

## **SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS IN GLOBAL AID & EMERGENCY PROGRAMMES**

**Joint ESOA, UNOSAT, and JRC media briefing and lunch  
*Sofitel, Place Jourdan, 12am, Tuesday 10th September 2006***

10th October 2006 – When disaster strikes, you need to act fast. The European Satellite Operators' Association (ESOA) represents an industry that delivers critical communications services to areas hit by crisis, often with hours. To highlight the essential work of the industry, ESOA is holding a series of briefings in Brussels alongside UNOSAT, which is the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme, the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, the World Health Organisation and the World Food Programme.

Michael Butler, Chairman of ESOA and COO of Inmarsat, emphasised: “Just when you need them most, terrestrial and cellular networks can be among the first casualties of a disaster. If you can't access a communications infrastructure, how can you co-ordinate an effective response? Satellite communications make a real difference to the disaster's victims. For some it is, literally, a life line.”

Thanks to the co-operation between ESOA members and government agencies, satellite communications play a critical role in establishing essential links for relief agencies and deliver communications services that provide instant infrastructure, logistics support, telemedicine, media coverage and continuity of business.

In the recent conflict in Lebanon, ESOA members worked with Télécom Sans Frontières (TSF), a specialist in re-establishing telecoms services in crisis-hit areas, to deploy voice and data communications via satellite. Working under the auspices of the United Nations, TSF supported 22 aid organisations and helped over 600 families. In the month that TSF was operating in Lebanon, over 1,850 minutes of voice calls were made.



Alain Retière, Director of UNOSAT, said: “Satellites are now trusted to provide the critical infrastructure that nations can rely on when in crisis. Proportionate focus should be given to the unique abilities of satellite communications and earth observations in policy making for humanitarian emergency and recovery programmes.” At the media briefing, Mr. Retière represented UNOSAT and the UN humanitarian community by sitting in for the Director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA) Geneva.

Michael Butler concluded: “ESOA wishes to ensure that adequate visibility is given to the role of satellite communication companies. Our members will continue to support all efforts requiring satellite capacity and services. Public support and awareness are crucial to their ability to do this.”

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## **About ESOA**

The European Satellite Operators' Association was formed in March 2002 to represent the interests of the industry with the European Commission, Parliament, Council and the European Space Agency as well as other international organisations, national governments and regulators. ESOA's goals include ensuring that satellites benefit from the appropriate political, industrial and regulatory environment to fulfil their vital role in the delivery of communications. ESOA is governed by a Board of Directors made up of the CEOs of its Member Companies.

The activities and other details about the ESOA can be found at [www.esoa.net](http://www.esoa.net). Members of ESOA are: EADS SPACE Services, Eurasiasat, HellasSat, Hispasat, Inmarsat, SES New Skies, SES Sirius, SES GLOBAL, Telenor Broadcasting Holding and Telespazio. Arianespace, EADS SPACE and International Space Brokers are Supporting Members of ESOA.

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