

ICT

information - communication - technology



## A Link for People who Care



WFP

World Food Programme



## First on the scene

A deadly tsunami slams into the coast of Sumatra. Frightened survivors are isolated on rooftops and hillsides. Roads, telephones and electricity lines are destroyed. Relief workers must find a way to get food to the survivors. They need to link up – to communicate. That is why experts in telecommunications must be among the first people on the ground in an emergency.

## A link for people who care

Within hours, a United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) telecoms specialist is heading for the disaster area with a suitcase holding the key to a quick and effective emergency response: a portable satellite terminal, plus radio and computer equipment to provide urgent voice and data communications at the scene of the disaster.

### >Ready to respond

This rapid response by WFP's Information and Communications Technology group (ICT) may seem spontaneous, but it is the result of careful, year-round preparation, on-going training, and collaboration with colleagues in other United Nations agencies, Non-Governmental-Organisations (NGOs) and Governments worldwide.

Based on the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) mandate and through its ICT Emergency Preparedness and Response team, WFP is the official provider of security telecommunications to UN agencies and other humanitarian partners, supporting global relief efforts.



WFP/R. Skullerud/Indonesia

WFP's ICT staff travel to the most isolated and dangerous places in the world. Their challenge is to provide connectivity in emergency situations within 48 hours of being called. They provide the primary link for *people who care*.

## >Wired to help

In remote locations where telephones, fax machines and email do not exist, ICT makes it possible for relief personnel to coordinate efforts with humanitarian partners to get food, water and sanitation to people in need and, at the same time, protect themselves while working in difficult situations.

Using a combination of different technologies like two-way radios, portable satellite terminals and telephones, Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) receivers and computers, humanitarian personnel can:

- keep track of food shipments and convoys
- use and update maps and spreadsheets
- find the quickest, most cost-effective ways to reach survivors
- exchange information with other UN agencies, NGOs and government authorities
- keep track of colleagues traveling in isolated areas
- call for help in the event of an ambush or accident
- order food deliveries for survivors of natural disasters or conflict

### Notes from the field

*In the first days after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, WFP helped to provide security telecommunications, electrical power and technical support to humanitarian workers. Notes written by ICT team members give a snapshot of their experience:*

*"The helicopter flight to Calang took us straight up the coast over the affected areas. Some villages have been wiped off the face of the earth."*

*"Most of the local population has moved up the hill now, fearing a new tsunami."*

*"You can't even imagine how to get staff there. But you have to plan to support hundreds of people, handle shipments and purchases of equipment for four countries – and ensure your staff will be safe and have a human environment to work in."*

*"We have electric power. It looks really ugly, but it works!"*

*During the first two months, some 800 humanitarian workers in Indonesia relied on ICT services.*



WFP/R. Skullerud/Indonesia

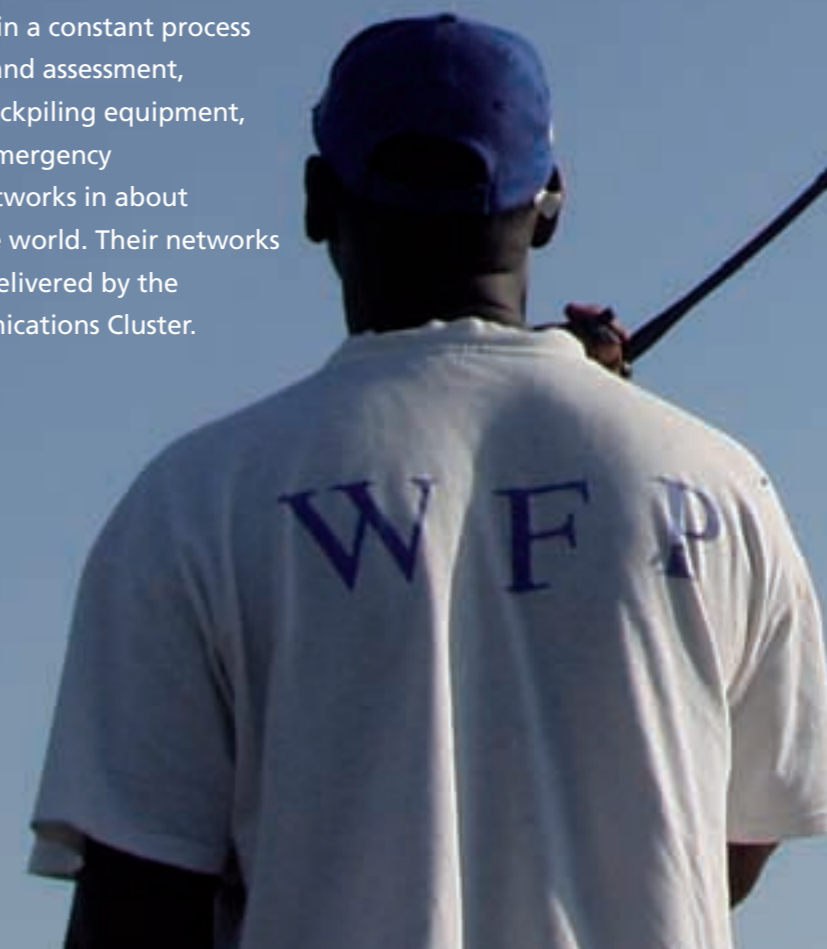
## >Year-round planning

Many humanitarian workers have direct contact with **ICT staff** only when they need help setting up telephones or computers. But much of their life-saving work relies heavily on ICT's day-to-day contribution to WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response planning.

ICT teams are engaged in a constant process of long-term planning and assessment, budgeting, training, stockpiling equipment, and strengthening of emergency telecommunications networks in about 80 countries around the world. Their networks are central to services delivered by the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster.



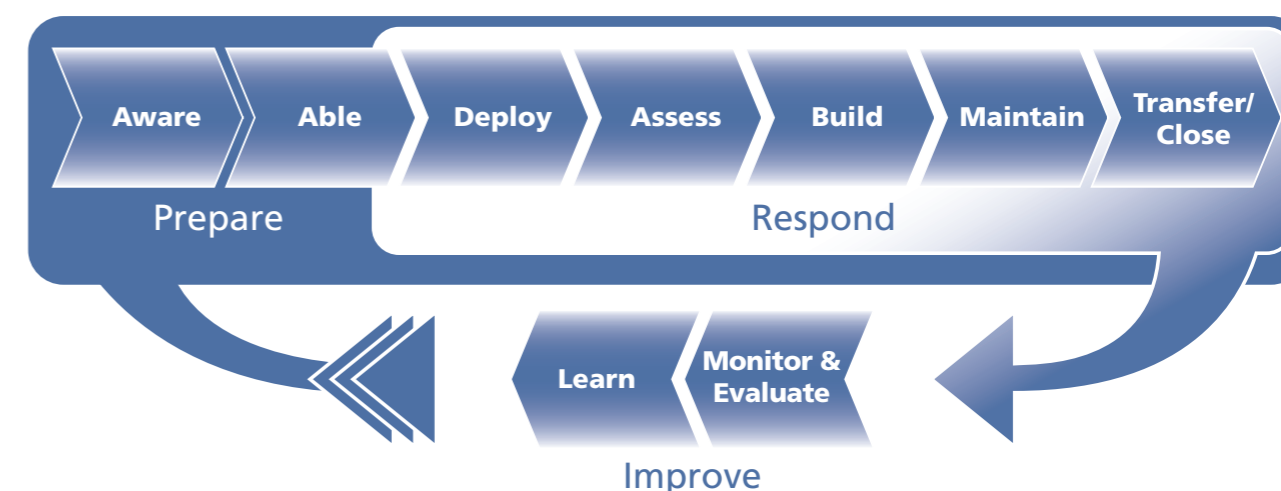
WFP/D. Visscher/Dubai



WFP/A. Parabela/Sudan

### ICT Emergency Model

First of its kind for humanitarian workers, developed by WFP with private sector support



## >Worldwide collaboration

### Emergency Telecommunications Cluster

The cluster system essentially means that UN agencies and their humanitarian partners work together to organise common, inter-agency telecommunications services. They pool their resources to provide timely, predictable and effective responses and therefore increase the cost-effectiveness of emergency telecommunications by avoiding duplication.

As part of the global cluster process and continuing their traditional cooperation in technical and humanitarian areas, WFP and UNICEF have jointly increased their global and local capacity in staff readiness, equipment stockpiles and training.

### Stand-by partners

The ability to respond quickly to emergencies anywhere in the world means having a global network of personnel who are able to deploy ICT equipment immediately. The World Food Programme makes this possible by establishing agreements with a series of stand-by partners. These partners, including governmental agencies, NGOs and the private sector, are based in countries around the world where personnel are trained to operate in accordance with the ICT Emergency Model.

### Private sector support

For the first time, ICT is working with partners in the private sector who recognize the importance of investing in emergency preparedness.

In February 2008, the **Vodafone Group Foundation (VGF)**, the **United Nations Foundation (UNF)** and WFP have launched a three-year Global Partnership for Emergency Communications to create a groundbreaking ICT Humanitarian Emergency Platform in support of the entire humanitarian community (including UN agencies and NGOs) operating in emergencies. The aim is to increase the efficiency and coordination of emergency communications by optimizing and standardizing ICT solutions in emergencies, expanding the pool of trained ICT experts, establishing a network of stand-by partners ready for deployment, and enabling immediate dispatch of ICT emergency responders.

This new partnership builds on a project funded by VGF/ UNF, started in 2006. A first training, conducted in 2007, has helped build the capacity of emergency ICT team leaders to deal with issues going far beyond cables and wires.

They include how to:

- accurately estimate communication needs and rapidly mobilize humanitarian response
- develop plans for coordinating efforts with various agencies
- cope with the stress of working in dangerous situations and the challenges of operating under extreme conditions
- react if ambushed or kidnapped while working in an isolated area

More training sessions are being organized as part of this new partnership.

### ICT Emergency Preparedness and Response Training

#### What participants said:

*"In training of this kind, where you have staff from NGOs and different UN agencies, they come together with a common approach: how we work when there's a need, when there's an emergency."*  
– UNICEF participant

*"What this course has done is attempt to unify what our response is and bring certain standards in the way we do business."*  
– WFP participant

*"This is a collaborative approach to emergencies and brings far better benefits to the beneficiaries in the end."* – OXFAM participant

*Ericsson and WFP deployed a private mobile telephone network in Kabul in 2002, providing the humanitarian community and the newly-established Afghan government with effective communication. More than 500 mobile telephones were delivered to all key*

*humanitarian partners and government officials, allowing local and international dialing. Previously, communication with the outside world was limited to expensive satellite phones. This innovative solution was unprecedented in a humanitarian emergency.*



WFP/M. García Real/Sudan

## ICT's stand-by partners 2007

### Government Agencies

- Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection & Emergency Planning (DCPEP)
- UK Department for International Development's Operation Team (DFID)
- Swedish Rescue Service Agency (SRSA)
- Irish Aid

### Non-Government Organizations

- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- RedR Australia

### Commercial Companies

- Ericsson Response

## >WFP's Security Communications Services

- Assessment of security telecommunications needs for the UN and humanitarian partners, preparation of recommendations, budgets and project proposals
- Establishment of 24/7 radio rooms in all operational areas, including recruitment, training and management of radio operators
- Set up of VHF/UHF and HF networks
- Liaison with government authorities for frequency licensing, equipment importation and other services
- Training of radio users for all UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian partners
- Technical assistance to all UN agencies, NGOs and humanitarian partners

## Did you know?

- **HF**, or high frequency, radio waves can carry voice and data/e-mail over extremely long distances
- **VHF/UHF**, or very high frequency/ultra high frequency waves, carry signals from one radio handset to another over shorter distances, up to 25 – 50 km, when used with repeaters.



WFP/D. Visscher/Dubai

## > ICT around the world

- 2008 Southern Africa floods
- 2008 Kenya election violence
- 2007 Bangladesh Cyclone Sidr
- 2007 West Africa floods
- 2007 Nicaragua Hurricane Felix
- 2007 Peru earthquake
- 2007 Pakistan floods
- 2007 Mozambique
- 2006 Yogiakarta earthquake
- 2006 Lebanon
- 2005 South Asia earthquake (Pakistan)
- 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami
- 2003 Sudan
- 2003 Iraq
- 2002 Southern Africa's drought
- 2001 Afghanistan
- 2001 Bhuj (India)
- 2000 Mozambique floods
- 1999 Timor Leste
- 1999 Kosovo

## Read about us in the news

**International Herald Tribune**, 14 February, 2008 - "Mobile conference puts focus on using technology for disaster response, economic improvements."

**Reuters**, 13 February, 2008 - "WFP and Vodafone to work on emergency communication."

**Washington Post**, 13 February, 2008 - "WFP, Vodafone to work on emergency communication."

**International Herald Tribune**, 1 April, 2007 - "Boot camp for techies."

**The Economist**, 28 July 2007 - "Flood, famine and mobile phones."

**Cox Newspapers**, 7 October, 2007 - "When Disaster Strikes, First Come the Tech Guys."

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## About WFP

The United Nations World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian agency, dedicated to saving lives in natural disasters and refugee crises, improving the nutrition and quality of life of the world's most vulnerable people, and enabling development. WFP provides food assistance each year to an average 70 million people in around 80 of the world's poorest countries.



**World Food Programme**

[www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)