

NEW ERA OF CONNECTIVITY FOR THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR TO BE UNVEILED BY IEC TELECOM AT DIHAD 2024

April 2024, Dubai, UAE: Brand new technology which presents a new era in mission critical communications for the humanitarian sector will be showcased by IEC Telecom when the satcom service operator attends the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid & Development (DIHAD) Exhibition in Dubai's World Trade Centre from April 23rd to 25th.

Highlight of IEC Telecom's exhibition stand display will be Skyphone, a revolutionary new handset by Thuraya Telecommunications Company, a mobile satellite services subsidiary of Yahsat. This is the first time Skyphone will be unveiled in the GCC.

Skyphone by Thuraya is the first-ever universal smartphone with cellular and satellite connectivity. Complemented by value-added services from IEC Telecom, Skyphone will empower first responders and camp administrators in the MENA region with flexible and reliable communications in the field.

Digital access is expanding steadily across the world – with 5.35 billion people using the internet in 2024 and 97 million new users coming online for the first time in 2023, reflecting a growth of 1.8% over the past year. Internet adoption in Northern America and Europe surpassed 90%, while it is over 99% in most GCC countries. Despite the global march towards connectivity, regrettably, one-third of the global population still has no internet access. Predominantly they reside in areas where the aid operations take place.

The escalating risk of natural disasters and growing geopolitical tensions underscore the critical need for humanitarian assistance. In fact, armed conflicts continue to affect 14 of the world's least connected nations. With aid operations facing mounting pressure, budgetary concerns become paramount. NGO operations necessitate dependable and readily deployable solutions that don't require substantial supportive infrastructure. Skyphone is ideally situated to meet this demand.

"Skyphone will offer the humanitarian sector the flexibility it requires for its critical operations. Connectivity in the field is not only about improved operations but also about saving lives and transforming livelihoods in deprived communities. With Skyphone, humanitarian corps will remain efficient wherever their duty calls them," says Nabil Ben Soussia, Group CCO, IEC Telecom.

Delivering seamless connectivity, Skyphone is ideal for humanitarian missions because of its dust and water-resistant case. Over GSM, the device will provide voice and data services and can be used for all types of applications, akin to a regular smartphone. Over satellite, Skyphone will offer Direct-to-Device service, supporting calls and SMS in 2024, with IoT and texting to be added in 2025. The launch of Skyphone aligns with Yahsat's D2D strategy, aiming to allow users to harness the capabilities of space technology anywhere in the world.

Committed to providing connectivity solutions to the humanitarian sector for nearly three decades, IEC Telecom takes the Skyphone's capabilities to a new level, enabling Push-to-Talk (PTT) functionality and tracking over the same device. These features are essential for critical missions, supporting cost-effective group communications on the ground, instant distribution of important updates, and real-time monitoring of user geolocation by the HQ.

“When disaster strikes, fast response is all that matters. With PTT functionality, Skyphone can be used as a radio, facilitating the coordination of rescue operations. GPS tracking, in turn, will provide visibility over the team’s deployment, helping HQ monitor the progress and send reinforcements to a specific user as soon as an alert is received,” adds Ben Soussia. “For long-term missions, such as humanitarian camps or social support programs, Skyphone (powered by Traksat) will serve as a powerful tool to boost operational efficiency, improving logistics and facilitating cooperation in the field,” he adds.

The Traksat¹ PTT solution encompasses a dispatch console for remote administration and an intuitive end-user application. In satellite mode, Traksat enables PTT services, geofencing, push notifications, SOS functionality, two-way messaging and more. In cellular mode, the PTT solution over Skyphone will also support the exchange of multimedia and video calls.

Skyphone will be commercially available in September 2024. The demo unit is being displayed at the joint Thuraya and IEC Telecom stand at DIHAD this week.

About IEC Telecom Group:

IEC Telecom Group is a leading international satellite service provider with nearly three decades of experience in engineering voice and data solutions. We support digitalisation for industries in remote areas with limited GSM coverage and provide reliable satellite backup for urban enterprises to ensure business continuity. Covering the entire communications lifecycle—from POC development to installation and maintenance—IEC Telecom has a strong regional presence in nine countries, a vast distribution network, and global stock, enabling worldwide delivery. IEC Telecom serves all major humanitarian organisations and is recognized as a leading expert in the field of network management and value-added services. Learn more at www.iec-telecom.com.

¹ Traksat was founded in 2012 as a specialized branch of IEC Telecom Group to answer the growing need for M2M, Tracking and Asset Management applications.