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Satellite Operators sign Crisis Connectivity Charter

Geneva, 14 October - In the past year alone, global natural disasters including in Vanuatu, Nepal and the Philippines demonstrated the critical role of communications in the wake of crises.The satellite sector is systematically part of the first responder team, providing immediate communications links that support supply logistics, urgent medical care and coordination of relief efforts.Today, at the World Humanitarian Summit Global Consultation held in Geneva, the world's leading satellite operators, Eutelsat, Hispasat, Inmarsat, Intelsat, SES, Thuraya and Yahsat, under the umbrella of the EMEA Satellite Operators Association (ESOA) and the Global VSAT Forum (GVF), announced the signing of a *Crisis Connectivity Charter* with the global humanitarian community represented by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC).

Embodying a commitment from the satellite community to enhance connectivity in humanitarian emergencies, the Charter formalizes terms and protocols designed to accelerate the ability of emergency response teams to access satellite-based communications when local networks are affected, destroyed or overloaded after a disaster. The principles of the Charter also include increased coordination to prioritize access to bandwidth for humanitarian purposes during disaster operations, pre-positioned satellite equipment and transmission capacity at times of disaster in 20 high-risk countries in Europe, the Middle-East, Africa and Asia, as identified by the ETC and beyond, as well as training and capacity building for the humanitarian community across all five continents.

Aarti Holla, Secretary General of ESOA: "ESOA is honored to have led this effort on behalf of member satellite operators who collectively deliver global coverage and connectivity. We have to recognize that number of crises around the world is increasing both as a result of climate change and geo-

politics. As a result, the unique ability of satellite solutions to help save lives is becoming indispensable and the Charter will enable the ETC to trigger pre-positioned satellite solutions in any one of their 20 high-risk countries or beyond."

Signing the Charter on behalf of UN OCHA, Stephen O'Brien, UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator said: "The humanitarian community relies on satellite communications as they are the only technology that are immune to natural disasters and that can be immediately deployed, regardless of constraints such as geography. This is a significant step for the humanitarian community and a step change in the way we have worked with satellite operators in the past."

Chair of the ETC and Chief Information Officer of the World Food Programme (WFP), Jakob Kern, noted: "The Charter seeks to ensure improved access to communications services in humanitarian emergencies, and with satellite services we can save lives. Through the Crisis Connectivity Charter and the ETC network, we endeavour to ensure that by 2020 all those responding to disasters, including affected people, can communicate to respond, recover and redevelop. Mobilising their members in this way, ESOA and GVF are supporting the ETC in making this vision a reality."

Signing for GVF, David Hartshorn, Secretary General noted: "Our members provide emergency communications on all continents using key satellite spectrum such as the C-band. We hope governments and administrations the world over will recognize the vital role satellite operators play in the globe's telecommunications infrastructure and its ability to ensure an immediate, robust and resilient response to disasters."

ESOA is a Brussels-based trade association whose membership brings together all European, Middle-East and African satellite operators and supporting members including service providers, manufacturers and launch service providers. Set up in 2002, the association's mission is to provide a unified voice and a platform for collaboration for satellite operators to ensure the continued success of the sector and to broaden the opportunities for policymakers to leverage satellite services to fulfill their objectives.

GVF is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organization with 200+

members from every major region of the world.The broad-based membership represents 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

UN OCHA is the part of the United Nations Secretariat responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. OCHA also ensures there is a framework within which each actor can contribute to the overall response effort.

The ETC is a global network of humanitarian, private sector and governmental organisations that work together in disasters to provide vital communications services. By 2020, the ETC will create an environment that provides emergency responders and people affected by disaster with a seamless, resilient and principled communications experience.

About Eutelsat Communications

Established in 1977, Eutelsat Communications (Euronext Paris: ETL, ISIN code: FR0010221234) is one of the world's leading and most experienced operators of communications satellites. The company provides capacity on 39 satellites to clients that include broadcasters and broadcasting associations, pay-TV operators, video, data and Internet service providers, enterprises and government agencies.

Eutelsat's satellites provide ubiquitous coverage of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific and the Americas, enabling video, data, broadband and government communications to be established irrespective of a user's location.

Headquartered in Paris, with offices and teleports around the globe, Eutelsat represents a workforce of 1,000 men and women from 37 countries who are experts in their fields and work with clients to deliver the highest quality of service.

For more about Eutelsat please visit www.eutelsat.com

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