



Author: John Bursa  
Regional Telecommunications Officer  
Asia Bureau, WFP

## Interagency ICT Typhoon Assessment Mission- Vietnam 20<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009

### Background-

The Western Pacific Typhoon and South Western Cyclone season has the potential to affect a number of countries within the Asia/Pac region, either directly or through extensive rainfall leading to flooding and landslides. At particularly high risk are The Philippines, Viet Nam, Southern China, Papua New Guinea, Solomon's, Fiji Islands, Vanuatu and as was recently witnessed: Taiwan.

Following direction from WFP's ICT Emergency unit in Rome and given WFP's responsibilities within the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) an Emergency Preparedness assessment mission was conducted by the WFP Asia Regional Bureau.

### Mission collaboration was the winner-

As a WFP staff member, Vietnam seemed the real mission impossible. WFP's presence was gone at closure of the Hanoi office a few years ago. How does one organise such a mission ?

Thoughts immediately went to our cluster partners, UNICEF who maintain a large Country-Office.

Fate seemed to be in my favour, as it so happened the UNICEF's regional bureau in Bangkok was fielding a review of a number of countries in the region, with you guessed it: Vietnam on that list. Opportunity galore here !

I adjusted my mission dates to suit that of Simon Genin, of ex TSF fame (now a UNICEF consultant) and who has also spent sometime at various emergencies around the globe and where we often happen to "Bump" into each other.

### Mission-

Together we conducted an Emergency Telecomms based assessment with meetings at UNDSS, UNDP, UNFPA- One UN building site and a couple of ICT Working group meetings.

We looked at emergency response procedures from the ICT perspective. In consideration of local ICT resources- agency response staff, satphones, ISP's and other ICT equipment needs when a disaster strikes.

The ICT team in Hanoi were very helpful and assisted us in meeting the mission TOR's.

What did stand-out was that a number of our ICT colleagues in Hanoi were beneficiaries of WFP programmes in the 70's and 80's. The acronym PAM is widely recognised, that was a pleasant surprise and reminds us that our work does go deep in the hearts and minds of people, even to this day.

Thanks go to Nam, Simon, Bharat and Sam at UNICEF and our UNDP, UNDSS and of course UNFPA colleagues. Xin chao, Cam on !

**John**