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UN, Luxembourg partner to strengthen emergency telecoms



A satellite dish, facing the East River, sits on the snow-covered grounds of UN Headquarters.

8 December 2011 –

The United Nations International Telecommunication Union ([ITU](#)) and Luxembourg today [announced](#) that they have agreed to cooperate on strengthening emergency telecommunications and rapid responses whenever natural disasters strike.

ITU and Luxembourg are both members of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), which is made up of UN agencies and other humanitarian partners.

The Government of Luxembourg has developed a “nomadic” satellite-based telecommunication system known as ‘emergency.lu’ aimed at assisting humanitarian agencies respond to

communities affected by natural disasters, conflict or protracted crises. The facility can also be used for longer-term deployment in chronic or recurrent humanitarian situations or as part of a preparedness strategy in developing countries.

The platform will be available for use by the international humanitarian community as a global public good facility as of 1 January next year, with Luxembourg funding its development, implementation, operation and maintenance to the tune of €17.2 million.

Under the umbrella of the ‘ITU Framework for Cooperation in Emergencies’ (IFCE), ITU will encourage its 193 Member States to use the ‘emergency.lu’ platform and facilitate the rapid deployment of emergency telecommunication systems in the event of a sudden-onset disaster.

The facility can also be used for longer-term deployment in chronic or recurrent humanitarian situations or as part of a preparedness strategy in developing countries. ITU will negotiate appropriate regulatory and legal frameworks with telecommunications regulatory authorities to assist in the deployment.

The IFCE, an ITU communications initiative to assist the humanitarian community in disaster response, and ‘emergency.lu’ will be jointly and individually deployed within two hours of notification using every possible means, including custom-fitted aircraft, depending on the nature and magnitude of the disaster.

“In recent times, disasters have wreaked havoc around the world – floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, storms, wild fires – resulting in catastrophic loss of lives and damage to property,” said Hamadoun Touré, the ITU Secretary-General.

“By placing ‘emergency.lu’ at the disposal of the international humanitarian community as a global public good, the Government of Luxembourg has provided an invaluable asset to humankind in an effort to save lives – and ITU will take all measures to facilitate its deployment.”

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