators have a role to play in disaster management, and are called upon to implement technologies geared to disaster management.

In the light of the foregoing, the workshop made the following recommendations:

- The countries of the subregion are invited to organize meetings to raise awareness of the role of telecommunications/ICT in disaster management at the national level.
- ITU is requested to assist the countries of Central Africa in drawing up national emergency telecommunication plans.
- The private sector must be involved in all phases of disaster management.
- National disaster management centres are invited to establish a direct link with ITU in order to facilitate assistance in the event of disasters.

Furthermore, participants appealed to governments to put in place appropriate policies and regulations in order to allow active participation by all stakeholders, such as the United Nations agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. In this connection, governments were requested to ensure the following:

- **Institutional capacity-building:** Need to ensure the availability of properly trained staff within government organizations and telecommunication operators. This will facilitate rapid and effective response in the event of disasters.
- **Regulatory platform:**
  - Need for clear legislation and guiding principles, eliminating lengthy approval procedures that hamper the efficient deployment of telecommunication resources, for example delays in the dissemination of public early warning messages on account of complicated approval procedures involving various authorities, which may only serve to exacerbate danger and accidents.
  - Need to introduce clear authorization procedures for the entry of telecommunication equipment in an emergency situation.
  - Adoption and ratification of the Tampere Convention would facilitate this process.

- **Technical support:** Need for suitably trained telecommunication staff capable of operating and maintaining the necessary equipment or assistance kits in the event of disasters and of reacting and providing relief during disaster periods.
- **Reserve Fund:** Need to have available a reserve fund that may be used in an emergency situation in order to avoid the need for hasty measures such as the organization of impromptu fund raising once a disaster has arisen.

The workshop:

- a) expresses its wholehearted support for the ITU Framework for Cooperation in Emergencies (IFCE), urges that this initiative be implemented, and calls upon Member States and other stakeholders to contribute to IFCE;
- b) requests ITU/BDT to continue proactively seeking new ways of assisting Member States in incorporating telecommunications/ICT in their disaster management programmes;
- c) requests ITU/BDT, pursuant to Resolution 34 (Rev. Doha, 2006) of the World Telecommunication Development Conference, to assist countries in their efforts to put in place early warning systems and to ratify and implement the Tampere Convention;
- d) requests ITU/BDT, within the framework of the implementation of Resolutions 36 (Rev. Antalya, 2006) and 136 (Antalya, 2006) of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, to explore innovative means and initiatives with a view to helping Member States use telecommunications/ICTs for the monitoring and management of emergency and disaster situations for early warning, prevention, mitigation and relief;
- e) recommends that:
  - administrations in charge of disaster prevention and management should establish inclusive relief strategies involving all relevant players;
  - telecommunications/ICTs should be given top priority in the establishment of emergency disaster management plans.

## PLAN OF ACTION

The workshop adopted a Plan of Action, comprising the following components, to be implemented between July 2008 and the next world telecommunication development conference in 2010, at which the Plan of Action will be examined in depth:

- a) Telecommunication/ICT strategy: In developing and adopting an ICT policy and establishing a telecommunication/ICT regulatory framework that will facilitate telecommunications in emergency situations, countries are called upon to organize national workshops bringing together all the stakeholders, such as the relevant ministries, regulatory authorities, immigration services, customs administrations and civil society. These national workshops, which will be facilitated by BDT/ITU, will help countries prepare to make best possible use of telecommunications/ICTs for disaster management.
- b) As an indicator of their level of preparedness and with the assistance of ITU in partnership with other international, regional and subregional agencies, countries should draw up emergency telecommunication plans to be integrated in national disaster management plans.
- c) As part of their overall development strategy, countries are invited to incorporate disaster management in the operation and development of their infrastructures/networks and to ensure that suitable resources are identified and earmarked for use in the event of a disaster.
- d) Countries are invited to take the necessary measures to study and ratify the Tampere Convention, in order to incorporate its provisions in relevant national law governing

telecommunications/ICT, requesting ITU's assistance where required. Having once ratified the Convention, countries shall proceed to implement it.

- e) National simulation exercises will be carried out as one of the basic phases for determining a country's level of preparedness.
- f) ITU resources such as easily transportable satellite terminals available free of charge for countries affected by disasters shall be made available in a timely manner for the purpose of basic telecommunications and providing telemedicine services in the immediate wake of disasters.
- g) Countries are invited to establish geographical information systems (GIS) and integrate them in emergency telecommunications.

Participants agree unanimously that the implementation of emergency telecommunication plans integrated in national disaster management plans is imperative for effective disaster management. Since no emergency telecommunication plans exist in any of the countries of the subregion, participants express the wish that their countries should receive assistance from ITU in the establishment of such plans.

The closing ceremony of the Training Workshop on Disaster Management for the Integration of Emergency Telecommunications in Disaster Management Plans was chaired by Commissioner Célestin Twahirwa, Director of Operations of the Rwandan National Police, and Coordinator of the Disaster Management Unit.

Kigali, 11 July 2008