Ref.: BDT/DNS/EET/DM xx	Geneva, 18 October 2023

To:
- Administrations of ITU Member States (Caribbean)
- ITU-D Sector Members
- Academia
- Regional and International Organizations
- Regulators
- Regional Offices for Americas of UN System Organizations

Subject: **Caribbean workshop on the role of telecommunications in disaster preparedness, response and recovery, 21-23 November 2023, Bridgetown, Barbados**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to invite you to participate in the Caribbean workshop on the role of telecommunications in disaster preparedness, response and recovery organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in coordination with the World Food Program (WFP) and GSMA. This event will take place from 21 to 23 November 2023, at the Hilton Hotel in Bridgetown, Barbados.

Experts will present and discuss how ICT solutions and digital technologies can be used for disaster management and risk reduction in the region. The event will consider the importance and the benefits of emerging technologies for early warning and early action, how simulation exercises can help increase resilience to natural hazards and the role of the mobile industry in building disaster resilience in the region.

The key objectives of this workshop are to gather the mobile industry, government entities, humanitarian agencies and international development partners, among others, to:

- Understand the individual and regional efforts to increase resilience to natural hazards;
- Proactively explore possible collaboration opportunities between government, private sector and regional humanitarian partners who are active in the area of emergency telecommunications;
- Discuss best practices in network resilience, customer support and emergency telecommunications regulations in the region; and
- Agree on actions for the near and medium term.

The event will be carried out in English only and participants are encouraged to register online by **11 November 2023** at the following link:
https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Regional-Presence/Americas/Pages/EVENTS/2023/ETCW-2023.aspx.

For any additional enquiry, Mr. Sylvester Cadette, Programme Officer, ITU Area Office for Caribbean Countries, Bridgetown, Barbados (sylvester.cadette@itu.int) remains at your disposal.

Yours faithfully,

Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava
Director

Annex 1: Practical information and Draft agenda

Annex 1

Overview of the workshop

Workshop location: Hilton Hotel, Bridgetown, Barbados

Workshop dates: 21-23 November 2023 (Tues-Thurs)

Modality: In-person

Logistics: The GSMA will provide the venue for the workshop, including coffee breaks and lunch. Participants will be responsible for travel to Barbados as well as their accommodation.

Workshop overview: The impact of disasters and crises are evident around the world. Access to connectivity provides a lifeline during humanitarian emergencies, including natural hazard disasters. Provision of connectivity is not just for humanitarian responders, but also for disaster affected populations, requiring major scale up of services. The mobile industry coordinates and partners with governments and the humanitarian sector to respond to this growing humanitarian challenge, often guided by GSMA's Humanitarian Connectivity Charter.

The Caribbean region is regularly impacted by a number of hazards every year making disaster preparedness and response essential. Over the last 23 years tropical cyclones, heat waves, storm surges, droughts and other extreme climate events have affected approximately 400,000 people and cost $137 million (USD) of damage in the region. Over 60 per cent of people in the Caribbean subscribe to a mobile service, relying on their mobile phones to access essential information and communication services, which provides an important lifeline during times of crisis, including the Atlantic hurricane season.

The aim of this workshop is to convene stakeholders from the mobile industry, ministries of ICTs, regulatory authorities, policy makers as well as the humanitarian-development sector to discuss challenges, opportunities, best practices and innovations related to the use of digital emerging technologies for disaster preparedness and response in the context of emergency telecommunications and early warning. This event will serve as a platform to discuss the different perspectives stakeholders have when preparing for and responding to rapid-onset disasters, as well as the importance of early warning systems. Through the collaborative exercises and informative presentations in this workshop, humanitarian and international development partners will gain a better understanding of the needs of the mobile industry with regard to disaster resiliency so that they can improve the types of support they provide and foster stronger public-private partnerships. Mobile operators will have the opportunity to better understand what kinds of expertise and resources humanitarian organisations can offer and improve operators' capacity to participate in international development and humanitarian initiatives. To bridge these needs, this workshop will provide a platform to bring together key stakeholders in the emergency telecommunications sector.

Draft agenda

Day 1

Time	Session	Presenter
08:30	Coffee reception	
09:00	Welcome and opening remarks	GSMA, WFP, ITU
09:30	HCC reinvigoration	GSMA
10:15	MNO perspective	MNOs
11:15	Coffee break	
11:30	Humanitarian perspective	Humanitarian orgs
12:30	Lunch	
13:45	Breakout session: mapping MNO needs and humanitarian 'supplies'	All
14:15	Coffee break	
14:30	Sustainable partnerships - panel discussion	GSMA, WFP, and others TBC
15:30	Presentation by local operators	Digicel Barbados
16:15	Site visit	Digicel Barbados
19:00	Dinner	

Day 2

Time	Session	Presenter
08:30	Coffee reception	
09:00	Recap of day 1	GSMA
09:15	Keynote address	TBC
09:45	Early warning systems - panel discussion	TBC
10:45	Coffee break	
11:00	Government perspective	GSMA
12:00	Lunch	
13:15	Way forward	GSMA
14:15	Coffee break	
14:30	Simex	ITU Mike Zandvliet
16:30	Recap day 2	
19:00	Dinner	

Day 3

Time	Session	Presenter
08:30	Coffee reception	
09:00	Simex	ITU
16:00	Recap of workshop and closing remarks	Mike Zandvliet