Video conferencing and live streaming

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Key points

- Do not underestimate the power of video!

1. Overview

The dramatic evolution of software technology and transmission media, and the advent of IP and broadband, have made multiple video-based applications possible, including simple transfer of video files, deferred or live streaming of events, webcasts, video-on-demand (VoD), telemedicine and advanced video conferencing techniques.

In fact, numerous powerful and fully mobile video tools for communication and collaboration have emerged in the last decade. Video is typically used for remote meetings and interviews, RSD, e-learning, webinars, and live coverage. Audio-visual coverage of remote dramatic events is now at the heart of the information machine and, because it is so powerful, video is widely used by humanitarian organizations.

2. Main guidance

When and for what purpose?

UNHCR's video unit frequently uses video techniques (to cover events, transmit interviews with the High Commissioner, transfer UNHCR field footage to media, etc.). DIST currently supports UNHCR's video unit technically and provides connectivity via MSS (mobile satellite systems) and FSS (fixed satellite systems).

During an emergency, it may be necessary to video-communicate with HQ or partners, to hold a discussion, share information, or broadcast (upload/stream).
Description and /or specifics

Video communications include three major elements:

- Connectivity (VSAT, MSS, ISP, etc.)
- A video platform
- An operator

**Connectivity.** In UNHCR, connectivity is provided by an office-based VSAT or fibre internet access, or (when off-site) by a hand-carried MSS (mobile satellite system) such as BGAN. Recent software enhancement makes it possible to bundle two BGANs, increasing speeds (eventually dedicated) to more than 1 Mbps, which is enough to run video conferences of SD (standard definition) quality. It is possible to achieve HD (high definition) video in a field environment, but it remains expensive in terms of bandwidth requirements.

**Video platform.** This depends on the application required. Typically, video conferencing sessions are transmitted through Cisco Webex Online Meetings, Microsoft Teams, or Cisco Video Conferencing.

**How to request / implement / seek support?**

Request video conferencing capacity from the local IT expert, the Bureau IT Lead, or directly from DIST IT Operations if first responders need hand-carried video capacity, DIST is responsible for preparing this. (See ‘contact and support’ below.)

3. Links

https://intranet.unhcr.org/en/support-services/ict-operations/ict-services/conf...

4. Main contacts

Contact the Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications (DIST).

- DIST Global Service Desk: hqussd@unhcr.org.
- UNHCR HQ Video Unit: hqvideo@unhcr.org