REQUIREMENTS ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR DISASTER RELIEF FROM THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Workshop on Telecommunications for Disaster Relief

Geneva, 17-19 February 2003

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

- International Comittee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation)

- National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies)

National Societies

- Created through ratification or accession to Geneva Convention of 1949, often established by national legislation

- Often given specific roles during state declared disasters such as:
  - Distribution of food, tents, blankets, etc..
  - First aid
  - Ambulance service
  - Tracing
  - Etc…

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

- 178 National Societies

- Over 80 years experience in Disaster response

- Unique organisation, UN recognition

The role of the International Federation

- **Secretariat based in Geneva:**
  - Coordinate and mobilize relief assistance for international emergencies
  - Promote cooperation between National Societies
  - Represent National Societies in the international field
- **Regional and Country field delegations**
  - Assist and advise National Societies with Relief operations and development programmes
  - Encourage regional Cooperation

The International Feration and recent telecommunications initiatives

- Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunications Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations

- International Disaster Response Law Project

- World Radiocommunications Conference, Istanbul2000, resolution 10: « use of two-way wireless telecommunications by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement »

Disaster Response and Telecommunications

- Communications must be effective and immediate
- Communications is essential for:
  - Information exchange
  - Coordination of assistance
  - Safety of workers
  - Saving lives
- Coordination and cooperation between relief agencies and State authorities
- Additional demands can cause delays
- **Preparedness is the most effective tool**

Telecom systems currently used

- Telephone, fax, mobile phone

- Satellite equipment (Inmarsat, Thuraya, etc..)

- Internet (dial-up, leased line)

- VHF and HF radio equipment

- -> No ideal system, we use a combinaison of these systems (also for backup reasons)

Our main problems with Telecommunications systems in Disaster Relief Environment

▪ Usual Telecom system may not be available during large scale disasters (earthquake, floods, etc..) or crisis.

▪ Infrastructure could be destroyed

▪ Shared network are overloaded (telephone, mobile phone, Inmarsat, etc…)

Users requierements

- « Work perfectly all the time in any circonstances »

- Simple to use (5 minutes training to a non technical user)

- Reliable, resistant to Disaster, not overflowed

- Low cost for the hardware, and more important low cost communications time.

- Allow voice and data communications, and if possible video if not too expensive.

- World wide coverage

- Short and long range capabilities.

User requierements (Cont.)

- No problem with trans-border use of equipment (Tampere)

- Works as well inside and outside buildings

- Good power supply design with possibility to power the system from a car battery

Access to Priority System

- When a priority system is used, such as the International Emergency Preference Scheme, the components of our movement should be granted access to perform its humanitarian and assistance role.

- As a Disaster Preparedness action, this possibility should be written in the regulation at highest possible level.

  - « To support their role in Disaster Response operations, access to Priority system should benefit the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement»