

PRESS RELEASE

Satellite Communications Provides Vital Support to Aid Workers' Mental Health

19 May 2021, London: Enhanced satellite connectivity will help improve the mental well-being of aid-agency workers in the field by boosting communications in remote locations, assisting team work and providing an accessible support network, according to satellite communications specialists [IEC Telecom](#) and [Inmarsat](#), the world leader in global, mobile satellite communications.

A high proportion of aid workers report that they have experienced mental health issues in the workplace. According to a mental health and wellbeing survey* of the Global Development Professional Network, 79% of respondents stated they had experienced mental health issues with the overwhelming majority, 93%, believing this was related to their work in the aid industry.

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic expedited the spread of digitalisation across many industries and the humanitarian sector was among the first to acknowledge the need for change. With travel restrictions and local lockdowns, isolated teams in remote areas rely extensively on the resources of their headquarters and communication has become even more essential.

Satellite connectivity's role is now central to the continuity of operations undertaken by remote missions, particularly for mobile units in areas with limited or no reliable mobile phone (GSM) coverage. As a result, demand for robust satellite communications solutions has increased exponentially, especially among medical missions and teams supporting isolated communities.

Addressing the World Humanitarian Forum's hybrid event in London on 19 May 2021, Nabil Ben Soussia, CEO Asia, Middle East & CIS at IEC Telecom Group, and Steven Tompkins, Director, Market Development, Inmarsat Enterprise, explained how the development of satellite technology is making it easier to communicate with aid workers in the field and to provide support networks and assistance to them.

Mr Ben Soussia said: "When you are working in a challenging role like humanitarian aid it is important to not feel excluded, either corporately or physically. Satellite connectivity can provide a support network to ensure you are able to work alongside colleagues elsewhere and share the burden of work.

"With the advancements in telecommunications it is now possible to carry out real-time conversations via videoconferencing, to have telemedicine consultations when and where they are needed, and to reliably transfer large amounts of data instantly. This means remote workers can be better supported without busting budgets. We've already seen this happening in the oil and gas offshore sector and we see real benefits for the humanitarian sector too," Soussia explained.

Establishing communications in the field is a key priority in the initial phases of any humanitarian crisis. With every second counting, fly-away solutions like Inmarsat LX VSAT

terminal can be set up onsite quickly and easily without the need for an engineer, thereby enabling immediate connectivity to data, video and voice services over satellite. Reliable back-up can be provided by its BGAN service while connecting IEC Telecom's revolutionary OneGate system gives access to essential connectivity tools and added value applications like OneAssist (handsfree headset for remote maintenance), OneHealth (telemedicine) and OneMonitor (remote surveillance). With its virtual dashboard OneGate allows specialist access remotely, meaning the system can be set-up, adapted, updated and monitored from afar. This gives a great deal more flexibility and future-proofing to the communication network and the services which can be accessed via satellite connectivity.

In the field what is needed is proven, reliable and always-on connectivity, as provided by Inmarsat's Broadband Global Area Network (BGAN) service. Delivered by its resilient and reliable L-band satellite network, BGAN is the industry standard for mobile satellite connectivity, trusted by governments and businesses across the world to deliver 99.9% satellite and ground network availability when its most needed.

With the help of satellite communications systems, aid agencies can set up temporary offices using semi-fixed modems, access corporate applications, manage logistics, and rely on a wide variety of digitally extended services that enable e-learning, remote maintenance, telemedicine, and more.

Mr Tompkins outlined: "The pandemic has focussed attention on health and well-being and given the world a greater understanding of the problems faced by isolated workforces. We will continue to work with the humanitarian sector to resolve this challenge. Our technology roadmap includes planned improvements in order to offer more affordable, mobile solutions operating at higher speeds to support growing demand in communication and industry-specific applications."

Ends

Notes to Editors

* Survey carried out by The Guardian newspaper (UK) <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/nov/23/guardian-research-suggests-mental-health-crisis-among-aid-workers>

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About IEC Telecom:

With more than 25 years' experience, today IEC Telecom is a leading provider of satellite communications services. We enable digitalisation for the maritime industry as well as remote units on land. For urban networks, we provide a powerful satellite back up to ensure the business continuity of customer enterprises.

Our portfolio includes a wide range of satellite products (from handset to VSAT services), solutions, and value-added services. In addition, we offer 24/7 support for satellite-based solutions during their full lifecycle.

IEC Telecom Group has offices across eight countries: Denmark, France, Kazakhstan, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, Turkey, and UAE. For more information browse our website: iec-telecom.com

About Inmarsat:

Inmarsat is the world leader in global, mobile satellite communications. It owns and operates the world's most diverse global portfolio of mobile telecommunications satellite networks, and holds a multi-layered, global spectrum portfolio, covering L-band, Ka-band and S-band, enabling unparalleled breadth and diversity in the solutions it provides. Inmarsat's long-established global distribution network includes not only the world's leading channel partners but also its own strong direct retail capabilities, enabling end to end customer service assurance.

The company has an unrivalled track record of operating the world's most reliable global mobile satellite telecommunications networks, sustaining business and mission critical safety & operational applications for more than 40 years. It is also a major driving force behind technological innovation in mobile satellite communications, sustaining its leadership through a substantial investment and a powerful network of technology and manufacturing partners.

Inmarsat operates across a diversified portfolio of sectors with the financial resources to fund its business strategy and holds leading positions in the Maritime, Government, Aviation and Enterprise satcoms markets, operating consistently as a trusted, responsive and high-quality partner to its customers across the globe.

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