



**International Telecommunication Union**

# **Emergency Telecommunications & The Tampere Convention**

**Tor Bothner**

**bothner@un.org**

**UN Office for the Coordination of  
Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**



ITU-T/OASIS Workshop and Demonstration of Advances in ICT Standards for Public Warning  
Geneva, 19-20 October 2006



ITU-T

## Emergency Telecommunications - Background

- Efficient telecommunications is essential for the coordination of rescue operations.
- However:
  - Disasters often happen in remote or under-developed areas, without good telecoms infrastructure
  - Lack of redundant capacity for emergency response
  - Local infrastructure vulnerable to disasters
  - Modern satellite communications expensive



ITU-T

## ET coordination

- o IASC Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET)
  - Open forum: UN, NGOs, Red Cross, private sector and academia
  - Coordination and inter-operability of ICT networks
  - Mobilization of surge capacity



## Emergency Telecommunications Cluster

- o Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
  - Coordination, installation & support of common IA networks
  - Information sharing among agencies on ICT activities and plans
  - Single point of contact for liaison with regulatory authorities



## Emergency Telecommunications Cluster

- o Participating Agencies
  - OCHA chairs and provides central coordination of Inter-Agency activities
  - WFP/UNICEF implementing the common infrastructure and services with support from other agencies (OCHA, WHO, UNDP, DPKO, UNHCR, UNOSAT, World Vision representing NGOs, and the private sector)

# The Tampere Convention

on the  
Provision of Telecommunication Resources  
for  
Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations



ITU-T

## Tampere Convention

- o Adopted by the “Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications” in 1998
- o Came into effect 2005 after ratification by 30 countries:

Barbados	Kenya	Romania
Bulgaria	Kuwait	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Canada	Lebanon	Slovakia
Cyprus	Liberia	Spain
Czech Republic	Liechtenstein	Sri Lanka
Denmark	Lithuania	Sweden
Dominica	Morocco	Switzerland
El Salvador	Netherlands	Tonga
Finland	Nicaragua	Uganda
Guinea	Oman	United Kingdom
Hungary	Panama	Venezuela
India	Peru	



ITU-T

## Tampere Convention

- o Facilitate the provision of Telecommunication resources for Disaster Mitigation & Relief Operations
- o Framework to manage requests for telecommunication assistance
- o Creating model agreements and best practices





ITU-T

## Tampere Convention

- o Regional & International cooperation to assess and monitor trans-boundary hazards and info exchange for:
  - Emergency relief
  - Disaster prevention/mitigation
- o States and non-state entities to deploy terrestrial & satellite equipment to:
  - Predict and monitor hazards and disasters
  - Share information about disasters
  - Install/operate reliable telecommunications resources for humanitarian relief agencies



ITU-T

## Tampere Convention

- o Unhindered importation and use of emergency telecoms equipment & related human resources (no import duties and regulatory barriers, licensing, etc.)
- o Protection against arrest/detention/seizure



ITU-T

## Tampere Convention

- o Requesting State retains right to direct, control and coordinate assistance provided under the Convention within its territory



ITU-T

## Tampere Convention in Practice

- ET used in all emergencies:
  - UNDAC (light equipment)
  - Ad hoc application for larger scale operations where ET is critically
- What is really needed is a mechanism to make the process more consistent and predictable
- [www.Tampereconvention.org](http://www.Tampereconvention.org)



ITU-T

## Importation and use of ET

### o ISSUES:

- Tsunami: Serious problems to import and operate telecommunications equipment; especially in Sri Lanka
- Complex emergencies: several countries still block import/usage of ET equipment, e.g. VSAT



ITU-T

## ICT – The Way Forward (1)

- Enhanced awareness efforts to ensure States are fully aware of the provisions of the Convention and their role and responsibility
- Continue lobbying the member States for the implementation of the Tampere Convention in particular:
  - for the necessary adaptation of national legislation;
  - for monitoring the progress in the field;
  - and for reporting to the emergency telecommunication family.



ITU-T

## ICT – The Way Forward (2)

- Populate the UN Central Register database with key information from both State Parties and non-State Parties
- Establish model cooperation agreements
- Move away from the current ad hoc approach toward a more consistent and predictable deployment of ET equipment and services



ITU-T

## ICT – The Way Forward (3)

- Encourage adoption of CAP by governments and other providers of public warning systems as a practical and positive action
- Strong emphasis on stand-by capacities that we would like the states to offer in addition to equipment (such as Telecoms experts, international radio operators (also IARU - Radio Amateurs))
- Determine what type of support is needed for the Operational Coordinator to fully implement the Convention