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World Radiocommunication Conference 2015 decides satellite spectrum is central to future vision for global connectivity

GENEVA, Switzerland– The world's governments resoundingly affirmed a clear vision for the importance of many vital and irreplaceable services provided today over satellite. They also agreed on a clear framework for future access to satellite spectrum for innovative satellite communications. This was accomplished by agreeing to preserve and create new additional valuable spectrum for fixed and mobile solutions used to support a multitude of video, television and data services, to expand Internet access, and to bridge the "Digital Divide" for billions of people around the world.

The inter-governmental decisions in support of satellite spectrum were made during the conclusion of the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU's) World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC), where the agreements reached by national administrations reflected a comprehensive strategy in which the unique value proposition of satellite-based connectivity is an integral part of a portfolio of synergistic technologies.

"WRC-15 has been a turning point in the global recognition of the value of satellite services for the future. We commend the national administrations – and the WRC Chairman, Mr. Festus Daudu – for their commitment to connectivity for all," said a joint statement of a coalition of associations representing the satellite industry. "These decisions provide the stability necessary for the entire satellite industry to fully leverage its strengths in support of the vision expressed by the WRC delegates."

Among the key decisions made during WRC are the following:

L-band: WRC-15 avoided identification of the L-band spectrum, which is used by mobile satellite service operators around the world, for IMT. The Conference identified the band 1427-1518 MHz for IMT, requesting the ITU-R to determine the technical measures to ensure compatibility with the mobile-satellite service operations in the adjacent band (1518-1559 MHz).

C-band: WRC-15 reconfirmed the need to protect critical fixed-satellite service (FSS) services throughout the world in this unique band. The lower 200 MHz of the C-band downlink frequencies (3400-3600 MHz) were identified for IMT in ITU Regions 1 and 2; Region 3 identified this 200 MHz only for a handful of countries by means of footnotes to the Table of Frequency Allocations. A position of "No Change" was adopted in the band 3600-4200 MHz, and only in Region 2 was a footnote agreed which identified IMT for a few countries in the 3600-3700 MHz band. A "No Change" decision means that administrations have recognised the vital and widespread use of those frequency bands by satellite services. Anywhere that IMT is deployed, it will be subject to adherence to strict protection requirements with neighbouring countries. In addition, the Conference declined to consider a proposal for IMT systems in the C-band uplink frequencies (5925-6425 MHz).

Ku-band: In order to address a spectrum imbalance in Ku-band spectrum, WRC-15 identified additional spectrum for FSS systems between 10-17 GHz. A downlink allocation in the 13.4-13.65 GHz band in Region 1 (EMEA) was approved by the Conference. In addition, an allocation in the 14.5-14.8 GHz was approved in several countries around the world.

Future bands for 5G: The Conference decided that no globally harmonised bands for the fixed satellite service, mobile-satellite service and broadcast-satellite service in C, Ku or Ka band would be included in the scope of a new WRC-19 agenda item, which aims to identify new frequency bands for future IMT/ 5G use. Throughout the deliberations, multiple administrations in every world region expressed strong opposition to studying the Ka band for IMT/5G, again confirming the Conference's confidence in satellite being a key player in the future digital eco-system.

ESIMs: The Conference adopted new regulations to facilitate the operation of "Earth Stations in Motion" (ESIMs) in part of the Ka-band satellite spectrum (19.7-20.2 GHz and 29.5-30 GHz). ESIMs operating in this band provide satellite broadband connectivity to mobile terminals, such as on ships and aircraft. The new regulations adopted by WRC-15 will facilitate the global

roaming of such terminals, while protecting other services and applications from interference.

Other: WRC-15 adopted several agenda items for future conferences that will spur growth in the satellite industry. Studies were approved for WRC-19 for additional FSS spectrum in 51.4-52.4 GHz. In addition, the conference adopted a future agenda item for WRC-23 for additional satellite spectrum in the 37.5-39.5 GHz. Also, in a hotly contested debate, the Conference adopted a Resolution which sets the path towards allowing the use of FSS links for Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS).

Editor's Note:

This press release has been prepared by the Asia Pacific Satellite Communications Council (APSCC), Cable and Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia (CASBAA), EMEA Satellite Operators' Association (ESOA), Global VSAT Forum (GVF), Interference Reduction Group (IRG), Satellite Industry Association (SIA), Society of Satellite Professionals International (SSPI), World Teleport Association (WTA), and other international associations of the satellite industry.

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Eutelsat Communications is listed on the Euronext Paris Stock Exchange (ticker: ETL).

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