

Satellite Communications For Sustainable Development

About ESOA

The European Satellite Operators' Association was formed in March 2002 to represent the interests of the industry with the European Commission, Parliament, Council and the European Space Agency as well as other international organisations, national governments and regulators. ESOA's goals include ensuring that satellites benefit from the appropriate political, industrial and regulatory environment to fulfil their vital role in the delivery of communications. ESOA is governed by a Board of Directors made up of the CEO's of its Member Companies.

The activities and other details about the ESOA can be found at www.esoa.net. Members of ESOA are: EADS SPACE Services, Eurasiasat, HellasSat, Hispasat, Inmarsat, SES New Skies, SES Sirius, SES GLOBAL, Telenor Broadcasting Holding and Telespazio. Arianespace, EADS SPACE and International Space Brokers are Supporting Members of ESOA.

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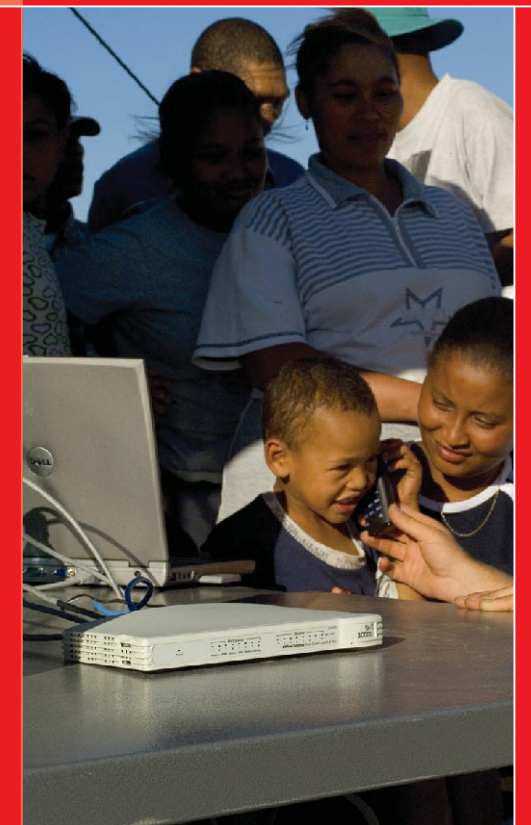
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Development of the world's poorest countries is empowered through access to communications technology. The European Satellite Operators' Association (ESOA) represents an industry that delivers these critical services in Africa and the developing world.



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The first live satellite call to Africa took place in 1963, between John F. Kennedy in Washington D.C and the Nigerian Prime Minister, Abubaker Balewa. It symbolized the beginning of the global communications revolution, but Africa has yet to fully benefit from the further advances of the last 40 years. It has resulted in a true digital divide.

The digital divide is well documented, but the figures are stark. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), in 2004 Africa accounted for 13% of the world's population, but for only 3.7% of all fixed and mobile subscribers worldwide. Africa has an average of 3 fixed lines per 100 people, compared to an average of 40 in Europe. The entire continent has fewer Internet users than in France alone.

The lack of a reliable communications infrastructure presents a real obstacle to the economic development of Africa, and connecting the continent's many and diverse countries is one of the biggest challenges facing the global communications industry. It is a challenge currently being met by the members of ESOA, who are involved in a wide variety of projects across Africa.



Reaching out to Africa

For much of Africa, the existing terrestrial networks are clustered around urban centres, leaving thousands of people and businesses in rural or remote areas with no access to voice, let alone data, connectivity. Satellite communications provides ubiquitous coverage over extremely large areas - several continents within one satellite footprint - with consistent and robust quality of service across the entire coverage area.

Through the services provided by ESOA members, developing nations have immediate access to some of the world's most advanced technology. Modern communications satellites can provide African users with access to the same technologies - such as broadband connectivity, IP data, 3G communications - as are taken for granted in developed countries.

Satellite communications is also highly cost-effective. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a joint initiative of African governments to stimulate socio-economic progress across the continent, is working with a number of ESOA members to reach its goal of improved telecommunications while simultaneously reducing costs.

Delivering essential services

Education

One of the areas in which satellite communications makes a very important contribution is in the delivery of educational resources to schools and colleges. Many African schools are very remote, with some children travelling many miles every day to attend. Internet access through a terrestrial network is not viable, but satellite communications can deliver e-learning resources directly to the schools, and the teachers and pupils that need them. NEPAD has identified the access to communications technology as an important step in improving and increasing the educational programmes across Africa, and ESOA members are at the centre of a number of projects that aim to achieve this. The benefits of e-learning can extend beyond schools too; for example, through human resources and training to improve the skills development of African employees.

Welfare

Satellite communications deliver a wide range of resources that improve the welfare of those living in Africa. The members of ESOA provide the networks across which African countries can enhance their democratic processes and civil governance, plan and build new infrastructures, establish health and disease management programmes, revitalise social and cultural life, and reduce the disparity between the rich and poor that is created by the digital divide.

Commerce

Satellite communications is a competitive leveller for businesses in Africa, offering access to the world's marketplaces and allowing Africa to take its place in industrial globalisation. The voice and data connectivity delivered by satellites enables African ownership and leadership in business, improves the opportunities for employment, and brings the power of networking across the continent and beyond. Members of

ESOA are working with new African businesses in sectors as diverse as finance, oil and gas, manufacturing, professional services and IT. At a local level, ESOA members offer assistance to new service providers, helping build businesses that will deploy satellite communications in their own communities; for instance, using local knowledge to offer IT and communications facilities for other businesses in the area, establishing internet cafés in village centres, or renting out mobile satellite terminals so that businesses can share the cost. African businesses are making a significant contribution to the value chain of satellite communications.

Satellite communications working for Africa

In addition to NEPAD, members of ESOA work with various agencies of the United Nations and the European Union, and a large number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), to provide satellite communications that assist with development in Africa. ESOA members also work directly with organisations - whether governmental or commercial - to help them utilise the unique benefits of satellite communications.

Developing African businesses

When Deliflor, the leading Dutch grower of chrysanthemums, was looking to expand its

operation in Africa, it identified a suitable business partner in Ethiopia. Located just a few hours outside of Addis Ababa, the local partner could meet all of the requirements of the Dutch company; except for communications. Deliflor's operations rely heavily on the data shared across its IT network. Working with an ESOA member, however, the company was able to help its Ethiopian partner to establish a cost-effective communications solution over satellite, giving it a reliable data connection to its new partner in the Netherlands. Satellite communications was instrumental in supporting a business that generated local employment for 200 people, at an approximate cost per terminal of €350 plus airtime.

Developing African education

An ESOA member is working with a consortium to provide educational resources across satellite to remote schools in South Africa. Two schools have taken part in successful trials, which use a compact and easy-to-use satellite terminal to connect to four PCs and a wireless network. As well as accessing information on the Internet - information that the schools had previously not had any access to - the satellite communications is supporting new links between the African schools and schools in the UK. By connecting to a central server in Cape Town, it is also helping teachers share teaching resources and follow a national curriculum. The project is currently being extended to 12 schools, before being taken nationwide.

Developing African welfare programmes

The mobile technology of an ESOA member is helping inhabitants of remote African village collect their pension and social security without fear of fraud. The mobile units, which replace the need for people to walk many miles into an urban centre, are equipped with satellite communications for high-speed data connectivity. Fingerprints of the claimants are analysed and checked with a central IT database, ensuring that payments reach the people who need them most.

Policy making

Around the world, satellite providers speak on industry panels, participate in government-industry working groups and conduct media interviews to educate authorities on proper selection and use of satellite systems and solutions. In addition, international organizations, such as the United Nations, have asked satellite operators to contribute to fulfilling their plans for development in developing regions. Through advances in technology, satellites provide a quick and cost-effective response to meet developmental needs and priorities.

ESOA wishes to ensure that adequate visibility and priority be given to satellites in policy making. Member companies will continue to support all efforts requiring satellite capacity and services. Public support and awareness is crucial to their ability to do this.

