Emergency Telecommunications in Humanitarian Relief Operations:

Using the Tampere Convention for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations

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

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o   Robust, reliable telecommunication services are essential for the effective coordination of emergency relief operations

o   However:

- Disasters frequently occur in remote or under-developed areas, with poor/no telecoms infrastructure

- Local infrastructure may be unavailable during the emergency:
    – damaged by the emergency (earthquake, flood, etc.)
    – saturated due to increased usage and insufficient redundant capacity

- Access to ET resources with no regulatory barriers is an enormous challenge

Emergency Telecommunications Coordination

o IASC Sub-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

- Facilitate the promotion and implementation of The Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations

Tampere Convention

o Adopted by the "Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications" in 1998

- Recognition that ET are critically important in emergency operations

o Came into force January 2005 after ratification by 30 Member States (currently 35)

o UN OCHA has operational responsibility

- Emergency Relief Coordinator is designated "Operational Coordinator" under the Convention

- Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET), Chaired by OCHA, facilitate the promotion and the implementation of the Tampere Convention.

Tampere Convention – What is it?

o Legal framework to manage requests for telecommunication assistance

o Means to facilitate the provision of Telecommunication resources for Disaster Mitigation & Relief Operations

o Minimize administrative barriers to moving telecommunications assistance across national boundaries during emergencies

- Unhindered importation and use of emergency telecoms equipment & related human resources (no import duties and regulatory barriers, licensing, etc.)

o Relief workers from NGOs engaged in telecommunications assistance have meaningful protections under international law

o Protects host governments by prohibiting the misuse of requested telecommunications

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

How does Tampere Convention help State Parties

o Preparedness for an effective emergency response

o Register of global resources and agreements

o Regional & International cooperation to assess and monitor trans-boundary hazards & 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 operations

How to help Member States

o OCHA and ITU to lead advocacy efforts to:

- Ensure States are fully aware of the provisions of the Convention and their role and responsibility

- Lobby Member States to ratify & implement the Convention:

  —for the necessary adaptation of national legislation;

  —for monitoring and reporting progress in the field;

o Best practices and model cooperation agreements

o UN Central Register: key information from both State and non-State Parties including resources and contacts in governments (customs, licenses, frequencies, etc.), industry, NGOs and other organizations who could help in the provision of telecommunications

o Move away from the current ad hoc approach toward a more consistent and predictable deployment of ET equipment and services

o Encourage adoption of the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) by governments and other providers of public warning systems as a practical and positive action

o Strong emphasis on stand-by capacities that States should offer in addition to equipment (i.e. Telecoms experts, international radio operators, IARU - Radio Amateurs)

Tampere Convention in Practice

o ET used in all emergencies:

- UNDAC (light equipment)
- Ad hoc application for larger scale operations where ET is critical

o What is really needed is a mechanism to make the process more consistent and predictable

o www.Tampereconvention.org

Importation and use of ET

o ISSUES:

- Tsunami: Serious problems to import and operate telecommunications equipment;

- Complex emergencies: several countries still block import/usage of ET equipment, e.g. VSAT

We're on a good way. A lot remains to be done for affected populations to really benefit from the efforts put so far in the Tampere Convention.

LET'S DO IT

Thank You
Questions Please?

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