

AFRICA SATELLITE SUMMIT DEFINES A NEW CHANGE AND OPPORTUNITY AGENDA FOR A COMMUNICATIONS-HUNGRY CONTINENT

Ethiopia Hosts GVF Supported First FutureSat Africa Summit

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LONDON – As the first **FutureSat Africa Summit** – held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for which GVF was Endorsing Association and Knowledge Partner – drew to a close, its three days of powerfully constructive dialogue engaging the active participation of policy-makers, private and public sector end-users of satellite communications, civil society organisations, and satellite technology and solutions providers was lauded as a major success.

Martin Jarrold, GVF Chief of International Programme Development, and one of the GVF team contributing to the Summit programme, noted that, “The Summit was not only strongly supported by the Ethiopian Ministry of Communications & Information Technology (MCIT) as official Summit Partner, but also by a strong senior level representation from 17 African nations as well as a further 11 countries from around the globe.”

Mr Jarrold continued, “The outcomes of the conference provided a further index that satellite offers a vitally central and core element of the communications connectivity solution which the nations of Africa need to meet the applications needs of such essential segments of society and economy as banking, broadcasting, education, government communications, health care, weather forecasting, maritime communications, humanitarian aid, air navigation, and the backhauling of mobile networks data traffic.”

The high-level and widely encompassing Summit audience of more than 270 people representing 124 organisations included ministerial-level policy makers, public and private sector C-level executives from solutions provider and end-user communities.

Julián Seseña, GVF Correspondent for Europe added, “The intention of the Ethiopian Government to promote their own planned satellite system was very evident at the Summit as was the clear advocacy of many different stakeholders – current users of satcoms and potential future users – of the need to establish new innovative business and value propositions between satcoms providers and the users. It was equally evident that access to space services is considered by African administrations as a strategic asset which has to be carefully managed by those who are already using the limited spectrum resources.”

Dr Seseña represented GVF as a panel moderator in two of the Summit sessions which addressed issues related to *Partnerships & Alliances* and *National Agendas & Country Objectives*. Reflecting on the former, Dr Seseña said, “The future successful developments of

satellite value propositions will undoubtedly require the establishment of sustainable alliances both in the vertical and horizontal business value chains. The satcom industry has to cooperate with their future users to ensure close and mutual trust in a highly evolving scenarios due to technology trends and new business routes.”

Regarding National Agendas & Country Objectives he added, “African countries have developed their national plans towards enhancing the penetration of the telecommunication services, broadcast and broadband. In their efforts, the satcom industry should contribute to ensure that the value of the satellite component is fully appreciated when designing and implementing the national plans. Satcom-based solutions should not be bound to last mile or rural environments, but they should be part of the overall landscape of the telecommunications offering for all type of users and all locations. Particular note was taken of the significant reduction of costs of the satellite terminals during past years.”

Also part of the GVF team in Addis Ababa was Geoff Daniell, GVF Correspondent for sub-Saharan Africa who, as well as moderating the Summit’s session on *Affordable Mobility*, presented GVF’s perspectives on *Digital Horizons*. During his comments Mr Daniell said that, “For many countries the big challenges lay with policies and regulations which do not adapt and evolve as fast as the technology they relate to. GVF is ready willing and able to assist national administrations with this. Also, it’s important to stress that Africa’s communications networks need to make use of all available technologies, fully integrated and operating seamlessly.”

On the issue of affordability, Mr Daniell noted that, “Affordability is equally applicable to all parts of the value chain. VSAT licensing and the fees associated with VSAT services in a number of African countries are a stumbling block with respect to the delivery of affordable VSAT and other satellite services.”

As well as including remarks from the Chief Executive of the Summit organiser, Extensia, Tariq Malik, the Summit’s formal Opening Ceremony featured an official address by H.E. Dr. Debretsion G/ Michael, in the Rank of Deputy Prime Minister, Economic Cluster Coordinator, Minister MCIT, Ethiopia, and from the MCIT State Minister Getachew Negash Tekla, as well as from Dr Elham M. A. Ibrahim, Commissioner for Infrastructure & Energy with the African Union Commission, and Martin Jarrold from GVF.

A following session on *Connected Africa* included Mr Jarrold’s ‘Satellite Spectrum Update’ during which – before an audience comprising delegates from Angola, Belgium, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, India, Italy, Israel, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Tanzania, UAE, Uganda, UK, USA, and Zambia – he commented in detail on various facets of spectrum-allocation and frequency interference issues pertinent to Africa relating to the outcomes of the November 2015 International Telecommunication Union World Radiocommunication Conference (ITU WRC-15), and looking ahead to the next WRC in 2019. Following his reflections on the continuing frictions between the satellite provider and user communities on the one side, and the providers of IMT wireless services using current LTE and developing 5G technologies on the other, he very pointedly concluded that, in connection with spectrum issues, “The GVF has resources which it can make available to show how complementary communications technologies can co-exist meaningfully in a diverse ecosystem of solutions if

we position them in an appropriate way, managing the most effective utilisation of spectrum for all.”

In a further GVF contribution to the Summit session on *Return on Investment*, Mr Jarrold focused on returns that enhance and grow social capital and build capacity. During a following panel discussion – not for the first time in the course of the Summit dialogue – clear reference was made to the changing structure of satellite terminal equipment and service pricing frameworks arising out of the many technological advances that include the continued launching of bandwidth efficient high throughput satellite capacity to geostationary orbit (GEO), together with plans for new low earth orbit (LEO) satellite constellations.

The official Summit summary document – focusing on such key Summit dialogue facets as technology evolution, spectrum, security, business models, capacity building – together with copies of the Summit presentations, will be available for download from the Summit website: <http://extensia-events.com/events/future-sat-africa-2016-summit-4th-to-6th-october-2016/>.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:



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GVF is the single and unified voice of the global satellite industry. Founded in 1997, it brings together organisations engaged in the delivery of advanced broadband and narrowband satellite services to consumers, and commercial and government enterprises worldwide. Headquartered in London, GVF is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organisation with 230+ members from more than 100 countries. The broad-based membership represents every major world region and every sector of the satellite industry, including fixed and mobile satellite operators, satellite network operators, teleports, satellite earth station manufacturers, system integrators, value added and enhanced service providers, telecom carriers, consultants, law firms, and users. Contact martin.jarrold@gvf.org in the UK office, or in the US office please contact david.hartshorn@gvf.org or angie.mar@gvf.org.

***GVF** – together with the world’s leading satellite operators, Eutelsat, Hispasat, Inmarsat, Intelsat, SES, Thuraya and Yahsat, the EMEA Satellite Operators Association (ESOA), and the global humanitarian community represented by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) – is signatory to the United Nations Crisis Connectivity Charter which formalises terms and protocols designed to accelerate the ability of emergency response teams to access satellite-based communications.



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