INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION	

DECLARATION
ON
GLOBAL FORUM ON EFFECTIVE USE OF TELECOMMUNICTIONS / ICT FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT: SAVING LIVES

The representatives of governments (174), international organizations (18), private sector entities (27), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (53) met in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2007 for the ITU Global Forum on Effective Use of Telecommunications/ICT for Disaster Management: Saving Lives to map out concrete strategies and adopt practical measures aimed at giving the use of telecommunications/ICT a central role in all phases of disaster management early warning, preparedness, relief and response, and rehabilitation of telecommunication networks.

The Forum discussed policy, regulation, technology, finance and deployment of last-mile telecommunications system taking into account multi-hazard approach. The Forum comprised plenary sessions, panel discussions, a Ministerial Round Table, a Private Sector CEO Round Table, workshop on remote sensing, thematic sessions, and exhibition of telecommunication/ICT available solutions including technologies for remote sensing and the use of telemedicine systems and technologies.

The Forum launched the ITU Framework for Cooperation in Emergencies (IFCE), and the ITU Network of Volunteers for Emergency Telecommunications (VET). The IFCE is designed by ITU to make telecommunications/information and communication technology resources available to countries for use by telecommunications/ICT authorities and government agencies responsible for disaster management, humanitarian personnel, and victims of disasters, in a timely manner whenever and wherever disasters may occur through the use of transportable, easy to deploy, and reliable systems. ITU will take into account the principle of technology neutrality. The IFCE which is steered by a High Level Panel on Emergency Telecommunications consists of three clusters – Technology cluster, Finance cluster, and Logistics cluster. The IFCE is an integral part of ITU's other activities undertaking all phases of disaster management such as disaster preparedness, early warning, and rehabilitation of telecommunications networks. The VET seeks to mobilize

technical human resources who volunteer their expertise and services for the deployment of telecommunication/ICT resources in the immediate aftermath of disasters. ITU will create a database of such experts in close collaboration with relevant partners as part of disaster preparedness. These volunteers may come from, but not limited to, retired specialists from ITU Member States, ITU Sector Members, and retired staff of the ITU Secretariat. The Forum also launched two publications:

- Compendium of ITU's Work in Emergency Telecommunications which contains the work of the three Sectors of ITU (Telecommunication Standardization, Radiocommunication, Telecommunication Development) which will be translated into the other 5 languages of the ITU.
- ITU Handbook on Best Practice on Emergency Telecommunications which is a publication of the ITU Development Bureau based on a study carried out in 12 countries which will be translated into the other 5 languages of the ITU.

The Workshop on the Role of Remote Sensing in Disaster Management provided a valuable exchange of information between the Remote Sensing/Observation and Radiocommunication communities and highlighted the need of coordinated actions in support of the implementation of effective Disaster Management provisions.

A number of bilateral partnership agreements and memoranda of understanding were also signed between ITU and the following partners:

- Iridium Satellite, LLC
- ICO Global Communications
- GEO
- Telemedicine & e-Health Training Centre, Holy Family Hospital
- TANA Telemedicine Systems
- WebForce International Federation
- VIZADA
- UNOSAT
- TerreStar
- IARU
- International Aid & Trade

We, participants at the ITU Global Forum on Effective Use of Telecommunications/ICT for Disaster Management: Saving Lives (Geneva, 2007), unanimously praised the ITU Management in particular, the ITU Secretary-General, Dr. Hamadoun Toure, for their initiative to hold this Forum with the theme "Saving Lives". We greatly appreciate the invaluable contributions made and the efficient management of the Forum lending to

successful outcomes for the Global Forum on Effective Use of Telecommunications/ICT for Disaster Management: Saving Lives, and request that this Forum be held regularly. We, unanimously in the spirit of humanity and solidarity, endorse the outcomes of the Forum and,

declare that

a) While natural disasters cannot be entirely prevented, ITU and partners through telecommunication/information and communication technologies (ICT) should help reduce their impact through monitoring, detection, and prediction of hazards and impending disasters including limiting the impact of global warming and climate change.

b) The effort towards bridging the digital divide and the creation of a truly global information society should be closely linked with emergency telecommunications for the dissemination of information to raise awareness on disaster preparedness, for early warning, and for disaster relief.

c) Effective policies and regulations are essential in support of deployment and use of telecommunications/ICT for disaster mitigation and management. The regulatory regime has to be continuously reviewed, and where other barriers to the use of telecommunication resources for disaster response and relief exist, these should be addressed. These barriers could include, but not limited to, regulations restricting the movement of telecommunications equipment and personnel, at both national and international levels, and regulations on the use of relevant frequency spectrum should be in accordance with the ITU Radio Regulations. It is important that while governments develop policies on disaster management, that the use of telecommunications/ICT resources is at the core of such planning. The World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-07) and Radiocommunication Assembly (R-7) approved several resolutions on the use and further development of Radiocommunication systems in risk assessment and disaster mitigation. Countries are encouraged to contribute to ITU-R studies called by these Resolutions.

d) It is essential for the relevant ITU-D Study Question dealing with emergency telecommunications, relevant ITU-D Programme in coordination with other relevant Programmes to address the issue of regulation for emergency telecommunications. Accordingly, ITU/BDT will take the issue of regulation to the 8th Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) and the Global ICT Industry Leaders Forum which will be held in Thailand from 11-13 March 2008 as well as, to future GSRs.

e) Harmonization of rules and regulations and/or spectrum usage must be consistent, or in conformity with, existing International Telecommunication Union’s rules and regulations.

f) Cooperation and coordination at international, regional and national levels is essential for effective use of telecommunications/ICT and alerting as well as disaster response/relief as it maximizes the use of limited resources and save lives. The cooperation should involve government authorities, United Nations Agencies, non-governmental organizations. The private sector especially ITU Sector Members play a very important role in this cooperation by contributing resources to humanitarian teams.

g) The ITU/IFCE through its three clusters serves as an essential mechanism for effective deployment of telecommunication resources to countries requiring assistance in the immediate aftermath of disasters, humanitarian organizations, and local communities.

h) Under the IFCE, ITU is encouraged to provide telecommunications/ICT facilities to its Member States and other entities and stakeholders involved or affected by disasters in a fair and neutral manner. These telecommunications/ICT resources should, at the request of an ITU Member State, be deployed at the site of a natural disaster within the first 48 hours.

i) Member States and ITU-D Sector Members as well as non-sector members including VET are called upon to support and cooperate with ITU/BDT with regard to the implementation of the IFCE since ITU/BDT is mandated to tap resources from its membership including Sector Members and non-sector members to attract inputs into the IFCE, as well as work with the other two ITU Sectors in order to ensure coordination.

j) The Technology Cluster of the IFCE should consist of all possible technology service providers and operators such as Satellite Operators and Land Earth Station Operators, Telecommunications Operators especially Mobile Service Providers, Remote Sensing applications/services providers, radio communication equipment providers/manufacturers, TV/Radio broadcast, amateur radio, and community-based communication organizations, providers of telemedicine for social and medical services. Different technologies should be made available for emergency telecommunications and should be easily deployed in a timely manner when disasters strike. As much as possible the use of existing infrastructure, telecommunication/ICT systems, and frequencies allocated for emergencies should be optimized.

k) A stand-by fund for emergency telecommunications under the Finance Cluster otherwise referred to as Emergency Telecommunications Fund (ETF) should be established under the Finance Cluster of the IFCE. The Fund will finance disaster-related initiatives and activities including, but not limited to, deployment of equipment and financing air-time. Possible funding sources may come from Member States in terms of Funds-In-Trust, regional economic groups, development banks, and the private sector. In this regard, Save Life Short Message Service (SLSMS) demonstrates a good concept and should be used for public participation in contributing resources

into the Fund. The SLSMS presupposes that when a disaster strikes, individuals and corporations send SMS to their service provider contributing a specified amount which they can be levied on their next bill. The service provider will then remit the funds to the Disaster Fund. Other proposals were made calling for innovative ideas on raising financing for emergency telecommunications such as the drafting of bankable projects and also ensuring that the High Level Panel on Emergency Telecommunications gets fully involved in facilitating in this process, and a proposal for a 'one-day' salary contribution by individuals to contribute towards the financing of emergency telecommunications.

l) Transport providers such as air freight companies and international couriers play an important role in facilitating the deployment of telecommunications/ICT resources in times of emergencies. ITU/BDT should pursue Service Agreements with many partners in the logistics industry that would transport equipment at negotiated rates under its IFCE's Logistics Cluster.

m) Remote sensing systems by satellite are invaluable sources of information for decision making in disaster management especially for initial assessments of the nature and magnitude of damage and destruction in the aftermath of disasters thereby saving lives and property. Some of the most significant progress in disaster reduction is being made in mitigation using historical and contemporary remote sensing data in combination with other geospatial data sets as input to predictive models and early warning systems.

Therefore, emergency telecommunications should use remote sensing applications and services. Work of the ITU-R in Remote Sensing in addition to the work under ITU-D Study Group 2 Question 22/2 on the Utilization of ICT for disaster management, resources, and active and passive space-based sensing systems must be continued and supported to achieve its objectives working in close cooperation with the relevant Study Groups in ITU-R

n) ITU should provide assistance to developing countries and in particular, Small Islands Developing States and Least Developed Countries in the development of National Emergency Telecommunication Plans (NETP) and related Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS). Regular training workshops on emergency telecommunications covering disaster preparedness including early warning systems, disaster response, and reconstruction should be provided at national, regional and international levels. ITU-T X.1303 Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) based on OASIS CAP V1.1 standard is a useful tool in this regard as it is a simple, lightweight XML-based schema that provides a general-purpose format for the exchange of emergency alerts for safety, security, fire, health, earthquake and other events over any network. CAP also associates emergency event data (such as public warning statements, photographs, sensor data with basic metadata such as time, source and level of urgency, and with

geographic locations.

o) ITU, through its Telecommunication Standardization activities should continue to work on the harmonization of national emergency number.

p) The **Global Forum on the Use of Telecommunications/ICT for Disaster Management: Saving Lives** should be held regularly, every two years, to ensure that emergency telecommunications adapt to rapid technological changes and pave way for the use of innovative multi-hazard solutions, mapping of effective emergency telecommunications strategies by countries, and facilitation of information sharing among countries and humanitarian actors. ITU/BDT should use this Forum to present the plan and progress of each cluster to ensure its transparency and accountability.

q) Increased assistance should be provided to developing countries as a way of enhancing their capacity to develop and deploy appropriate systems for disaster management taking into account the special needs and challenges of Land-Locked Developing Countries, Small Islands Developing States, economies in transition, and Least Developed Countries.

r) The Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) should sustain the current momentum of promoting and enhancing the participation of multi-stakeholders in emergency telecommunications, and should continue to coordinate and facilitate the creation of partnerships between governments and private enterprise, and between all other stakeholders involved in the deployment and use of telecommunications in humanitarian work.

s) Member States are encouraged to consider resolutions with regard to disaster management and take into consideration, if appropriate, the ratification and implementation of the Tampere Convention while observing domestic legal requirements. ITU/BDT should continue providing assistance required by the Member States in the ratification and implementation of the Tampere Convention in accordance with ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-06) Resolution 36, and the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-06) Resolution 34.