ABSTRACT

This application relates to the field of communication technologies, and provides a communication method and apparatus to improve efficiency of performing operations on a plurality of terminal devices. In the method, after an access network device receives a random access request from a terminal device, the access network device may determine, for the terminal device, an identifier to be used in a first signaling layer. This enables the access network device and a core network device to indicate the terminal device via the identifier, thereby performing an operation on the terminal device. In other words, the access network device and the core network device may assign, for each terminal device requiring operations, an identifier to be used in the first signaling layer. In this case, the access network device can independently trigger random access of each terminal device without relying on an indication from the core network device, and the core network device can perform, during random access of the terminal devices, an operation on a terminal device that has completed the random access. As a result, the efficiency of performing operations on the plurality of terminal devices can be improved.