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Press Release

EARTHQUAKE IN CHILE TSF ON THE GROUND SINCE MARCH 1st

TSF Headquarters, March 3rd, 2010 -

This mission is supported by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)

In response to the devastating earthquake of magnitude 8.8 occurred in Chili on Saturday February 27th, at 1 am local time, TSF deployed the same day a first crew of telecom experts in emergency telecommunications from its regional base in Managua. The team arrived on Monday morning in Santiago.

According to the first information, telecommunications networks are seriously damaged, making difficult evaluations, relief coordination and interventions on site. Santiago Airport international and other airports in the affected zone are still operating with restrictions. Facing this humanitarian tragedy (at least 723 people killed and more than 2 million people affected, severe damages in the most affected regions: V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, metropolitan region) President Michelle Bachelet has called for urgent international help and has indicated that their priorities are to get communications functioning.



The team has immediately coordinated with local authorities (Civil Defense and ONEMI - National Office of Emergencies, Chilean government agency dedicated to the prevention, organization, coordination and information relative to natural disasters) in order to define telecommunication priorities and to organize a deployment to the affected zones, as quickly as possible.

During the night of the 1st of March, the team deployed to the littoral zone of region VII. In coordination with local authorities in Lincante and with the ONEMI's general direction, TSF is planning to install as soon as possible communication centers in region VII. These centers for emergency responders will offer broadband Internet access, priority voice communications, fax lines and all IT equipment needed for a field office. Moreover, humanitarian calling operations started, enabling victims to get in touch with their family and receive personalized assistance and mental support.

Reinforcements left from TSF's international headquarters and regional base in Bangkok and will rejoin their colleagues in the next hours.

The mission is supported by the Vodafone Foundation, the United Nations Foundation, Inmarsat, Eutelsat, Vizada, AT&T, Cable and Wireless, PCCW Global, the Communauté d'Agglomération de Pau, and the Conseil Régional d'Aquitaine.

About Télécoms Sans Frontières

Télécoms Sans Frontières: the leading humanitarian NGO specialised in emergency telecommunications

With its 24-hour monitoring centre and relying on its operational bases in Europe, Central America and Asia, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) crews of IT and telecoms specialists can intervene anywhere in the world in less than 24 hours. After a sudden onset disaster or conflict, they can set up in a matter of minutes a satellite-based telecoms centre offering broadband Internet, phone and fax lines. These centres enable emergency NGOs, the United Nations and local authorities to communicate right at the heart of a crisis. They also facilitate the coordination of aid efforts. In parallel, TSF runs humanitarian calling operation to offer support and assistance to affected civilians, giving them a link with the outside world from which they would be otherwise completely cut off.

Beyond emergencies, TSF is also involved in long term prevention and development projects that offer sustainable solutions to benefit local associations and structures in the most isolated and vulnerable communities.

Since its creation in 1998, TSF deployed to nearly 60 countries and assisted almost 500 relief organisations and millions of victims. In 2006, TSF became a partner of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). TSF is First Responder of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC).

Télécoms Sans Frontières is also a working group member of the United Nations emergency telecoms body (WGET). TSF is a partner of the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO) and a member of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

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