

Challenges in deploying telecommunications / ICT for disaster response (GET2016)

Alpha Bah

*IT Emergency Preparedness & Response Branch
U.N. World Food Programme*

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World Food Programme

When disaster strikes...



... timely provision of ICT services
saves lives



WFP – 5 key facts

1. The World Food Programme is a UN agency whose mission is to end global hunger.
2. We are 100% voluntarily funded by governments, the private sector and individuals.
3. We partner with national governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), institutions, corporations and others.
4. On average, we reach more than 80 million people with food assistance in 75 countries each year.
5. About 14,000 people work for WFP, most of them in remote areas, directly serving the hungry poor.



The Zero Hunger Challenge is the UN Secretary-General's call to the world to end hunger in our lifetimes. WFP's entire strategy is aimed at helping the world achieve that goal.



March 2014

WFP Global Presence

- Bangkok Regional Bureau (OMB)
- Cairo Regional Bureau (OMC)
- Dakar Regional Bureau (OMD)
- Johannesburg Regional Bureau (OMJ)
- Nairobi Regional Bureau (OMN)
- Panama Regional Bureau (OMP)
- Country Office
- ★ Rome Headquarters
- Centre of Excellence
- Regional Bureau
- WFP Office
- Humanitarian Response Depot



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The designations employed and the presentation of material in the maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

* The line of control in Somalia and Kashmir is represented approximately by a dotted line. The final status of Somalia and Kashmir has not yet been agreed on by the parties.

** A dispute exists between the governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

*** Final boundaries between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. South Sudan declared its independence on 9 July 2011.

What We Do



**Prepare for
and respond to
emergencies**



**Help make
communities
stronger, better
able to deal
with climate
shocks**



**Enable people
and countries
to meet their
own nutrition
needs**



**Improve
mother and
child nutrition**

We respond to humanitarian emergencies

Whether refugees are fleeing war, floods are washing away homes or drought is destroying farmland, hunger is often the first emergency.

Time saved means lives saved. WFP, with its global presence and logistics muscle, is ready to respond within hours.

Being prepared is part of the secret. WFP is constantly collecting and analysing information on natural and man-made hazards.

If we can see that an emergency is looming, we can lessen its impact. Extra supplies can be positioned in convenient locations.



We put our logistics capability at service of humanitarian community

- We manage the **United Nations Humanitarian Air Service** (UNHAS): In 2013, WFP flew more than 364,000 humanitarian workers and nearly 2,000 tons of cargo to 237 places.
- We manage the **UN's humanitarian warehouse hubs** (United Nations Humanitarian Response Depots) in six strategic locations around the world. In 2013, we dispatched US\$35 million in relief supplies.
- We provide **Logistics Services** directly to the humanitarian community, e.g. we built Ebola Treatment Units for the World Health Organization in West Africa.
- We **coordinate logistics operations** for the humanitarian community in major emergencies.



We support the humanitarian community

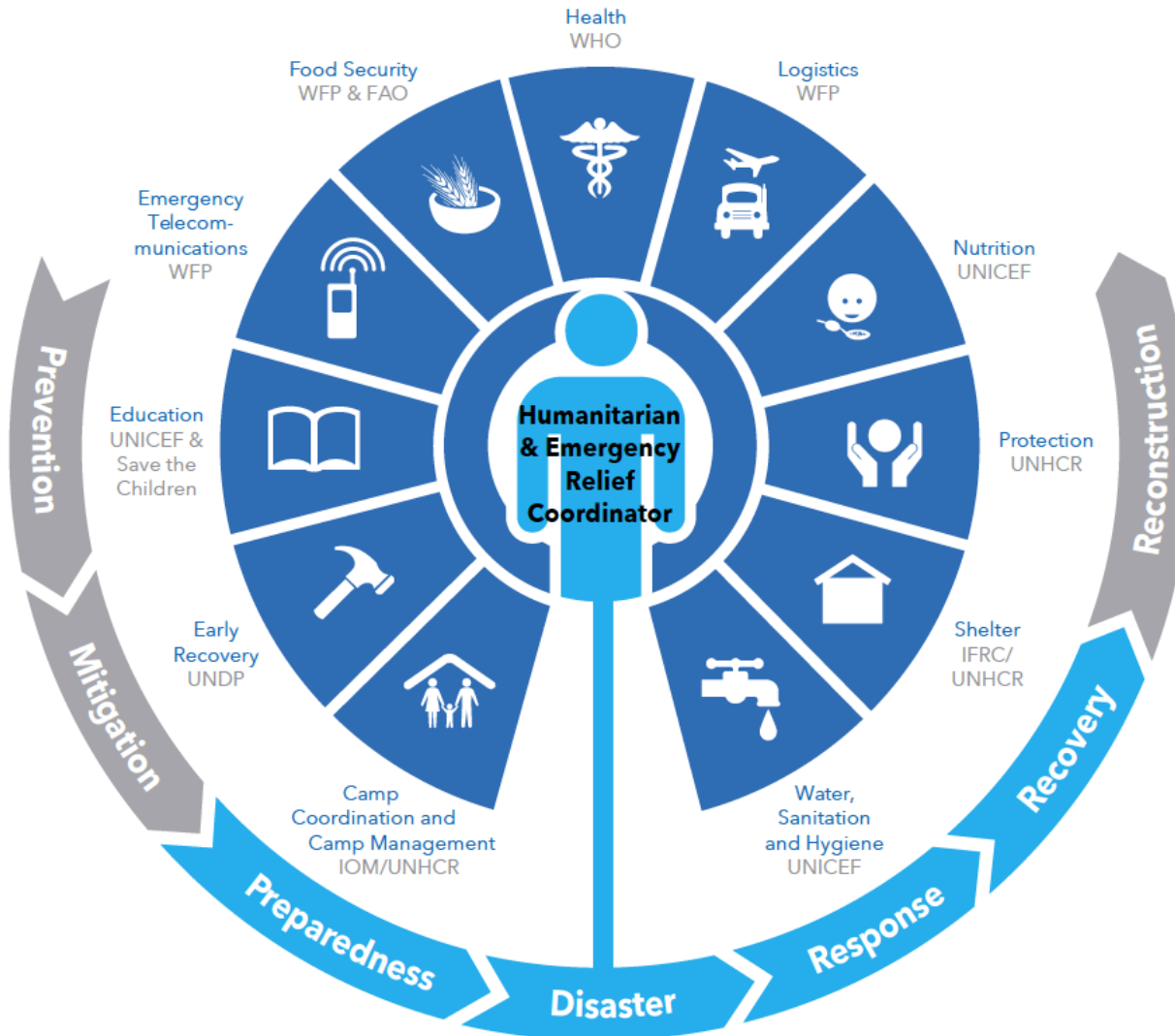
In emergencies, WFP is the lead coordinator (“cluster leader”) for the humanitarian community in:

- **Logistics**
- **Emergency telecoms**
- **Food Security:** shared the leadership role with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

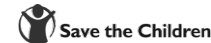
We ensure services are in place and information is shared.



The IASC Clusters



Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC) : A Global Network



A global network of organisations that
work together to provide
shared communications services
in humanitarian emergencies.

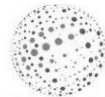


GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Directorate for Development Cooperation



World Food Programme

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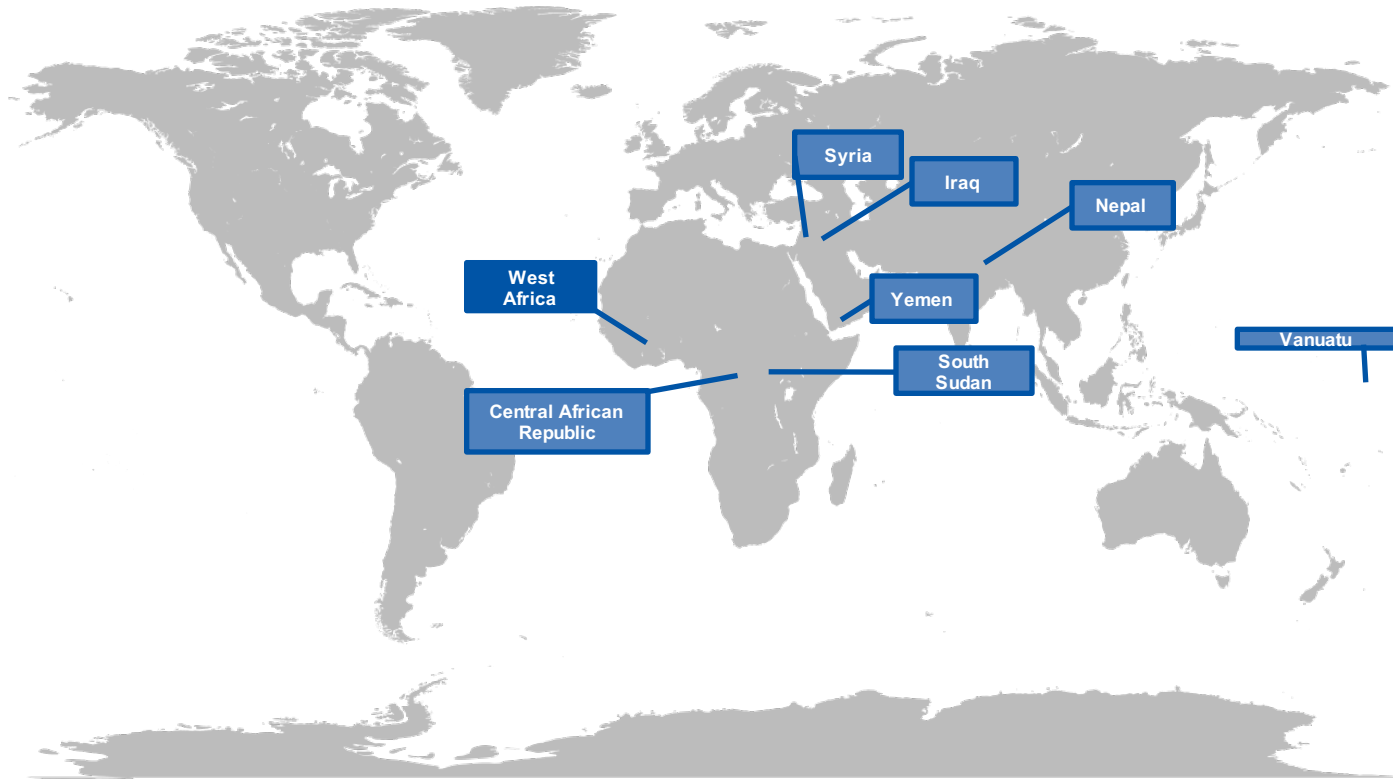
World Health Organization

WFP is global lead of the ETC





ETC: Emergency Response Operations Overview (2015)



Larger Scope – ETC2020 Strategy



Government



Affected Populations



Response Community



Photos: Oxfam/Simon Rawles; WFP/ Mariko Hall; Telecoms Sans Frontieres

Building preparedness *before* an emergency strikes

As Global ETC Lead, WFP leverages its in-country IT capacity and networks to establish IT emergency preparedness and build resilience.

Working together *during* an emergency response

When nominated as local ETC lead, WFP uses its in-country IT capacity and emergency response team (FITTEST), NGOs, standby and private sector partners, to deliver shared communications services to the response community.

Learning and developing *after* an emergency

After demobilization of the ETC, WFP IT builds upon new connections and continues building capacity, learning from the emergency and preparing for the next.

FITTEST



FITTEST WFP's IT response capacity

Operational Challenges



- 1.Regulatory:** Restrictions on import, clearance, licensing, and physical access
- 2.Duplication:** multiple assessments, duplication of services
- 3.Coordination:** Complexity of coordination mechanism (too many coordinators), multiple contacts
- 4.Surge capacity:** Several protracted emergencies stretching limited resources
- 5.Leveraging evolving technologies & partner solutions:** identifying “fit for purpose” solutions (too many solutions looking for problems)
- 6.Financing:** Lack of donor interest in ICT, especially on preparedness

The way forward for emergency telecoms



- 1. Working closer with governments in high-risk countries to build communication resilience:** joint capacity building activities, developing SOPs for EPR, leveraging strength of parties.
- 2. Improved and decentralized preparedness:** local pre-positioning, joint simulation exercises involving local service providers.
- 3. Increased private partnerships:** private companies as partners rather than service providers, actively involved by sharing their expertise.

Information Technology Division
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World Food Programme