



UNOG-NEWS Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) WFP 05 November 2021

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Shotlist

1. Exterior wide shot, United Nations flags flying.
2. Medium shot, inside the press conference room podium with large TV screen broadcasting the conference on Zoom.
3. **SOUNDBITE (English): Patrick McKay, Coordinator for Southern Africa Regional Data Operations Manager, World Food Programme (WFP): “We know that climate change is here, we know that cyclones and hurricanes are occurring a lot more frequently than they ever have been before and we know that we need to sort of step-up in how we are going to respond to them rapidly.”**
4. Medium shot, Mr. Le Blanc listening to the briefing with the UN logo in the background, press briefing broadcast on Zoom.

5. **SOUNDBITE (English): Patrick McKay, Coordinator for Southern Africa Regional Data Operations Manager, World Food Programme (WFP): “We use drones for providing connectivity to people, so providing internet access. We have just come back from France where we have been testing a tethered drone. This is a drone that runs on a power cable and it flies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and we found it by putting every high-powered Wi-Fi antenna on the drone, we can provide connectivity to the community in about over a 3.2 square kilometers area. So in general, when I was in Cyclone Idai, I had people coming up to me ‘Can you tell my family I’m ok?’, ‘Can you tell my friends I’m ok?’ because generally the only people with internet are responders but we would like to change that, we would like to give the community internet access as well.”**
6. Medium-wide shot, inside the press conference room (B-128), in the back, participants seated with masks attending the briefing.
7. **SOUNDBITE (English): Patrick McKay, Coordinator for Southern Africa Regional Data Operations Manager, World Food Programme (WFP): “We think drones are going to make a massive impact on how we work in future. I think we are really at this sort of entry level stages now. And once we sort out what, I would say the legal issues rather than the technical issues, I think trends will be completely taking over what we do in terms of data collection and emergencies as well as cargo delivery.”**
8. Medium shot, participants masked listening to the press briefing.
9. **SOUNDBITE (English): Patrick McKay, Coordinator for Southern Africa Regional Data Operations Manager, World Food Programme (WFP): “So we do need to work with the host governments on the ground. If governments are shutting things down, we don’t want to go into places where we are not wanted to providing solutions. Technically that’s no problem, technically we can have a satellite beam being signaled down to a base station and at the drone sent it up and spread it out whether we use Wi-Fi or LTE. Getting permission to do that it is a completely different aspect, unfortunately.”**
10. Close-up, technician supervising the briefing on Zoom.
11. **SOUNDBITE (English): Patrick McKay, Coordinator for Southern Africa Regional Data Operations Manager, World Food Programme (WFP): “Our helicopters that we use are actually really expensive: they are going from a couple of thousands of dollars per hour. A drone costs us maybe 1 or 2 ... worst 10 dollars an hour depending on the drones to keep everyone. So, there is a massive cost saving and when you are running short of funding you have to actually look at how you can most efficiently use the tools available to you.”**
12. Close-up, a masked journalist listening to the press briefing.
13. **SOUNDBITE (English): Patrick McKay, Coordinator for Southern Africa Regional Data Operations Manager, World Food Programme (WFP): “We also believe that we can be more efficient in terms of being able to find more people and rescue all people. So, you know, if our fortunes are on an emergency, we will have one helicopter available maybe two, but we can have a few of drones ready to go identify people in all sorts of different locations and we can put the helicopters into direct use, and I will go to that point at that point and go to that point and come back.”**
14. Medium shot, journalists seated with masks taking notes.
15. Close up shot, journalist taking notes.
16. Close up shot, journalist taking notes.

Story

The World Food Programme (WFP) has launched today in South Africa the drone hub to focus together with government and partners on building capacity with the aim of using drones for humanitarian purposes.

Speaking from Johannesburg, WFP's Coordinator for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), Patrick McKay, said today at a news briefing at the UN in Geneva that **“we know that climate change is here, we know that cyclones and hurricanes are occurring a lot more frequently than they ever have been before and we know that we need to sort of step-up in how we are going to respond to them rapidly.”**

WFP started using drones in 2017 and has gained a lot of experience over the last few years, an experience that proved invaluable in Mozambique when cyclone Idai hit hard the country.

“We use drones for providing connectivity to people, so providing internet access. We have just come back from France where we have been testing a tethered drone”, said WFP's Patrick McKay.

“This is a drone that runs on a power cable and it flies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and we found it by putting every high-powered Wi-Fi antenna on the drone, we can provide connectivity to the community in about over a 3.2 square kilometers area. So in general, when I was in Cyclone Idai, I had people coming up to me ‘Can you tell my family I’m ok?’, ‘Can you tell my friends I’m ok?’ because generally the only people with internet are responders but we would like to change that, we would like to give the community internet access as well.”

During the response in Mozambique in March 2019, WFP was able to collect a huge amount of data in a very short amount of time and also shared the data with the other responders. It was the first emergency where every responder had a clear picture of what the situation on the ground looked like. Based on high quality imagery collected by WFP, UNICEF could see exactly what was happening with the schools, the World Health Organisation (WHO) could inspect the clinics, and the Emergency Telecoms Cluster could see which towers were still standing.

“We think drones are going to make a massive impact on how we work in future”, stated Mr. McKay. **“I think we are really at this sort of entry level stages now. And once we sort out what, I would say the legal issues rather than the technical issues, I think trends will be completely taking over what we do in terms of data collection and emergencies as well as cargo delivery.”**

Drones enabled the Government of Mozambique to carry out rapid disaster mapping in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai, one of the worst disasters ever to hit the southern hemisphere. It took just two or three days to capture over 70,000 high resolution images to inform relief operations – nearly half the time that would have been required to conduct manual damage assessments. Local authorities were ready because they had been trained by WFP on ten different drone systems.

“We do need to work with the host governments on the ground. If obviously, governments are shutting things down, we don’t want to go into places where we are not wanted to providing solutions”, stressed WFP's Mc Kay. **“Technically that’s no problem, technically we can have a satellite beam being signaled down to a base station and at the drone sent it up and spread it out whether we use Wi-Fi or LTE. Getting permission to do that it is a completely different aspect, unfortunately.”**

With the help of drones, WFP can move faster, using resources more efficiently and ultimately save more lives at a cheaper cost.

“Our helicopters that we use are actually really expensive: they are going from a couple of thousands of dollars per hour. A drone costs us maybe 1 or 2 ... worst 10 dollars an hour, depending on the drones to keep everyone”, Mc Kay said. **“So, there is a massive cost saving and when you are running short of funding you have to actually look at how you can most efficiently use the tools available to you.”**

Ultimately, WFP aims to replace the use of helicopter in the search phase and identify the location of people needing rescue with drones and using boats and helicopters to go directly to the person needing rescue.

“We also believe that we can be more efficient in terms of being able to find more people and rescue all people”, said WFP’s Coordination Manager for Southern Africa Regional Data Operations. **“If our fortunes are on an emergency, we will have one helicopter available maybe two, but we can have a few of drones ready to go identify people in all sorts of different locations and we can put the helicopters into direct use, and I will go to that point at that point and go to that point and come back.”**

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