



## **emergency.lu**

### **“Delivering Together: Humanitarian response, technology and innovation”**

**Tuesday, 2 July 2013 at 1.15 pm in Geneva, Palais des Nations, Room XXVI**

Dear Colleagues.  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government of Luxembourg, I would like to welcome you to this side event at the ECOSOC High-Level Segment, co-organized by the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign affairs and by the World Food Programme. The very topical theme for today's discussion is 'Delivering Together: Humanitarian response, technology and innovation'.

As we would like to encourage the dialogue on humanitarian innovation and on the impact innovative technologies can have on humanitarian operations, I would like to start by giving you a concrete example of what 'delivering together' can mean for a government and how innovation can improve the humanitarian response if it corresponds to clearly identified needs.

When a disaster strikes, the ability to communicate is crucial. Humanitarian responders must rely on information and communication tools to be able to communicate effectively, to report results of early assessments, to support their safety and security and to coordinate quickly response efforts among hundreds of organisations. However, infrastructure is often severely damaged by natural hazards, or is simply lacking in remote locations, and it may take a lot of precious time and efforts to set up reliable communication systems.

In 2010, after the Haiti earthquake, Luxembourg decided to set up **emergency.lu**, a highly mobile, easy-to-deploy, satellite-based communication platform with the objective to offer effective communication and coordination services to the humanitarian and civil protection communities in the field and to improve the preparedness of humanitarian organisations. You will get more technical information on **emergency.lu** during the presentation in a few minutes.

Based on its highly developed experience and expertise action in satellite and communication technologies, Luxembourg identified an operational gap in humanitarian action and tried to close this gap by drawing upon the knowhow of private sector companies, and by working in close collaboration with humanitarian organisations, to ensure that **emergency.lu** does not duplicate existing solutions and responds to the actual needs of humanitarian responders. Luxembourg considers **emergency.lu** as a global public good intended to improve the preparedness and response capacity of the humanitarian community.



What I would like to underline in the context of our debate today is that **emergency.lu** was designed as a public-private partnership between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg and three Luxembourg-based private companies (HITEC Luxembourg, SES TechCom and Luxembourg Air Ambulance). Mr Yves Elsen, the CEO of HITEC Luxembourg, is with us today to bring in the private-sector perspective on this PPP. The solution was developed in close collaboration with the World Food Programme in its role as leader of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster. Meanwhile, other partners are part of the project, such as Ericsson Response and Skype. It has meanwhile become part of a wider concept, under the lead of the ETC cluster, to allow humanitarian workers to have quick access to information wherever they are, on any device available.

Based on this experience, Luxembourg is convinced that governments can play an innovative role in bridging the gap between technology and the humanitarian community. Governments can facilitate the collaboration between humanitarian organizations and the private sector. They can help humanitarian organizations to take advantage of private-sector technology and innovation and to get access to tools and services that respond to their specific needs.

Thanks to our public administration daily involvement in the technical cooperation between the private-sector partners and humanitarian organizations, we have meanwhile identified new areas where we are bringing in private-sector knowhow to work on humanitarian innovation, for example in the field of information and knowledge management.

In addition, the constructive exchange with the private sector has triggered more innovative thinking and projects in Luxembourg. For example, our MFA is about to launch a telemedicine platform in Africa in July and are working on several 'ICT for development' programmes in West Africa.

Together with the commission of the African Union and the European Union, Luxembourg is promoting the establishment of Internet bugs all over Africa, the so-called "AXIS project".

'Delivering together' has become a reality for Luxembourg and has proven to be mutually beneficial, for our humanitarian partners, for our private partners, but also for our Government.

We can testify to the fact that a true "win-win" equation can be built to contribute to a better and quicker delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Thank you very much for your attention.