



Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET)

Management of VHF and HF Selcalls and Callsigns on UN radio networks.

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October 24, 2001

Version 4.0
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1. Scope

This document outlines the unified system for the allocation of the HF and VHF callsigns and associated selcalls on the UN radio networks.

It amends and supersedes all previous versions.

2. Intended audience and approach

This document is intended specifically for the technical management staff of the WGET (Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications) and ITAG (Inter-Agency Telecommunications Advisory Group) members.

The authors made use of the long-lasting UN experience in field operations to ponder the various alternatives and make the necessary trade-offs intrinsic in any standard. The breadth and different nature of the actors this document is intended for, however, made some of the choices very difficult, but it is hoped they are for the better good of improved Inter-Agency inter-operability and coordination.

The underlying principles dictating most choices were to give agencies and organizations the highest degree of independence in the choice and management of their own callsigns and selcalls, while avoiding duplicates among network users.

WARNING:

It should be noted that the official and full callsign for all UN radio stations and UN radio users is '4U' plus the callsign as described in this document.

The implementers of the call sign schema proposed in this document are to ensure that there will be no confusion with the national call signs of the host country, or neighbouring countries in which a signal may be received.

UN network users should be trained that whenever queried about their official callsign, by an external party, the correct callsign ('4U' plus the callsign as described in this document), is given.

The national call signs referred to are call signs conforming to the ITU Radio Regulations, Appendix S42 "Table of Allocation of International Call Sign Series", also published on the ITU Web Site:

http://www.itu.int/cgi-bin/htsh/glad/cga_callsign.sh?lng=E

3. Background

In the early stages of an emergency a Telecommunications Coordinating Officer is appointed¹ to ensure effective coordination and facilitate the application of the standards.

The main goals of the standards proposed in this document are to:

- Increase the safety and security of aid workers and their properties
- Increase the efficiency of and the coordination within the UN and NGO community
- Identify each individual, vehicle and each base with a unique callsign within one VHF network
- Identify each base and each vehicle with a unique callsign and selcall within one HF network
- To convey as much critical information as possible (e.g. the agency a user belongs to, its location) through the callsign and selcall structure
- Keep the callsigns as short as possible and easy to use
- Support NGOs and smaller UN agencies.

The standardization plan comprises two inter-linked parts:

- Selcall (selective calling) numbering scheme,
- Fixed, mobile and personal HF/VHF callsign allocations.

These are based on a number of secondary standards defining the standard call letters (or abbreviation) for countries, cities, agencies/NGOs and region and country numerical identifiers. These secondary standards are to be agreed upon by all parties involved.

¹ Reference is made to the IAET Concept Paper dated 27 April 2004 posted on <http://www.reliefweb.int/telecoms/intro/wgetminutes/wgetmin.html>. Please note that the IAET concept paper might be reviewed as part of the Humanitarian Response Review; however, this will neither affect the standards proposed in this document neither the need for a TCO.

4. Identifying locations (countries and bases)

Goal:

To uniquely define each location (base and/or country) within one VHF or HF radio network.

Standard:

1. To define a location for a country and or city within one VHF or HF radio network,
 - take the first letter of the location
 - if already taken, take the last letter of the location
 - if taken, second letter
 - if taken, last but one
 - if all taken, an arbitrary choice will have to be made

Examples:

- Kampala: Kilo
- Entebbe: Echo
- Arua: Alpha
- Fort Portal: Foxtrot
- Kabale: Lima (first, last and second were already taken)

2. In some complex cross border or regional emergencies with large coverage networks, the country call letter can be used in combination with the base call letter so that base call letters can be re-used in different countries.

Examples:

- Uganda Kampala: Uniform Kilo
- Uganda Kabale: Uniform Echo
- Rwanda Kigali: Romeo Kilo
- Rwanda Kibungo: Romeo Oscar
- Tanzania Kigoma: Tango Kilo
- Tanzania Karagwe: Tango Echo
- Tanzania Kibondo: Tango Oscar

3. Where numbers have to be used (e.g. in selcalls) to identify locations, the number will represent the sequence of the number in the alphabet (Alpha = 01, Zulu = 26).

5. Identifying UN agencies and NGOs

Goal:

To uniquely identify each UN agency which has a large field presence with a single call letter, while reserving space for the NGOs.

Standard:

1. Main field agencies:

01	Alpha: FAO (Agriculture)
02	Bravo: Worldbank/IMF (Bank)
03	Charlie: UNICEF (Children)
04	Delta: UNDP (Development)
05	Echo: UNESCO (Education)
06	Foxtrot: WFP (Food)
07	Golf:
08	Hotel: WHO (Health)
09	India:
10	Juliet:
11	Kilo:
12	Lima:
13	Mike: IOM (Migration)
14	November:
15	Oscar: OCHA/UNDAC
16	Papa: UNOPS (Projects)
17	Quebec: FALD/UNDPKO
18	Romeo: UNHCR (Refugees)
19	Sierra: UNDSS/Interagency security (Security)
20	Tango:
21	Uniform: UN Secretariat (Special Representatives, Envoys,...)
22	Victor:
23	Whiskey:
24	X-ray: - Reserved for NGOs
25	Yankee: - Reserved for NGOs
26	Zulu: - Reserved for NGOs

2. As the responsibility of the UN for UN staff differs from NGO staff, it is important to make a clear distinction between callsigns for UN or for NGO staff. The NGOs should have a double call letter beginning with X-Y or Z

3. Where numbers have to be used (e.g. in selcalls) to identify agencies, the number will represent the sequence of the number in the alphabet (Alpha = 01, Zulu = 26).

6. Identifying departments

Goal:

To uniquely identify the most commonly used departments for each UN agency so the department can be integrated within the VHF callsign or selcall of an individual.

Standard:

1. Standard call number system:

Fixed:

- 1 = Management and miscellaneous senior staff
- 2 = Finance and administration
- 5 = Security
- 8 = ICT / Technical Services

Recommended:

- 3 = Logistics
- 4 = Programme
- 6 = Agency defined
- 7 = Drivers / Transport
- 9 = Visitors

2. Dedicated prefixes should only be used for departments or user groups large enough to justify a dedicated prefix.

7. VHF radio callsigns

On VHF networks, one wants to speak either to an individual, a radio base (radio-room, network control,) or a vehicle. Therefore, VHF callsigns are used to identify individuals, radio bases (radio rooms, network control centres) and vehicles.

1. For network control centres (like radio rooms):

a. Standard callsign (used in a nation wide or local VHF network):

B - C + 'Base'

Where B = city/base, C = agency

Examples:

- FAO base in Islamabad (Pakistan) India Alpha Base
- WFP base in Prishtina is Papa Foxtrot Base

b. In the cases where a VHF network covers more than one country or in cross border operations, it is advised a full regional callsign is used:

A - B -C + 'Base'

Where A = Country, B = city/base, C = agency

Note:

- If more than one base per agency is operational in the same location then a number is added, for example A-B-C Base1, 2, 3 etc.:

Example:

- FAO base in Kampala (Uganda) on a regional network = Uniform Kilo Alpha Base.

2. For individuals:

a. Standard callsign (used in nation wide or local VHF networks)

B - C - X - YZ

Where B = city/base name, C = agency, X = department, YZ = number within the department.

Notes:

- For 'YZ', it is advisable to introduce a numbering system that reflects the reporting line within the organisation.
- ONLY use a single digit and avoid the '0' as a department/group or staff identifier
- The numbering after the first digit is free for each agency to define, for each individual operation.

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Examples:

- Bravo Romeo 3 = UNHCR Baghdad Head of Logistics
- Bravo Romeo 3.1 = UNHCR Baghdad warehouse supervisor
- Bravo Romeo 3.11 to 3.19 = UNHCR Baghdad warehouse staff
- Kilo Charlie 5 = UNICEF Kampala Security officer
- Hotel Papa 8.11 to 8.19 = WHO Prishtina (Kosovo) ICT staff

Notes:

- The 'dots' in the calls are not to be pronounced.
- Each number is pronounced individually (e.g. Papa Delta Three One One, not Papa Delta Three Eleven).

b. If a VHF network covers more than one country or in cross border operations, it is advised that a full regional callsign is used:

A – B – C – X – YZ

Where A = Country, B = city/base, C = agency, X = department and YZ = number within the department.

3. For vehicles:

a. Standard callsign used on all networks:

A - C + 'mobile' +XYZZ

Where A = Country, C = agency

XY: 01-26; 31-56; 61-86 = Numerical sequence for the letter of the agency identifier

ZZ = the mobile number is any unique identifier each agency assigns to the vehicle.

Notes:

- The VHF mobile call-sign has the same format as the HF mobile callsign.
- XYZZ represent last 4 digits of a 6-digit HF selcall or a full 4-digit HF selcall.
- When only a VHF radio is installed in the vehicle, a standard call sign (as per above) is still assigned.

Examples:

- WFP vehicle in Kampala, Uganda is Uniform Foxtrot mobile 6612.
- UNHCR vehicle in Islamabad, Pakistan is Papa Romeo Mobile 4803.

8. HF radio callsigns

On HF, in general one wants to communicate with radio base (radio room, network control centre), vehicle or field party (man-pack radio) to pass messages, rather than to speak to specific individuals.

1. For network control centres (like radio rooms)

a. Standard HF callsign to be used on all HF networks

A - B - C

Where A = Country, B = city/base, C = agency

Note:

- If more than one base per agency exists in the same location then a number is added, for example A-B-C 1, 2, 3, etc.:

Example:

- UNICEF base in Kampala, Uganda = **UKC** (spelled as **Uniform Kilo Charlie**)

2. For individuals:

Individual staff is not identified through an HF callsign

3. For mobiles

a. Standard callsign used on all networks

A - C + 'mobile' +XYZZ

Where A = Country, C = agency

XY: 31-56; 61-86 = Numerical sequence for the alphabetical identifier for the agency plus 30/60.

ZZ = the mobile number is any unique identifier each agency assigns to the car.

Note:

- XYZZ represent last four digits of a 6-digit selcall or a full 4-digit selcall.

Examples:

- WFP vehicle in Kampala, Uganda is Uniform Foxtrot mobile 6612.
- UNHCR vehicle in Islamabad, Pakistan is Papa Romeo Mobile 4803.

9. HF selcall assignment

Now that the main suppliers of the HF equipment to various UN agencies agreed through the WGET, to implement the “standard” six digit (four digit compatible) selective calling protocol in all their newly manufactured radios, we can move forward on the implementation of the six digit selcall system. For the purpose of compatibility with the old type radios the four digit format still remains part of this document. Most radios can be programmed for both 4 and 6-digit selcall formats.

All UN agencies are strongly encouraged to start implementing the six digit selcall format.

1. The six digit selcall guideline for bases and mobiles:

The standard six digit selcall system is:

AB CD EF

Bases:

A: Number identifying the region

B: Number identifying the country within the region

CD: 1-26: Numerical sequence for the alphabetical identifier of the agency.

EF: 01-98: Numerical sequence for the alphabetical identifier of the location (A=01, Z=26), or sequential/arbitrary number for the bases.

Note:

- Numbers identifying regions (A) and countries (B) within the regions are explained in a different document.

Example:

- WFP Kampala base, Uniform Kilo Foxtrot, selcall 110611

Mobiles:

A: Number identifying the region

B: Number identifying the country within the region

CD: 31-56 and 61-86: i.e. Numerical sequence for the alphabetical identifier for the agency plus 30/60.

EF: sequential/arbitrary number for the mobile

Notes:

- In the mobile numbering plan each agency is allocated selcalls for two fleets of 90 vehicles (avoiding “0” as the last digit as this may cause a group call on certain type of radios). If a particular agency requires a larger fleet allocation, one of the unused fleet numbers from 27-30, 57-60 or 87-99 can be allocated through the TCA.

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- Numbers identifying regions (A) and countries (B) within the regions are explained in a different document.

Example:

- WFP mobile 15 in Uganda is 113615

2. The four digit selcall guideline for bases and mobiles:

The standard four digit selcall system is:

CD EF

Bases:

CD: 1-26: Numerical sequence for the alphabetical identifier of the agency.

EF: 01-98: Numerical sequence for the alphabetical identifier of the location (A=01, Z=26), or sequential/arbitrary number for the bases.

Example:

- WFP Kampala base, Uniform Kilo Foxtrot, selcall 0611

Mobiles:

CD: 31-56, and 61-86: i.e. the alphabetical position of the letter of the agency plus 30/60.

EF: mobile number

Example:

- WFP mobile 15 is 3615

Note:

- In the mobile numbering plan each agency is allocated selcalls for two fleets of 90 vehicles (avoiding "0" as the last digit as this may cause a group call). If a particular agency requires a larger fleet allocation one of the unused fleet numbers from 27-30, 57-60 and 87-99 can be allocated through the TCA.