

Disaster Relief and Management
Role of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster

**Regional Conference on Disaster Relief and Management:
International Cooperation & Role of ICT**

14-17 April 2007
Alexandria, Egypt

Chérif Ghaly
Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ghaly@un.org

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

- **Primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance**

- Established June 1992 UN GA Res. 46/182
- Involves all key UN & non-UN humanitarian partners (ERC OCHA chair)
- IASC Sub-Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET)





Building a Stronger, More Predictable Humanitarian Response System

Humanitarian Reform

Three pillars of reform:

(1) CLUSTER APPROACH

**Adequate capacity & predictable leadership
in all sectors**

(2) HUMANITARIAN FINANCING Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

Adequate, timely and flexible financing

(3) HUMANITARIAN COORDINATORS

**Effective leadership and coordination in
humanitarian emergencies**

Humanitarian Reform – Cluster Approach

Cluster concept with 9 Clusters

- Nutrition
- Water and Sanitation
- Health
- Camp Coordination and Management
- Emergency Shelter
- Protection
- Early Recovery
- Logistics
- Emergency Telecommunications:
Lead Agencies OCHA, WFP and UNICEF

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)

Well defined roles and responsibilities for providing common telecommunications infrastructures

Field, regional and HQ activities allows for systematic and global gap analysis

Framework for NGO/Private sector operational collaboration

Rapid response with predictable service deliverables and timeframes

Pre-positioned resources (staff, equipment, standby capacities)

Provision of standard, interoperable ICT platforms & procedures to avoid duplication and ensure cost effective services

Smooth transition to post-emergency reconstruction

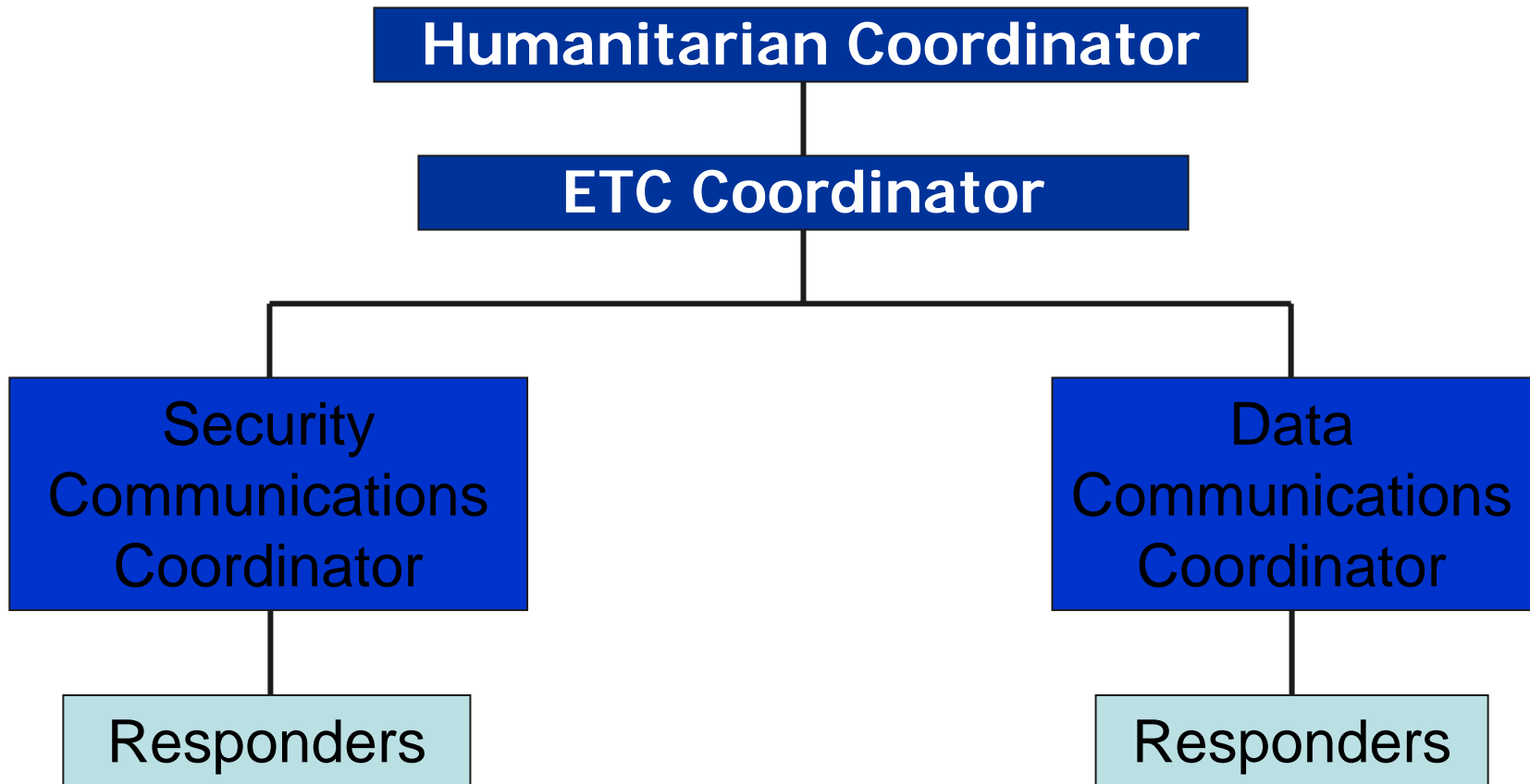
ETC Mandate

- **Establish & maintain capacity to respond to:**
 - Three large-scale emergencies per year
 - Two of which are simultaneous
 - Large-scale means 500,000+ affected populations with five operational locations
- **OCHA:** Overall coordination
- **WFP:** Provision of security communications
- **UNICEF:** Provision of data communications

Members: UN agencies, NGOs, RCRC, Private sector, Govt, ..



ETC Emergency Response



ETC – Security Communications

To provide common security telecommunications backbone for the humanitarians:

- ✓ Setting up the common security communications network covering the UN operational area
- ✓ Implement Standard Radio call signs
- ✓ Rollout standards for HF and VHF communications
- ✓ Provide guidance on HF and VHF frequency usage (i.e. sharing available frequencies)
- ✓ Rollout SOPs for Security communication
- ✓ Coordinate user Training on Security comms to UN and NGOs
- ✓ Provide common security vehicle tracking System



ETC – Data Communications

To provide Data Communication services in emergency areas. This is achieved in 3 phases:

Phase I - Web-based email access from a single point of presence to communicate essential data and security information

Phase II - Internet “hot-spot” connected to light-weight satellite terminals; e-mail, FAX and printer services

Phase III - Provides a reliable Wide Area Network link for Internet access and corporate applications. Local inter-agency connectivity through the implementation of a Metropolitan Area Network

ICT Evolution

ICT a key requirement for the successful humanitarian relief operations. Robust and reliable data communications are essential from the onset to provide:

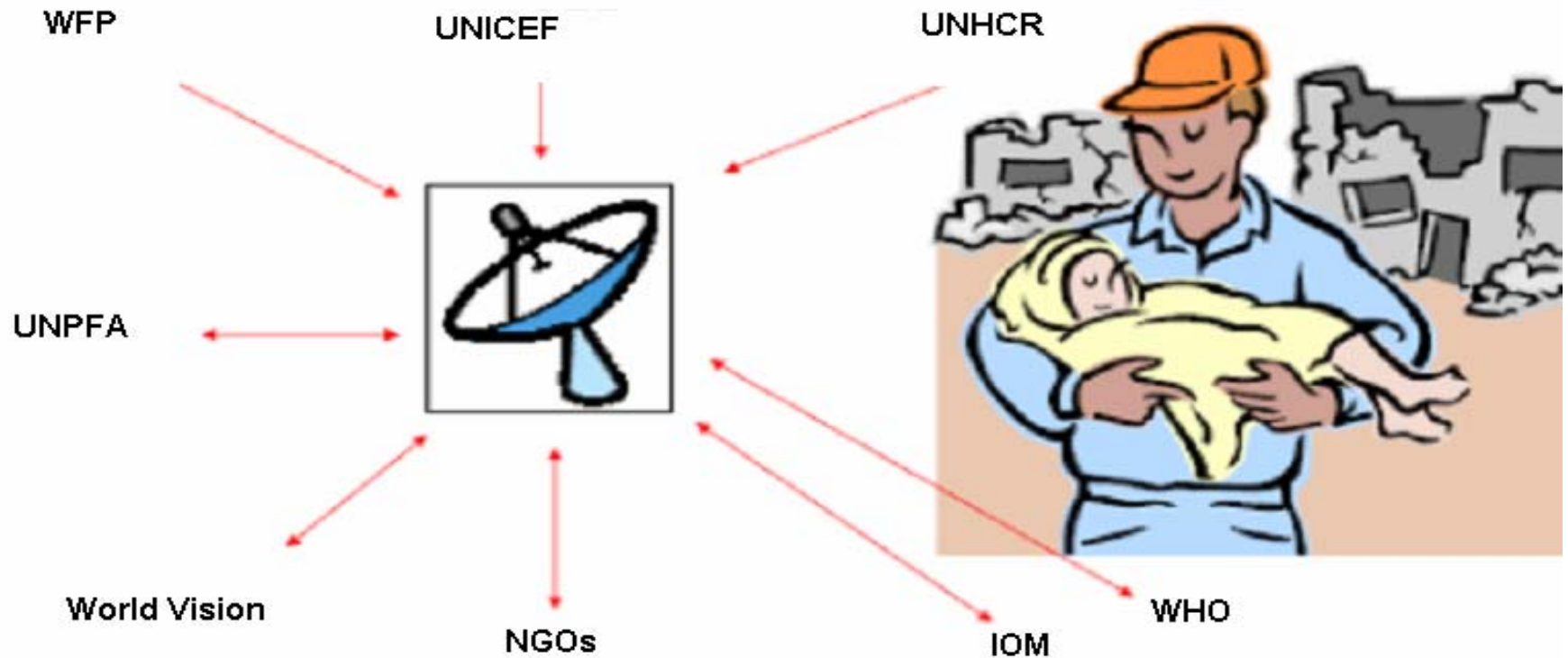
- **Email**
- **File Transfer**
- **ERP Access** – Access to corporate applications (Enterprise Resource Planning) for finance, supply, human resources and programme planning
- **Intranet** – Corporate Intranet for information sharing
- **Internet** – Public Internet for information gathering and sharing
- **Video** – Video conferencing and/or broadcasting of vital news and events have become increasingly important

Data Communications in an Emergency Pre-ETC



Multiple connections to various global networks,
large investments, staffing and maintenance costs

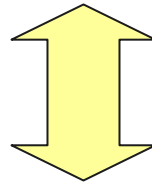
Interagency Data Communications ETC model



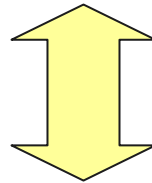
One connection back to one global network,
wireless data connections provide local distribution

ETC Strategy

Preparedness & Planning



Emergency Response



Post Emergency Evaluation

ETC Model Advantages

- **Reduced telecommunications infrastructure at emergency locations**
- **Reduced costs**
- **More rapid and predictable response**
- **One dedicated Inter-Agency support team**
- **Better Preparedness and Training**
- **Global standards and SOPs**
- **Greater oversight and accountability**
- **Improved coordination**

On Behalf of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
Thank You

Chérif Ghaly
Chair, WGET and ETC
Chief Information Technology Section, OCHA
ghaly@un.org