

GIGnos Consulting sàrl

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# **Evaluation of OCHA's Emergency Telecommunications Project**

January 2003

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# 1. Executive Summary

GIGNOS Consulting carried out an evaluation of OCHA's Emergency Telecommunications Project (at the request of OCHA) between December 2002 and January 2003. The evaluation had the main objective of identifying issues that justify either the continuation or the discontinuation of the Project, as it now exists within ESB/OCHA; and to make recommendations accordingly.

The first part of the evaluation consisted in desk research, through which six main areas of activity of the project were identified. The second part of the evaluation work consisted in the elaboration of a logical framework that would serve as the basis for the research, for the analysis and for the presentation of the data. It was decided that each one of the six areas of activity would be examined in terms of its background, relevance, achievements and expectations. The actual role of the project would also be investigated and space would be provided for any remarks. The third part of the evaluation work consisted in additional desk research and an extensive range of interviews. Some of the interviews were carried out through email communications, other were carried out in person. In a few cases, an "electronic" interview was followed by a meeting. The fourth part of the evaluation work consisted in the drafting of the present report and in the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

The main findings of this evaluation could be briefly summarised as follows.

OCHA has a rather solid legal (deriving from the provisions of the Tampere Convention) and "historic" (deriving from the previous involvement of UNDRO and DHA) mandate for the coordination of the provision of telecommunication services in case of disasters.

The Emergency Telecommunications Project has engaged, in the course of the years in a series of interlinked activities which are all considered highly relevant for the emergency telecommunications sector. Through these activities, the Project has managed to achieve remarkable results. Although not all of these activities ended up making an actual difference in the field, respondents to this study agreed that they are all important and should be continued.

The six areas activity identified are:

1. management of the IASC Reference Group on Information and Communication Technology (IASC RGICT), formerly Working Group on Telecommunications (WGET)
2. implementation of the Tampere Convention
3. use of telecommunications for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel
4. provision of telecommunication facilities and advisory services
5. cooperation with the private sector
6. links between disaster response and telecommunications.

The **Management of the IASC Reference Group on Information and Communication Technology (IASC RGICT), formerly Working Group on Telecommunications (WGET)**, is the most important of all activities.

It is difficult to separate what is the result of the work of the RGICT and what is the product of the activity of OCHA's Emergency Telecommunication Project. The two are so intimately related that practically all activities and achievements of the Project examined in this study can in fact be viewed as products of the RGICT. The IASC RGICT is seen as the primary mechanism through which OCHA discharges its coordination functions in the emergency telecommunications sector. Since 1994, the Group has functioned as a) forum for information exchange, b) policy coordination platform, c) operational coordination platform, d) formal point of contact with the ITU and e) formal point of contact with the private sector.

None of the experts interviewed in the course of this study failed to explicitly state that the WGET (as it continues to be referred to) is a fundamental mechanism for information exchange and coordination. In the words of a UN respondent: "The WGET is the only UN forum for emergency telecommunications. It is the mechanism we prefer, as a base for working groups on particular issues. Let me be very frank, the UN needs the WGET".

Apart from the all-important operational coordination (as it is the case of the current task force on the Middle East crisis), the IASC RGICT does not produce outcomes that are easily weighed or measured. Nevertheless, these outcomes are unanimously viewed as fundamental. This is well represented by the words of the current Chief of Telecommunications at IFRC, who, in 1988 had carried out a study of the sector showing that all agencies were completely on their own: "The WGET has changed the way in which emergency telecommunications are made. It has brought about a collaboration dynamic. It's a bit like development – you don't necessarily see visible results, but you understand that things are not done the way they used to."

In the policy area, the RGICT has been the cornerstone for the development of the Tampere Convention and is currently involved in the follow-up on implementation. The RGICT has "produced" the concept of the emergency Telecommunications Officer (TCO), endorsing the Terms of Reference and following up on implementation. The RGICT has elaborated the Minimum Standards for Security, later adopted by the ACC, and is currently working to the development of a standardised system of call signs. The RGICT developed the Handbook on Disaster Communications for Developing Countries, published by ITU in 2001.

Under the current circumstances, the Project is essential for the IASC RGICT. In 2001, the WGET adopted a resolution emphasizing "the importance of the work of the Secretariat in respect to the facilitation of field telecommunications for all WGET partner organisations and entities" and requesting "the IASC to consider measures to ensure the continuation of the work presently carried out by the WGET Secretariat."

The work towards the **implementation of the Tampere Convention** has been frustrated by serious difficulties related to its entry into force. A number of international initiatives have been taken to push the agenda of signature/ratification, but a lot remains to be done. According to article 12 of the Convention, 30 States will have to have ratified the Convention by 21 June 2003. As of the end of October 2002, 54 States had signed the Tampere Convention and 15 have ratified it. June 2003, however, is not seen as a "terminal" date. The ITU Legal advisor is of the opinion that the deadline of the Convention is not significant, as it applies only to signature.

Notwithstanding the objective difficulties for its entry into force, the expectations for the results of the full application of the Tampere Convention are very high: over and above all the consequences of the application of the provisions of the Convention for humanitarian operations, the document has one extremely important value, as it provides the legal basis for starting the ITU process of attributing radio frequencies to emergency services worldwide. The possibility of having a dozen of frequencies internationally recognised as “private” to the emergency services would represent a dramatic advantage: aid agencies could go into a country in crisis and simply set up and operate their equipment.

The Project has been the driving force behind most – if not all - the initiatives taken at international level to promote the signature/ratification of the Tampere Convention. A rather detailed plan of action has been prepared by a Consultant working for the Project for the first six months of 2003, targeting in particular a number of governments with which negotiations are already at an advanced stage. If the Project were to be discontinued, it is difficult to see who, with the partial exception of ITU, would have the mandate and experience (including a vast institutional memory) to take the lead in this process.

The case for the third area of activity of the Project, **the use of telecommunications for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel**, is somewhat less strong. This is not because the subject is not important, or because achievements are low. Rather, it is because most of the work concerning the Minimum Standards has been accomplished they have been elaborated by the IASC RGICT, agreed upon at technical level and endorsed by the ACC. They have later been incorporated by UNSECOORD in the Minimum Operating Standards for security. UN agencies are currently in the process of incorporating them in their procedures and implementing them. At this stage, the Project (individually and through the IASC RGICT) has to make sure that the Standards are further disseminated and to assist agencies in their full implementation.

The activity related to the **provision of telecommunication facilities and advisory services** to other sectors of OCHA seems to suffer from a severe lack of “marketing efforts”. It is a very useful activity, very little known outside technical circles. Although it currently benefits over 120 users worldwide, it has the potential for doing much more.

The provision of “interoperable” telecommunication services refers to the implementation of WaveMail, a complete e-mail system that allows users of different kinds of technology in different parts of the world to create, send, read, forward, reply and manage messages in a totally “transparent” way. This means that an aid worker in a remote field location, with only an old HF radio at his/her disposal, can handle an email traffic using exactly the same interface that he/she would be using in the organisation’s country office (using a dial-up modem to access the Internet), or aboard a ship (using a satellite telephone) or back at Headquarters (using a high-speed Internet connection).

At the time of writing, over 120 different users worldwide (UNDAC, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, OCHA, SRSA and others) utilise OCHA’s main gateway in Geneva. The gateway includes 6 HF radios connected to high gain antennas pointed to different parts of the globe, radio modems working 24 hours a day 7 days a week and 4 mail servers connected to the Internet. The gateway also supports direct connection via satellite, telephone line (analogic and ISDN) and via TCP-IP (Internet). As an

example, during the month of February 2002, OCHA's gateway was used for a total of 27,120 minutes, receiving 4,434 messages and transmitting 5,636 messages.

Concerning the second part of this activity, according to respondents in OCHA, advisory services by the Emergency Telecommunications Project have not been requested often. When that happened, however, the advice provided resulted of great value.

The main outcome of the activity of **cooperation with the private sector** was the partnership with the Swedish telecom equipment producer Ericsson, formalised under the "Ericsson Response" initiative, to which the UN Secretary-General made ample reference in his Millennium Report.

After some delays, due in part to the financial difficulties that the Swedish company encountered in recent years and to the consequent substantial reduction of the staff involved in the Ericsson Response initiative, tangible results were produced. These included the installation of an Ericsson GSM switch in Kabul servicing some 320 users in a radius of 12 km around the city centre, and the "Brindisi switch", ready to be deployed at short notice in support to DPKO missions and capable of supporting up to 100 users within one day to airlift to the disaster area.

Notwithstanding these positive results, the negative economic conjuncture that the telecommunications sector is going through and the legal difficulties for private companies to officially "sponsor" the UN cast a shadow on the possibility of further developments in the short term. At the same time, other bodies in the UN may have a more specific mandate in negotiating partnerships with the private sector.

Lastly, concerning the **links between disaster response and telecommunications**, there was agreement among the interviewees that having one entity pushing the agenda of emergency telecommunications with the ITU and on behalf of all users is indeed relevant and desirable.

During the period 2001-2002, the Project participated (through simple presence, through the presentation of papers/speeches, with the display of the OCHA Emergency Telecommunications exhibit and, in one case, as co-organiser) to a range of world-wide events. Interviewees expressed realistic – i.e. rather low – expectations on the likely impact of these advocacy initiatives. They unanimously pointed out, however, to the fact that somebody has to "raise the flag" of emergency telecommunications, and that, through the participation to these often huge events, a network of contacts is established and maintained which can benefit the entire humanitarian community.

In summary, this evaluation has identified a number of activities in which the Emergency Telecommunications Project has been involved. The experts interviewed in the course of this study considered these highly relevant for the users of information and telecommunication technology in emergency situations. Results achieved were valued from fair to very good.

At the same time, the study revealed that high expectations are placed in the continuation of most of these activities. In particular, the continuation of the work of the IASC RG ICT, the progressive expansion of its scope to include information technology, and an increased focus on operational issues are considered as absolutely essential. At the same time, the work to promote signature and ratification of the Tampere Convention, and, especially, to follow up on its implementation has to

continue in order not to lose the gains made so far and to ensure that this important international treaty delivers the results expected.

A wide range of emergency response and humanitarian actors are benefiting from the interoperable telecommunication services. It was pointed out that work in this area should not only be continued – in order to continue servicing the existing users – but that the users base should be considerably expanded to fully take advantage of the existing infrastructure and expertise.

Finally, it was mentioned that ceasing to represent the interests of the users of telecommunications in emergencies within the broader policy and regulatory environment in telecommunications would have far reaching negative consequences.

**Therefore, the first and main recommendation emerging from this study is that work should be continued in all areas in which the Emergency Telecommunications Project has been involved so far. Particular attention should be given to the management of the IASC RG ICT, the implementation of the Tampere Convention, the provision of interoperable telecommunications services and the liaison between disaster response and telecommunications.**

As described in Section 4 of this report, OCHA's mandate in the coordination of Emergency Telecommunications is rooted in both history and international law. Furthermore, several respondents of this study have expressed the opinion that OCHA is the "natural house" for many of the activities outlined above.

**It is therefore recommended that OCHA retains the primary responsibility for the continuation of these activities, particularly as far as the functioning of the IASC RGICT and the implementation of the Tampere Convention are concerned.**

The research and interviews carried out in the course of this study have revealed a major policy shift that is taking place in the sector – looking at telecommunications in isolation appears today as a mistake. Information and telecommunications technology form a seamless continuum, and this is true in emergency conditions as it is during everyday life.

**It is therefore recommended that, in the continuation of the work initiated by the Project, this policy shift is taken into account, so that information and telecommunications technology in emergencies are considered as two aspects of the same reality.**

This study was not intended to be a Management Review, and therefore it does not contain detailed recommendations as to the future set up of the Emergency Telecommunications Project *per se*. A number of general recommendations should be taken into account when considering future arrangements.

The Project has been funded so far in its entirety by a single donor, which is detrimental for the viability of any undertaking in the long term. Therefore, **efforts should be made in order to broaden the donor base and secure the necessary financial resources for carrying out the activities mentioned above.** The possibility of having the members of the IASC RGICT contributing towards financial requirements should be considered as well.

Giving the necessary attention to a broad range of diverse activities implies a heavy workload and requires different skills: technical, administrative, diplomatic (for

coordination purposes), political (in terms of knowledge of the international policy and regulatory environment). Therefore, **activities in this sector require an adequate number of staff with the appropriate mix of skills and knowledge.**

The Emergency Telecommunications Project, for several reasons that lie beyond the scope for investigation of this study, seems to have suffered from difficulties of communication with other sectors of OCHA and with the senior management. This appears to be not an isolated problem of OCHA, as several respondents have spoken about a “communication divide” that seems to come in the way of the relationship between the Telecom services of the various agencies and the respective managements. Stereotypes emerged in each other’s perception of both sides of the divide: telecom staff are reportedly accused of using obscure, technical language, and to be interested more in the technical issues *per se* than in the use of telecommunications for actual field emergency. Management is reportedly accused of not being interested in information and communication technology and possibly of *simply not understanding the issues*

Apart from these exaggerations and obvious distortions, **it is essential that proper communication is re-established and maintained between these “technical” and other sectors of OCHA, and especially with senior management. Strategic objectives should be formulated (and information about activities and achievements should be communicated) in a clear and consistent manner.** For its part, management should ensure constant and effective supervision.

In light of the currently prevailing budgetary constraints, certain activities of the Project were reportedly not provided with sufficient resources. **Close budgetary control should be exercised on the activities and, if additional resources cannot be allocated, a redistribution of the existing funds should be carried out in order not to have to discontinue any of the activities, which are all considered important.**

## 2. Introduction

GIGnos Consulting sàrl was contracted by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in December 2002 to carry out an evaluation of its Emergency Telecommunications Project.

Specifically, GIGnos was asked to:

- 1) Review and analyse the original purpose of the project and whether this purpose is still valid and relevant.
- 2) Identify results achieved through the project and review its limitations and restrictions.
- 3) Collect information and review ongoing and/or planned activities under the Project, including those of the Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET), a sub-group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.
- 4) Obtain views of relevant UN entities (especially/also ITU), humanitarian organisations, partners in humanitarian assistance, including those regularly participating in the work of the WGET, as well as the views of experts, on various aspects of the use of telecommunications in disaster reduction and response operations and whether/how the Project has contributed to these.
- 5) Obtain views of the management of OCHA, the management of RCB, ESB and AO, as well as RCB regional desks.
- 6) Identify issues that justify either the continuation or the discontinuation of the Project, as it now exists within ESB/OCHA; and to make recommendations accordingly.

## 3. Methodology

The first part of evaluation work consisted in a desk research aimed at the identification of the main areas of activity of the Project. The following six areas were identified:

- 1) Management of the IASC Reference Group on Information and Communication Technology (IASC RGICT), formerly Working Group on Telecommunications (WGET).
- 2) Implementation of the Tampere Convention.
- 3) Use of telecommunications for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.
- 4) Provision of telecommunication facilities and advisory services.
- 5) Cooperation with the private sector.

## 6) Links between disaster response and telecommunications.

<b>Background</b>	This section, compiled mostly based on desk research, provides a brief description of the activity, its <i>raison d'être</i> , its history up until now.
<b>Relevance</b>	This section reflects the views of the interviewees of this study with respect to the relevance of the activity for the humanitarian sector.
<b>Achievements</b>	This section, based on both desk research and interviews, describes the main achievements of the activity. As much as possible, the criterion of whether or not the activity has made a practical difference was used.
<b>Expectations</b>	This section reflects the views of the interviewees with respect to what is expected of this activity in the relatively near future.
<b>Role of the Project</b>	This section outlines the specific role that the Project has/had in the activity. The bottom line question is “what would happen of the activity if, under the current set up and circumstances, the Project was to disappear?”

The third part of the evaluation work consisted in additional desk research and interviews. Some of the interviews were carried out through email communications, other were carried out in person. In a few cases, an “electronic” interview was followed by a meeting.

The fourth part of the evaluation work consisted in the drafting of the present report.

## 4. OCHA’s mandate in Emergency Telecommunications

The importance of role of telecommunications in disaster relief was fully and officially recognised for the first time in the UNDRO International Conference on Disaster Communications, held on 21 March 1990 in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR).

One year later, the group of experts in communications and disaster management participating in the Conference on Disaster Communications held at Tampere, Finland, from 20 - 22 May 1991, endorsed the Preamble and Major Needs identified and the Recommendations adopted at the UNDRO Conference. The Tampere Declaration stated, *inter alia*, that “there is an urgent need to improve international co-operation in communications and enhance national communications capabilities in order to reduce loss of life, damage to property and livelihoods, and damage to the environment caused by disasters”.

Already in 1991, the Tampere Conference recommended that “consistent with the goals and objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator should take the appropriate steps to implement the intent of this Declaration with the support of and in consultation with, other concerned bodies of the UN system, international terrestrial and satellite telecommunications operating organizations and non-governmental organizations”.

The “legal” origin of the Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET) can be traced back to a resolution of the First World Telecommunication Development Conference (Buenos Aires, 1994), later endorsed by the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Tokyo, 1994). The WGET was first convened under the auspices of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs in 1994 and was brought under the purvey of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) through the endorsement of its Terms of Reference by the Heads of Agency in December 1994.

Finally, in 1998, the Tampere Convention attributed a crucial role to the United Nations, and to the Emergency Relief Coordinator in particular, in the coordination of the provision of telecommunication assistance in case of disasters. According to its Article 2:

“2.1. The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator shall be the operational coordinator for this Convention and shall execute the responsibilities of the operational coordinator identified in Articles 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

2.2. The operational coordinator shall seek the cooperation of other appropriate United Nations agencies, particularly the International Telecommunication Union, to assist it in fulfilling the objectives of this Convention, and, in particular, those responsibilities identified in Articles 8 and 9, and to provide necessary technical support, consistent with the purposes of those agencies.

2.3. The responsibilities of the operational coordinator under this Convention shall be limited to coordination activities of an international nature.”

## **5. Evaluation of the Emergency Telecommunications Project.**

A review of OCHA’s fundraising documents shows that the main priorities for the work of the Emergency Telecommunications Project remained unchanged during the period 2000-2003. These activities are outlined in some greater details, although with somewhat changing language, in various planning documents produced by the Project during the same period.

As per the logical framework, each of the areas of activity was investigated individually.

### **5.1 Management of the IASC Reference Group on Information and Communication Technology (IASC RGICT), formerly Working Group on Telecommunications (WGET).**

**Background** The WGET has been functioning since 1994 as an open forum to facilitate the use of telecommunications in the service of humanitarian assistance.

Although it was initially established by the IASC, the WGET has lived much of an independent life until 2000, when it was brought back under the full purvey of the Committee. Since then, it reports regularly as a Subsidiary Body of the IASC Working Group. In 2002 it was re-

named IASC RGICT.

Unlike some of the other Subsidiary Bodies, the IASC RGICT is not primarily a consultative body. The RGICT has functions at the operational/technical level as well as in the regulatory/policy field.

The Group comprises some 36 organizations, including United Nations entities, major NGOs, the ICRC and IFRC, the ITU and experts from the private sector and academia. (A list of the participating organisations is available in Annex 1).

The Group has two sub-working groups, one dealing with policy issues and the other with operational issues. (Terms of Reference are available in Annex 2). The RGICT holds one to two plenary meetings per year and meets more frequently at the sub-working group level.

Exchange of information and informal coordination among the members of the RGICT, however, happens mostly outside the formal setting of the plenary and sub-working group meetings. The Group's Secretariat, i.e. OCHA's Emergency Telecommunication Projects, manages an electronic discussion forum which is used all year around by a large number of users.

During 2002, approximately 250 users exchanged several hundreds messages through the top level mailing list, which is open to experts, practitioners, academics, students and virtually anybody with a *bona fide* interest in emergency communications. The subject of the messages ranged from regulatory to technical and operational issues, announcements of meetings and of vacancies.

Private, closed lists exist as well for the representatives to the IASC RGICT and for inter-agency operational coordination as well.

**Relevance** None of the experts interviewed in the course of this study failed to explicitly state that the WGET (as it continues to be referred to) is a fundamental mechanism for information exchange and coordination.

In the words of a UN respondent: "The WGET is the only UN forum for emergency telecommunications. It is the mechanism we prefer, as a base for working groups on particular issues. Let me be very frank, the UN needs the WGET".

Another UN respondent pointed out that "After the disbanding of the ICCG [a subsidiary body of the ACC] the IASC RGICT is the only mechanism for coordination within the UN to have a legitimacy and to have formally established reporting lines to senior management".

**Achievements** Detailing the specific achievements of the IASC RGICT is not easy. First of all because it is difficult to separate what is the result of the work of the RGICT and what is the product of the activity of OCHA's Emergency Telecommunication Project. The two are so intimately related that practically all activities and achievements of the Project examined in this study can in fact be viewed as products of the

RGICT. In this sense, one could say, mimicking what is said about the relationship between the IASC and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, that “the IASC RGICT is the primary mechanism through which OCHA discharges its coordination functions in the emergency telecommunications sector”.

Secondly, as a policy coordination body, the IASC RG does not produce outcomes that are easily weighed or measured. Nevertheless, these outcomes are unanimously viewed as fundamental. This is well represented by the words of the current Chief of Telecommunications at IFRC, who, in 1988 had carried out a study of the sector showing that all agencies were completely on their own: “The WGET has changed the way in which emergency telecommunications are made. It has brought about a collaboration dynamic. It’s a bit like development – you don’t necessarily see visible results, but you understand that things are not done the way they used to.”

Broadly speaking (details on the specific activities will be provided in the following sections of the report) the IASC RGICT has functioned as:

1) Forum for information exchange. The RGICT is valued for its open nature (it includes individual experts, NGOs and the private sector) and for the breadth of the information being exchanged. In the words of a respondent: “You get to know what’s around and how it is working and if it’s worth trying it out or not.” The advisory services provided by the Emergency Telecom Project to other parts of OCHA are largely based on the intelligence gathered by the RGICT.

2) Policy coordination platform. The RGICT has been the cornerstone for the development of the Tampere Convention and is currently involved in the follow-up on implementation. The RGICT has “produced” the concept of the emergency Telecommunications Officer (TCO), endorsing the Terms of Reference and following up on implementation. The RGICT has elaborated the Minimum Standards for Security, later adopted by the ACC, and is currently working to the development of a standardised system of call signs. The RGICT developed the Handbook on Disaster Communications for Developing Countries, published by ITU in 2001.

3) Operational coordination platform. As it is the case with the current crisis in the Middle East, during all major emergencies the RGICT sub-working group on operations functions as an inter-agency task force for the coordination of preparedness and response measures in the field of telecommunications (see “remarks” for additional comments).

4) Formal point of contact with the ITU. The formal involvement of the ITU in the mechanism of the IASC RGICT forms the basis of all the initiatives carried out by the Emergency Telecom Project to further the emergency Telecommunications agenda with Ministries of Telecommunications, development branches of Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the private sector (all represented in ITU).

5) Formal point of contact with the private sector. Apart from the

possibility of acquiring technical information directly from the source, the fact that private companies are participating to the work of the IASC RGICT has proven useful in furthering collaboration and sponsorships.

**Expectations** All the interviewees who are also members of the IASC RGICT placed high expectations in the continuation of its work. There is general agreement that this mechanism cannot be discontinued, and, if anything, that the support the Secretariat provides should be further strengthened.

**Remarks** Currently, one of the more visible and important activities carried out in the framework of the IASC RGICT is the coordination of emergency preparedness and response measures in the telecommunication sector.

This activity is based on the concept of TeleCommunications Officer (TCO), developed by the WGET and adopted by the entire UN family. The Terms of Reference for the TCO were officially endorsed by UNSECOORD, and are generally considered good. When applied, the TCO concept appears to have made a definite difference for humanitarian operations.

According to some respondents, what is lacking are clear procedures for implementation. The result of this situation is that there have been instances when the identification of a lead agency for the coordination of telecommunication services (and later the appointment of a TCO) have been unduly delayed, with adverse consequences in the field.

**Role of the Project** As stated above, it is difficult to separate the work of the Emergency Telecommunications Project from the one of the IASC RGICT. By providing Secretariat services (convening of ordinary and extraordinary meetings, preparation of agenda, compilation of minutes, follow-up on decisions, management of the electronic discussion system) the Project has been the very heart of the Reference Group.

During the session of 23 April 2001, the WGET adopted, following a proposal by UNICEF and ITU, a resolution emphasizing "The importance of the work of the Secretariat in respect to the facilitation of field telecommunications for all WGET partner organisations and entities" and requesting "The IASC to consider measures to ensure the continuation of the work presently carried out by the WGET Secretariat."

OCHA is seen as the "natural home" for the Secretariat. Some of the respondents, who perhaps are not familiar with the intricacies of mandates in humanitarian coordination, recommended that OCHA should have a role beyond facilitation, to the point of actually "assigning" or "delegating" responsibilities, particularly as far as operational coordination is concerned. It has also been suggested that the Project could usefully manage common funding provided by donors for the emergency telecommunications needs of the various agencies.

## 5.2 Implementation of the Tampere Convention

**Background** The origins of the Tampere Convention can be traced back to the a conference organized by the International Institute of Communications, experts in telecommunications and in disaster management from 26 countries unanimously adopted the “Tampere Declaration on Disaster Communication”. That Declaration called for the urgent creation of an international agreement to coordinate and facilitate national and international communication capabilities to mitigate disasters.

In 1994, the first World Telecommunication Development Conference, meeting in Buenos Aires, adopted a resolution, which was subsequently endorsed by the ITU's Plenipotentiary Conference in Kyoto, urging the completion of the work begun here in Tampere. On the basis of that resolution, the WGET started the work of drafting the text of the Convention.

Ample consultation was carried out inside and outside the WGET for the following three years, until, in 1996, the ITU officially distributed the Convention to Member States seeking their comments. The Convention was debated at the 1997 World Radiocommunication Conference in Geneva, which adopted a resolution urging national administrations to support and implement this Convention.

In December 1997, the Government of Finland distributed the Convention to all United Nations and ITU Members States, inviting each of them to offer comments and to participate at a forthcoming conference.

The “Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations” was finally adopted by the delegations of the 60 States participating in the Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications (ICET-98), hosted by the Government of Finland in Tampere, Finland, 16-18 June 1998.

**Relevance** In the words of Professor J. Cate (Professor of Law and Director of the Information Law and Commerce Institute, Indiana University School of Law):

“The Tampere Convention is frankly unusual. It is not a technical, legal document, that seeks to create detailed and binding rights. Given the subject matter, and the variety of contests in which disasters occur, it could not be.

Rather it is a targeted effort to facilitate the provision of timely, effective telecommunication resources and rapid, efficient information flows for disaster prevention and response. It does this in three primary ways.

First, the Convention puts in place a structure for managing requests for telecommunication assistance and for minimizing the impediments to that assistance before disasters occur.

Second, it creates mechanisms for identifying and evaluating best practices, model agreements, and other valuable resources currently in use by disaster mitigation organizations--public and private --and for developing new ones where needed.

Finally, the Convention contributes the force of multinational moral persuasion to the importance of this subject and to the people involved in disaster mitigation and relief. It recognizes publicly that telecommunications are essential to dealing with disasters, not just because telecommunication infrastructure is most vulnerable to disasters, but also because reliable telecommunications are a critical underpinning of all other mitigation and relief efforts.”

**Achievements** At this point in time, it is difficult to maintain the Tampere Convention has made a significant difference for the humanitarian operations on the ground. Although some success stories do exist, as in the case of the flooding emergency in Mozambique, in other cases attempt to use the treaty to facilitate the provision of emergency telecommunications were highly frustrating.

The case of India, in this respect, is particularly interesting. India is one of the few States signatories to the Tampere Convention and, nevertheless, mounting a large-scale radio network in the aftermath of the Gujarat earthquake proved particularly difficult.

The administrative instructions concerning the implementation of the Convention had evidently not trickled down to the local administration level and, when the IFRC telecom delegates started installing radio equipment on vehicles on the basis of generic authorizations obtained locally, they were nearly arrested by the army. Problems in the end were solved, but, as in many other cases, that was due to negotiations and agreements reached at a local (and even personal) level rather than based on the law.

As many of the respondents pointed out, the problem is therefore not with the Convention itself, but with its entry into force and, especially, the adoption of administrative procedures for its implementation on the part of the individual States.

As of the end of October 2002, 54 States have signed the Tampere Convention and 15 have ratified it.

According to Mr. Mohamed Harbi, a former senior official of the ITU and one of the fathers of the Convention, the difficulties that lay in the way of a broader signature/ratification of the Convention belong to different categories:

Difficulties common to all countries: problems are related to the fact that the Convention deals with subjects treated by several Ministries or governmental agencies (Telecommunications, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Home Affairs). In most cases, due to a lack of communication, the file is “stuck” in one of the Ministries, and no initiatives are taken for signature/ratification.

Developing countries: in these cases, the problem is essentially linked to the lack of information on the importance of the Convention. Furthermore, taking into account the instability that characterises the public sector in these countries, most of the civil servants who were aware of the Convention in 1999 have left the administration to join the private sector, which is expanding fast in developing countries.

Developed countries: in these cases, it is mostly a problem of legal procedures to be followed for the ratification (involving the Parliament, the Upper House or other), which require a lot of time. As far as EU countries are concerned, the situation which seemed blocked due to Brussels' demand to member States to freeze ratification until the Commission had signed the Convention, has improved considerably. Now, all the Commission demands is that a reservation is made, at the moment of the signature/ratification, concerning the need to respect the countries' obligations vis-à-vis the Treaty of the European Union.

A number of international initiatives have been taken to push the agenda of signature/ratification, but a lot remains to be done. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that, according to article 12 of the Convention, 30 States will have to have ratified the Convention by 21 June 2003. An extension of this period or a reduction of the (arbitrarily chosen) number of 30 ratifications would require complex and expensive procedures.

This, however, is not seen as a "terminal" date. During the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, Marrakesh, 23 september-18 October 2002, the ITU Legal advisor has concluded that the deadline of the Convention is not significant. It applies only to signature. Even if it does not get sufficient signatures by the deadline of 21 June 2003 it is still open for accession.

This opinion is shared by Art Levin, ITU Legal Advisor at the time of the Tampere Conference. According to Mr Levin, "a country that signs may then give its consent to be bound by ratification, approval or acceptance. In addition, a signatory has some obligations under the Vienna Convention not to act contrary to the spirit of the treaty and, some experts believe, has made a good faith commitment to take the necessary steps to give its consent to be bound. After the deadline a country may only give its consent to be bound by acceding to the treaty. Thus, the deadline is important. The other interpretation would be worse. If the deadline was absolute, then unless the required number of countries (30) give consent to be bound by the fixed date, the treaty is void".

**Expectations** Experts agree that the practical outcomes of the Tampere Convention will become evident when, after its entry into force, Finland will start developing "Rules of Procedure", which will expand the field of application and specify administrative actions to be taken by governments.

Notwithstanding the objective difficulties for its entry into force, the expectations for the results of the full application of the Tampere Convention are very high.

Over and above all the consequences of the application of the provisions of the Convention for humanitarian operations, the document has one extremely important value: it provides the legal basis for starting the ITU process of attributing radio frequencies to emergency services worldwide.

To fully understand the importance of this fact, one has to take into account the following:

1) obtaining radio frequencies for emergency services is the single most important (and usually the most difficult and time demanding) step that has to be taken in a country stricken by a crisis. Without having these channels officially attributed by the Ministry of Telecommunication, it is impossible to legally operate radio equipment.

2) at the national level, radio frequencies are often considered a matter of national security, and any request is therefore submitted to a lengthy approval process. At the international level, radio spectrum is a rare and precious commodity, for which many different and powerful users continuously fight.

3) the possibility of having a dozen of frequencies internationally recognised as “private” to the emergency services would therefore represent a dramatic advantage. Aid agencies could go into a country in crisis and simply set up and operate their equipment.

4) It is very important to remember that an attribution of frequencies by the ITU *has the force of law* for the member countries. Therefore, once the process started within ITU on the basis of the Tampere Convention will have been completed, the attribution of emergency frequencies will have immediate, *automatic, worldwide application*.

**Remarks** In evaluating the “weight” of the Tampere Convention, one has to take into account the fact that the document is seen as a milestone in the area of international law applicable to disasters. Although this, as already stated above, does not in itself make a difference for the users in the field, it would be wrong to completely disregard the fact that anybody dealing with the so-called “International Disaster Response Law” considers the Tampere Convention as a fundamental reference.

**Role of the Project** The Project has been the driving force behind most – if not all - the initiatives taken at international level to promote the signature/ratification of the Tampere Convention. A rather detailed plan of action has been prepared by a Consultant working for the Project for the first six months of 2003, targeting in particular a number of governments with which negotiations are already at an advanced stage. If the Project were to be discontinued, it is difficult to see who, with the partial exception of ITU, would have the mandate and experience (including a vast institutional memory) to take the lead in this process.

### **5.3 Use of telecommunications for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel**

**Background** On 10 October 2000, the Information Systems Coordinating Committee (ISCS) of the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) endorsed the “Minimum Telecommunication Standards required to provide Safety and Security to Field Personnel” (ACC/2000/ISCC/R.5).

The document, which had been elaborated by the WGET, gives a series of detailed prescriptions in the areas of a) coordination protocols, b) pre-planning, c) assessment missions, d) uses of equipment, e) use of telecommunication equipment by UN missions, f) use of telecommunication equipment during operations, g) standardisation and j) training.

The Minimum Standards therefore acquired the status of mandatory administrative instructions for all agencies of the UN system.

**Relevance** In the Minimum Standards document, the ACC states that: “Communications is a key factor in the success of a mission and also to the survivability of the mission and its personnel. Communications requirements must be an integral part of the security plan for each mission.”

It is difficult to argue against the fact that proper communications are an absolute requirement to ensure safety and security of humanitarian personnel in today’s increasingly dangerous complex emergencies. Following the adoption of the Standards on the part of the ACC, considerable work is left to do in terms of follow-up on implementation.

Although the Minimum Standards are a UN concept, they were developed with the active participation of non-UN entities. These entities, notably the ICRC and IFRC, have not yet come to a decision as to if and to what extent they want (or can) adhere to the Minimum Standards. Nevertheless, they consider the Minimum Standards “definitely a reference document, something that we will use in our self-evaluations”.

**Achievements** The Minimum Standards have been incorporated by UNSECOORD in the “MOST”, or Minimum Operating Standards for security.

In terms of actual implementation in the field, the situation is uneven. In 2002, WFP has carried out a survey in the 47 countries with security phase higher than 1 where they operate, to evaluate the level of compliance with the Minimum Standards. The survey showed that compliance is in general satisfactory in countries (an estimated 20-25) where there is an active emergency, where large operations are carried out, or where there are important security threats (examples were given of Afghanistan, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda). More “marginal” countries, in terms of emergency operations and security conditions, are much worse off.

WFP is currently evaluating the system-wide (i.e. all agencies under the responsibility of the Designated Officials) compliance with the Minimum Standards in the countries interested by the Middle East crisis. With the exception of Iran, initial results are reportedly not good. The situation is reportedly improving but concerns were expressed for countries where the situation is potentially volatile, and preparedness measures are low.

UNHCR has reportedly invested in excess of USD 3 million for the implementation of the MOSTs, roughly a third of which was devoted to bringing communications equipment up to standard. This included interventions in some 34 countries.

**Expectations** Interviewees, in the UN and outside, expect a lot from the wider adoption, dissemination and implementation of the Minimum Standards.

**Role of the Project** Most of the work concerning the Minimum Standards is achieved: they have been elaborated, agreed upon at technical level and endorsed by the ACC. UN agencies are in the process of incorporating them in their procedures and implementing them.

At this stage, the Project (individually and through the IASC RGICT) has to make sure that the Standards are further disseminated and to assist agencies in their full implementation.

#### **5.4 Provision of telecommunication facilities and advisory services**

**Background** Following an agreement with the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG), and OCHA (in particular the Emergency Telecommunications Project) manages an emergency telecommunications centre in the Palais des Nation in Geneva.

The Project also supports all emergency services of OCHA and field offices with advisory services concerning the selection and application of appropriate telecommunication facilities.

**Relevance** The provision of “interoperable” (see below for an explanation of the technical word) telecommunications is of crucial importance to a wide range of humanitarian users.

According to respondents in OCHA, advisory services by the Emergency Telecommunications Project have not been requested often. When that happened, however, the advice provided resulted of great value.

**Achievements** “Interoperability” refers to the implementation of WaveMail, a complete e-mail system that allows users of different kinds of technology in different parts of the world to create, send, read, forward, reply and manage messages in a totally “transparent” way. This means that an aid worker in a remote field location, with only an old HF radio at his/her disposal, can handle an email traffic using exactly the same interface that he/she would be using in the organisation’s country



month of February, OCHA's gateway was used for a total of 27,120 minutes, receiving 4,434 messages and transmitting 5,636 messages. During the month of October, the system was used for a total of 7,942 minutes, receiving 1,462 messages and transmitting 2,164 messages.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that UNDAC mission to East Timor relied entirely on this system. This means that the entire humanitarian operation in East Timor, during the initial phase, communicated with the rest of the world solely based on WaveMail.

The implementation of the WaveMail system on the part of OCHA is seen as having had an excellent technical spill-over effect on other agencies, inside and outside the United Nations.

As far as the provision of advisory services, OCHA's Mr. Jesper Lund, who, among other things, is in charge of the selection and procurement of technical equipment of the UNDAC system, commented that: "Mr. Zimmermann showed good technical knowledge, paired with some vision of the market and of the likely strategic developments. In 1999, for instance, he advised us on the selection of a provider of satellite communications. We followed his advice, and the provider we choose is the only one which is still existing today...".

Two Section Chiefs in OCHA's Response Coordination Branch said that they had never requested advisory services from the Project.

**Expectations** Some of the interviewees expressed frustration for the fact that OCHA's WaveMail is little known in the emergency management world outside the specialists circles, and therefore is *vastly under-utilised*. The system is considered excellent from the technical point of view, absolutely state-of-the art, solid, reliable and user friendly (both the ICRC and IFRC use similar systems to handle a large part of their email traffic) and still OCHA's WaveMail is functioning at a fraction of its potential.

Unless a "mass marketing campaign" is undertaken to promote the use of the system (which is open to any user with the right credentials in the humanitarian world), OCHA's WaveMail may not withstand the competition from other more fashionable (but often more expensive, and less reliable and flexible) systems of communicating in emergencies.

**Role of the Project** Under the current set up, there would simply be no interoperable systems through the OCHA Gateway if the Project wasn't there.

## 5.5 Cooperation with the private sector

**Background** The cooperation with the private sector in the field of telecommunications was initiated by Mr. Zimmermann in 1999.

**Relevance** Telecommunications is a notoriously capital-intensive market sector.

This is due to the high cost of the equipment and its relatively short shelf life (changes in technology occur at a fast pace, and equipment becomes quickly obsolete). The possibility of acquiring equipment directly from the producers or even of outsourcing entirely the provision of telecommunication services during emergencies at reduced or no cost at all seems very interesting for the United Nations and for the humanitarian community at large.

**Achievements** The main outcome of this activity was the cooperation with the Swedish telecom equipment producer Ericsson, formalised under the “Ericsson Response” initiative, to which the UN Secretary-General made ample reference in his Millennium Report.

After some delays, due in part to the financial difficulties that the Swedish company encountered in recent years and to the consequent substantial reduction of the staff involved in the Ericsson Response initiative, tangible results were produced.

Under agreement with WFP, Ericsson installed a GSM switch and two relay stations in Kabul in January 2002. The switch is connected via a 4 Mbps VSAT link to the PTSN in Sweden. The switch capacity is rated for a user population of 5000 phones and can handle 160 simultaneous calls (320 phones active). Ericsson initially supplied 200 handsets, 300 more will (or may) be supplied. The donation equipment value is about USD 1.2 million, plus 8 specialised staff for installation, at an estimated cost to Ericsson of about USD 300,000. Donation of transport (partially provided by the Swedish Government) amounted to an additional value of USD 200,000. Coverage is provided in a radius of about 12 km around Kabul. The equipment was dismantled in August 2002, when a commercial phone operator begun its activity in Kabul, and sent for storage in the UN warehouse of Brindisi (Italy).

Another announced Ericsson Response initiative is the donation of a GSM switch, to be installed in the UN logistics base in Brindisi, and six remote base stations to be connected to Brindisi via satellite link. These remote base stations can be deployed to emergency sites quite quickly as part of UN DPKO’s rapid deployment startup kits, and can support up to 100 staff within one day of airlift to a disaster area. An agreement for the so-called “Brindisi Switch” has been drafted, cleared with the UN offices concerned, and signed. A date for the delivery and installation of the promised equipment is nevertheless not known.

Other contacts with private sector enterprises were initiated and maintained, but did so far not result in actual offers of support, most likely due to the general recession in the telecommunication sector during the past years. As an initiative from the private sector, the recently privatised Inmarsat Ltd asked for the UN Secretary General’s patronage for a newly created foundation. The foundation is however intended to benefit only one NGO (Telecommunications sans Frontieres). The practical/operational aspects were studied by the RGICT secretariat and by experts.

**Expectations** Since 2000, the telecommunications industry has been going through

a very dire period. Equipment makers and service providers have both suffered enormous economic losses and were forced to drastically cut their budgets. The negative economic contingency is far from over, and under these circumstances it is difficult to see an expansion – and even a continuation - of the cooperation with the aid agencies.

In the case of the United Nations, additional difficulties are due to the legal constraints that forbid private companies to officially sponsor the UN. These constraints make a partnership between the UN and private companies unattractive from the marketing point of view.

A primary area of interest in this sector is the availability of satellite channels. One respondent pointed out that a framework agreement between the UN and the providers of satellite communications would be very beneficial, as it would automatically assign to the UN a certain number of channels for use during emergencies. It was also pointed out that several contacts were taken in this sense, and that it would be a pity to let them down.

**Role of the Project**

On one hand, the Project is ideally placed to pursue this activity: it has specific technical knowledge (or can easily access it through the IASC RGICT) and has a broad range of contacts. Being housed in OCHA, it can carry out this activity on behalf of the entire humanitarian community.

On the other hand, the negative economic conjuncture and the other difficulties mentioned above cast a shadow on the possibility of producing actual results in the short term. At the same time, other bodies in the UN may have a more specific mandate in negotiating partnerships with the private sector.

## **5.6 Links between disaster response and telecommunications**

**Background**

The International Telecommunication Union is unique among international organizations in that it was founded on the principle of cooperation between governments and the private sector. With a membership encompassing telecommunication policy-makers and regulators, network operators, equipment manufacturers, hardware and software developers, regional standards-making organizations and financing institutions, ITU's activities, policies and strategic direction are determined and shaped by the industry it serves.

The three Sectors of the Union - Radiocommunication (ITU-R), Telecommunication Standardization (ITU-T), and Telecommunication Development (ITU-D) - work to build and shape tomorrow's networks and services. Their activities cover all aspects of telecommunication, from setting standards that facilitate seamless inter working of equipment and systems on a global basis to adopting operational procedures for the vast and growing array of wireless services and designing programmes to improve telecommunication infrastructure in the developing world. ITU's work has provided the essential background that has enabled telecommunications to grow into a US\$1 trillion industry worldwide.

Each of the three ITU Sectors works through conferences and meetings, where members negotiate the agreements which serve as the basis for the operation of global telecommunication services.

Study groups made up of experts drawn from leading telecommunication organizations worldwide carry out the technical work of the Union, preparing the detailed studies that lead to authoritative ITU Recommendations.

Within this framework, the Emergency Telecommunications Project works “representing the interests of the users of telecommunications in the service of humanitarian assistance vis-à-vis national and international regulatory activities”.

**Relevance** There was agreement among the interviewees of this study that having one entity pushing the agenda of emergency telecommunications with the ITU and on behalf of all users is indeed relevant and desirable.

**Achievements** The achievements of this sector of activity of the Project are indeed very difficult to measure. The impact of advocacy and information activities carried out in large international/intergovernmental conferences is hard to quantify and, in any case, is not likely to be very strong.

During the period 2001-2002, the Project participated (through simple presence, through the presentation of papers/speeches, with the display of the OCHA Emergency Telecommunications exhibit and, in one case, as co-organiser) to a range of events, including:

Summer 2001, 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on Emergency Telecommunication (CDC-2001), (co-organised by the Project and the Government of Finland)

July 2001, European Telecommunications Standardisation Conference

December 2001, TETRA World Congress on Standardisation

December 2001, AFRICA TELECOMM, Johannesburg (organisation of the OCHA stand)

January 2002, Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on Information Society

March 2002, World Telecommunications Development Conference, Istanbul, (the Project was mandated to represent the entire UN)

May 2002, UNDP Regional Seminar on ICT for the Caribbean, Jamaica

Summer 2002, E-Global Conference, Tampere, Finland

September 2002, ICT-M Conference (military/civil cooperation in

telecommunications)

November 2002, Conference Preparatory Meeting for the 2003 World Radio Communications Conference, Geneva

During the same period, the Project also participated to numerous meetings at technical level (mostly ITU Study Groups).

**Expectations** Interviewees expressed realistic – i.e. rather low – expectations on the likely impact of these advocacy initiatives. They unanimously pointed out, however, to the fact that somebody has to “raise the flag” of emergency telecommunications, and that, through the participation to these often huge events, a network of contacts is established and maintained which can benefit the entire humanitarian community.

**Role of the Project** All the activities listed above were entirely carried out by the Project. It appears that no other person or organisation has been representing the interests of the users of emergency telecommunications.

## 6. General remarks and recommendations

In summary, this evaluation has identified a number of activities in which the Emergency Telecommunications Project has been involved. The experts interviewed in the course of this study considered these highly relevant for the users of information and telecommunication technology in emergency situations. Results achieved were valued from fair to very good.

At the same time, the study revealed that high expectations are placed in the continuation of most of these activities. In particular, the continuation of the work of the IASC RG ICT, the progressive expansion of its scope to include information technology, and an increased focus on operational issues are considered as absolutely essential. At the same time, the work to promote signature and ratification of the Tampere Convention, and, especially, to follow up on its implementation has to continue in order not to lose the gains made so far and to ensure that this important international treaty delivers the results expected.

A wide range of emergency response and humanitarian actors are benefiting from the interoperable telecommunication services. It was pointed out that work in this area should not only be continued – in order to continue servicing the existing users – but that the users base should be considerably expanded to fully take advantage of the existing infrastructure and expertise.

Finally, it was mentioned that ceasing to represent the interests of the users of telecommunications in emergencies within the broader policy and regulatory environment in telecommunications would have far reaching negative consequences.

**Therefore, the first and main recommendation emerging from this study is that work should be continued in all areas in which the Emergency Telecommunications Project has been involved so far. Particular attention should be given to the management of the IASC RG ICT, the implementation of the Tampere Convention, the provision of interoperable telecommunications services and the liaison between disaster response and telecommunications.**

As described in Section 4 of this report, OCHA's mandate in the coordination of Emergency Telecommunications is rooted in both history and international law. Furthermore, several respondents of this study have expressed the opinion that OCHA is the "natural house" for many of the activities outlined above.

**It is therefore recommended that OCHA retains the primary responsibility for the continuation of these activities, particularly as far as the functioning of the IASC RGICT and the implementation of the Tampere Convention are concerned.**

The research and interviews carried out in the course of this study have revealed a major policy shift that is taking place in the sector – looking at telecommunications in isolation appears today as a mistake. Information and telecommunications technology form a seamless continuum, and this is a true in emergency conditions as it is during everyday life.

**It is therefore recommended that, in the continuation of the work initiated by the Project, this policy shift is taken into account, so that information and telecommunications technology in emergencies are considered as two aspects of the same reality.**

This study was not intended to be a Management Review, and therefore it does not contain detailed recommendations as to the future set up of the Emergency Telecommunications Project *per se*. A number of general recommendations should be taken into account when considering future arrangements.

The Project has been funded so far in its entirety by a single donor, which is detrimental for the viability of any undertaking in the long term. Therefore, **efforts should be made in order to broaden the donor base and secure the necessary financial resources for carrying out the activities mentioned above.** The possibility of having the members of the IASC RGICT contributing towards financial requirements should be considered as well.

Giving the necessary attention to a broad range of diverse activities implies a heavy workload and requires different skills: technical, administrative, diplomatic (for coordination purposes), political (in terms of knowledge of the international policy and regulatory environment). Therefore, **activities in this sector require an adequate number of staff with the appropriate mix of skills and knowledge.**

The Emergency Telecommunications Project, for several reasons that lie beyond the scope for investigation of this study, seems to have suffered from difficulties of communication with other sectors of OCHA and with the senior management. This appears to be not an isolated problem of OCHA, as several respondents have spoken about a "communication divide" that seems to come in the way of the relationship between the Telecom services of the various agencies and the respective managements. Stereotypes emerged in each other's perception of both sides of the divide: telecom staff are reportedly accused of using obscure, technical language, and to be interested more in the technical issues *per se* than in the use of telecommunications for actual field emergency. Management is reportedly accused of not being interested in information and communication technology and possibly of *simply not understanding the issues*

Apart from these exaggerations and obvious distortions, **it is essential that proper communication is re-established and maintained between these "technical"**

and other sectors of OCHA, and especially with senior management. **Strategic objectives should be formulated (and information about activities and achievements should be communicated) in a clear and consistent manner.** For its part, management should ensure constant and effective supervision.

In light of the currently prevailing budgetary constraints, certain activities of the Project were reportedly not provided with sufficient resources. **Close budgetary control should be exercised on the activities and, if additional resources cannot be allocated, a redistribution of the existing funds should be carried out in order not to have to discontinue any of the activities, which are all considered important.**

# ANNEX 1

## Participants in WGET Meetings since 1994

### United Nations system:

- UN (DAM), United Nations Department of Administration and Management, New York
- UN (OCHA), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- UN (DPKO), United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations, New York
- FAO, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome
- IAPSO, Inter Agency Procurement Services Office, Copenhagen
- ISDR, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (formerly IDNDR)
- ITU, International Telecommunications Union, Geneva
- UNDP, United Nations Development Programme, New York
- UNHCR, Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva
- UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund, New York
- UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Vienna
- UNOG, United Nations Office at Geneva
- UNOY, United Nations Office at Vienna
- UNV, United Nations Volunteers Programme
- WFP, World Food Programme, Rome
- WHO, World Health Organisation, Geneva
- WMO, World Meteorological Organisation, Geneva

### Other International Organisations:

- IARU, International Amateur Radio Union, International Secretariat, Hartford CT
- ICRC, International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva
- IFRC, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva
- IOM, International Organisation for Migration
- PTC, Pacific Telecommunication Council
- PAHO, Pan American Health Organisation, Washington DC
- WV, World Vision, Washington DC
- MSF, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Brussels
- DRCF, Disaster Relief Communications Foundation, UK
- CPSC, Center for Public Service Communications

### National Organisations and Institutions:

- ARRL, American Radio Relay League, Hartford CT
- DARC, German Amateur Radio Association
- Industry Canada
- DoS, US Department of State, Washington DC
- NOAA, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency, USA
- ODA, Overseas Development Administration, Foreign Office, London
- USAID / OFDA, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Washington DC
- SDR, Swiss Disaster Relief Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs, Berne

- SRSA, Swedish Rescue Services Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Stockholm

**Other Participants:**

Experts and consultants from the private sector and from academic and scientific organisations, as well as Field offices in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas.

## **ANNEX 2**

### **WGET Terms of Reference**

Co-ordination and Communications can not exist without each other. A co-ordinated approach to emergency telecommunications therefore requires, first of all, an appropriate forum which includes all interested partners.

The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) has the mandate, to co-ordinate international humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and disaster mitigation. DHA therefore convenes, in connection with its own project on Emergency Telecommunications, the Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET) and serves as its secretariat.

The WGET includes all entities of the United Nations system involved in humanitarian assistance and/or field telecommunications, other major governmental and non-governmental, international and national organizations and the International Telecommunication Union as well as a number of experts and advisors from the academic and commercial field. It has two Sub-Groups:

Sub-Group A deals with regulatory issues, mainly on the trans-border use of telecommunications equipment during acute emergencies, in particular the implementation of ITU Resolutions WTDC-94 No.7 and PP-94 No.36, and

Sub-Group B works on improved co-ordination structures among all partners and on technical aspects including the potential of new technologies for emergency telecommunications.

The WGET maintains an e-mail mailing list as a forum for the exchange of information on emergency telecommunications. The list is open to all subscribers with a bona fide interest in emergency telecommunications; to subscribe please send an e-mail message to [mailserv@itu.ch](mailto:mailserv@itu.ch) (subject is ignored) with the text subscribe emergency telecoms and the address from which you send this message will be added to the list. To unsubscribe from the list, send an e-mail as above but with the text unsubscribe emergency-telecoms from the address you want to unsubscribe.

A successful co-ordination as well as the adoption and ratification of the intended International Convention on Emergency Telecommunications depend on the support and collaboration of all partners in telecommunications policy and industry with the partners in international humanitarian assistance - for the ultimate goal to facilitate the provision of aid to those who need it most: To the increasing number of people affected by disasters of all kind.

## **Terms of Reference of the WGET Sub Groups A and B**

(as defined by the WGET Core Group Meeting January 1995)

### **Sub-Group A: Regulatory and Legal Issues**

1. The International Convention on Emergency Telecommunications
  - 1.1 Steps to be taken for the implementation of ITU WTDC-94 Resolution No. 7 and ITU PP-94 Resolution No.36,
  - 1.2 Definition of the format and structure of the Convention,
  - 1.3 Definition of the essential contents (parts, articles and paragraphs) of the future "Convention on Emergency Telecommunications",
  - 1.4 Discussion of and proposals for the terminology of the Convention,
  - 1.5 Discussion of and proposals for the procedures to establish the Convention and to identify the entities to be consulted / involved,
  - 1.6 Discussion of and proposals for supporting measures (PR work),
  - 1.7 Discussion of date and identification of potential host countries for the intergovernmental conference which will be convened to adopt the Convention,
2. The shared use of Emergency Field Telecommunications Networks
  - 2.1 Analysis of the existing regulatory framework,
  - 2.2 Status of implementation of ITU PP-89 Resolution 50 and related instruments,
  - 2.3 Discussion of and proposals for the procedures to implement Resolution 50 and identification of entities to be consulted / involved,
  - 2.4 Analysis of liabilities and of financial implications resulting from a shared use of networks.

### **Sub-Group B: Operations and Systems Aspects of Emergency Telecommunications**

3. The Co-ordination of emergency field telecommunications
  - 3.1 Review of the emergency telecommunications systems and structures presently in use for communications in and with the field,
  - 3.2 Definition of priority needs and appropriate technologies to meet the requirements,
  - 3.3 Discussion and proposals for possible mechanisms to optimize the utilization of emergency networks of different partners in a relief operation, including the provision of co-ordinated (shared) technical support for such networks,

3.4 Definition of interfaces between networks of humanitarian agencies and those of other partners in relief operations, including MCDA and Peace Keeping Forces,

3.5 Discussion of and proposals for a possible technical standardization of the parameters relevant to a shared use of networks and links with and in the field,

3.6 Discussion of and proposals for the transition from emergency telecommunications networks to the rehabilitation of local and national networks.

#### 4. The interaction between Emergency Telecommunications and Information Management Systems

4.1 Review of existing and anticipated links between the field and Headquarters for the exchange of data with information management systems,

4.2 Definition of the resulting field telecommunications requirements and standards required for field level access to and from such systems.

## ANNEX 3

### List of Signatories/Ratification (underlined) of the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations

*Status October 2002, as per "Status of International Treaties deposited  
with the United Nations Secretary-General*

<u>Country</u>	<u>Signature</u>	<u>Ratification</u> <u>Definitive</u> <u>signature (s),</u> <u>Accession (a),</u> <u>Acceptance (A),</u> <u>Approval (AA)</u>
1. Argentina	11 May 1999	
2. Benin	18 Jun 1998	
3. Brazil	12 March 1999	
<u>4. Bulgaria</u>	<u>22 September 1999</u>	<u>20 June 2000</u>
5. Burundi	18 June 1998	
<u>6. Canada</u>	<u>15 June 1999</u>	<u>18 May 2001</u>
7. Chad	20 October 1999	
8. Chile	18 June 1998	
9. Congo	18 June 1998	
<u>10. Cyprus</u>	<u>18 June 1998</u>	<u>14 July 2000</u>
11. Czech	04 September 2002	
12. Denmark	18 Jun 1998	
<u>13. Dominica</u>		<u>26 December 2000</u>
<u>a</u>		
<u>14. El Salvador</u>	<u>09 August 2000</u>	<u>18 April 2002</u>
15. Estonia	25 May 1999	
16. Finland	18 June 1998	01 April 1999 A
17. Gabon	27 April 2001	

18. Germany	18 June 1998	
19. Ghana	18 June 1998	
20. Guinea		<u>08 October 2002</u>
21. Haiti	11 February 1999	
22. Honduras	25 February 1999	
23. India	29 November 1999	<u>29 November 1999</u>
24. Italy	18 June 1998	
25. Kenya	18 June 1998	
26. Kuwait	18 June 1998	<u>13 June 2002</u>
27. Lebanon	17 November 1998	
28. Mali	18 June 1998	
29. Malta	18 June 1998	
30. Marshall Islands	11 November 1998	
31. Mauritania	18 June 1998	
32. Mongolia	18 June 1998	
33. Morocco	01 December 1998	
34. Nepal	23 April 1999	
35. Netherlands	19 December 2000	<u>06 July 2001</u>
36. Nicaragua	18 June 1998	<u>18 November 1999</u>
37. Niger	18 June 1998	
38. Oman	19 August 1999	
39. Panama	20 September 2001	
40. Peru	14 January 1999	
41. Poland	18 June 1998	
42. Portugal	18 June 1998	
43. Romania	18 June 1998	
44. Russian Federation	14 March 2002	
45. Saint Lucia	31 January 2000	
46. Senegal	20 November 1998	
47. Slovakia	16 February 2000	<u>6 February 2001</u>

<u>48. Sri Lanka</u>	<u>05 August 1999</u>	<u>13 October 1999</u>
49. Sudan	04 December 1998	
<u>50. Switzerland</u>	<u>18 June 1998</u>	<u>24 April 2002</u>
51. Tajikistan	18 June 1998	
52. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	03 December 1998	
<u>53. Uganda</u>	<u>28 October 1998</u>	<u>05 Sep. 2002</u>
54. United States of America	17 November 1998	
55. Uzbekistan	06 October 1998	

\* \* \*

## **ANNEX 4**

### **Interviewees and sources**

Casier, Peter, Chief, FITTEST, WFP Dubai office

Cate, Fred, Professor, Indiana University

Chasier, Jean Paul, UNOG Geneva

De Campos Neto, Simao, Counsellor, SG16, ITU Geneva

De Monravel, Guillaume, Chief, MCDU, OCHA Geneva

Froseth, Runi,

Geiss, Stephen, Information Technology Management Advisor, ITU Geneva

Ghaly, Cherif,

Harbi, Mohamed, Independent Consultant and former Special Advisor to the ITU Secretary General, Geneva

Jacobsson, Stefan, UNOG Geneva

Jim Arnold, Chief, Field Telecom, UNICEF

Johansson, Merete, Chief of Section, OCHA Geneva

Levin, Art, Legal Advisor, ITU Geneva

Lucot, Jean Paul, Chief of Telecom Services, IFRC Geneva

Lund, Jesper, Officer (UNDAC), OCHA Geneva

Metais, Dominique, Chief, Voice Communication Services, WHO, Geneva

Milot, Michel, Manager, Industry Canada Telecommunications Branch

Putman-Cramer, Gerhard, Deputy Director (Natural Disasters Policy) and Chief, Emergency Services Branch, OCHA Geneva

Rinaldo, Paul, Chief, ITU Working Party of Study Group 8 and Liaison Officer, ARRL, Whashington DC

Rusbhy, Jay, Chief, Field Telecom, UNHCR Geneva

Sommerhalder, Rolf, Chief of Telecom Services, ICRC Geneva

Tull, Stephen, Officer, RCB, OCHA Geneva

