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Satellite Industry & Pacific Militaries Collaborate To Enable Improved Disaster Preparedness

(21 August, 2012) Multi-national disaster preparedness for Pacific-area disasters has been improved through collaborative efforts of stakeholders in the military and satellite-communications sectors with delivery of a successful training program last week at Changi Naval Base.

Training was provided as the central feature of Satcom Endeavor, an international disaster-preparedness workshop organized by more than twenty Pacific-Area militaries as part of the annual Pacific Endeavor workshop in cooperation with the Global VSAT Forum (GVF), the international non-profit association of the satellite industry. The program certified personnel from more than 12 nations as installers of VSAT-based satellite communications systems.

This was the inaugural year for the Satcom Endeavor program, and also marked the first year that the GVF played such an integral role in the Pacific Endeavor program as part of a long-term vision shared by the Pacific Endeavor organizers and the GVF. A team from the GVF led by the GVF's Chair of Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Response (HA/DR) Programs, Steve Birnbaum, provided the training and presented briefings to the workshop attendees and Corporate Board.

"This joint effort will enable, through closer public and private sector co-ordination, lives to be saved with improved disaster preparedness," said David Hartshorn, Secretary General, GVF. "Military leadership in the Pacific, combined with the satellite industry's latest communications capabilities, are poised to more effectively respond in a region where most of the world's major natural disaster occur each year."

The Pacific militaries that participated in Satcom Endeavor can not only leverage the capabilities of their GVF-Certified personnel during future disasters, but the stage is also set for further preparedness measures. Mr. Birnbaum advocated to both the participants and the Corporate Board strong relationships, information sharing and closer collaboration between all disaster preparedness stakeholders in a presentation to the Pacific Endeavor Corporate Board.

"GVF has been asked by the international disaster-response community to identify a means by which satellite-related systems, services, and skilled professionals can be cost-effectively pre-positioned worldwide," said Mr. Birnbaum. "Now, through collaboration and relationship building at events such as Satcom Endeavor, we can increasingly share access to the Certified VSAT Installer Database and the GVF Disaster Preparedness Communications Registry, which provides links to GVF-Member companies' satcom assets... before, during and after disasters."

The GVF VSAT Installer Certification Program has now enrolled more than 6,000 trainees worldwide, and GVF's Member companies include all of the world's major satellite-bandwidth suppliers and satellite equipment manufacturers, as well as many local and international connectivity providers. Collectively, these companies, their customers, and their contractors supply, install, maintain and operate millions of earth stations throughout the world. These capabilities are beginning to be applied in innovative ways to drive preparedness.

Accordingly, Satcom Endeavor was supported by a broad industry effort, including: Intelsat General's provision of tuition and satellite bandwidth; Viking Satcom's donation of earth station equipment; administrative and training support from SatProf; and matching tuition from the GVF-Andrew Werth Scholarship.

Delivery of the Hands On Skills Tests was enabled by GVF's international team of Certified Examiners, including Parag Kadam, Mahdi Bagh Computers (MBC), India; Suhadi Kartadihardja, AdiTech Matra, Indonesia; Greg Selzer, SatProf, U.S.; and Chris Sivertz, SSE Thailand. Logistical support was provided by Rory Eddings and Riaz Lamak of GVF.

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"The Satcom Endeavor participants showed that they were fully engaged in the program," said Greg Selzer, who co-ordinated the delivery of training. "Likewise, the satellite industry's support for delivery of GVF's online training and Hands On Skills Tests proved our industry's commitment to disaster preparedness. We look forward to building upon this success throughout the world."

About GVF

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 200+ 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. Through partnerships with industry, government, non-government and other communications stakeholders, the association works to promote more effective collaboration for disaster preparedness, response and development.

(source: Global VSAT Forum)

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