
COMMITTEE 4

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IASC Sub-Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications Position on the WRC-07 Agenda on C-band

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) was established by the UN General Assembly Resolution and is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. Together with Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA), the IASC forms the key strategic coordination mechanism among major humanitarian actors.

In recognition of the critical role of information and communications technology (ICT) in support of disaster relief and mitigation, the IASC established the Sub-Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET) as a forum to increase the effectiveness of its participants related to regulatory, operational and technical aspects of telecommunications for disaster relief. WGET includes international, governmental and non-governmental humanitarian organizations with an interest in emergency telecommunications.

WGET promotes cooperation, interoperability and standardization of telecommunications solutions with and in the field. In this regard WGET members have adopted C-band VSAT technology as a standard and have made significant investments in its deployment. WGET members currently operate more than 1,200 VSAT terminals mainly in the developing world with hubs and earth stations in Europe and North America. INMARSAT is one of main security communications carriers for WGET members, and its downlinks operate on C-band and therefore are also at risk. There is heavy reliance on this technology to effectively support the humanitarian community in life saving activities, emergency operations and staff security. Anything that would disrupt C-band communications would have serious consequences, both operational and financial, to the effective functioning of the humanitarian community.

WGET supports and sees a key role for IMT, such as WiMAXX, but believes it must complement, not disrupt, existing C-band operations. IMT can significantly benefit humanitarian field operations by extending the range of terrestrial communications to sub-

offices which can be linked to C-band backbone networks to provide enhanced WAN (wide area network) coverage. Thus every effort should be made to ensure C-band and IMT coexist harmoniously.

WGET wishes to express deep concern to the World Radiocommunications Conference and the International Telecommunications Union on the proposals under consideration to share the C-band satellite frequency spectrum with the Broadband Wireless Access and/or IMT infrastructures. WGET supports IMT but requests that no decision be taken that would negatively impact C-band operations, in view of the serious consequences on the delivery of humanitarian assistance, particularly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.