

Economic emergencies vs emerging economies

From Sao Paulo to Moscow, and From Lagos to Shanghai, satellite-based VSAT networks are providing private – and public-sector interests with the tools needed to strengthen performance – and governments are facilitating such services through regulatory reform.

David Hartshorn, Secretary General, Global VSAT Forum

Getting cost quotes for a wide-area corporate network? Before signing the purchase order, consider that hundreds of thousands of corporate sites in more than 100 countries are supported by cost-effective telephony, fax, data and videoconferencing services for scores of mission-critical commercial applications.

Planning to launch a sustainable-development telecom pilot project? Before authorizing the wire transfer, note that thousands of villagers are being provided with inexpensive rural telephony, distance learning and telemedicine services in South and North America, East and Southeast Asia, Australasia, and Sub-Saharan and North Africa.

How? Via fixed satellite-based networks provided by the VSAT industry, which is represented throughout the world by the Global VSAT Forum (GVF), an international association of organizations engaged in the delivery of advanced digital communications.

The GVF is an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organization established to facilitate the use of VSAT services and systems. The broad-based membership represents every major world region and every sector of the satellite industry, including satellite operators, VSAT network operators, VSAT manufacturers, system integrators, value added and enhanced service providers, and telecom carriers.

The articles included in this publication were written by GVF Members and demonstrate clearly why VSATs – a term that refers to satellite-based very small aperture

terminals – are increasingly being used by corporate and government end users for everything from enhanced broadband multimedia to plain old telephone service.

Such versatility is now more affordable than ever. Satellite capacity is more abundant today, and transponders are generally more powerful, enabling the use of smaller – and more inexpensive – antennas on the ground. Additional space-segment savings have been realized through new modulation schemes, efficient coding techniques, and digital signal processing systems, which pave the way for narrow – or broad-band solutions.

Not surprisingly, VSAT-based solutions have not escaped the notice of governments. Despite the public and private sectors' best efforts to provide connectivity via land lines, telecom services remain out of reach for billions of people and many thousands of commercial enterprises. VSATs are available to address those requirements.

The potential end users of VSATs represent a vast untapped base of human resources, waiting to be provided access to the simple tools needed to unleash their productivity. This fact, long since underscored by the United Nations and International Telecommunication Union – is now recognized by most governments, which are moving to facilitate VSAT-based services by reforming their regulatory regimes.

This essential reform process is evident in a number of ground-breaking initiatives:

- Licensing requirements are being reduced in every region and, in some cases, replaced with general authorizations to enable more cost-effective use of VSAT solutions.

- Type approvals are being eliminated in the European Union and, in the Americas and Asia-Pacific, mutual recognition agreements have been developed by CITELE and APEC to minimize the type approvals process.

- Customs duties are being reduced in more than 40 member nations of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and less than one year remains before customs duties on VSATs are eliminated, per the terms of the 1997 Information Technology Agreement.

- Increased satellite market access is to be permitted in more than 50 nations per the terms of the WTO's landmark Telecom Trade Agreement.

- Access to regulatory information related to VSAT services is being expanded through the establishment of "One-Stop-Shop" databases, such as in Latin America and Europe.

As the reform process continues, the benefits of VSAT-based communications are being realized in every sector, both private and public. From banks and stock exchanges to schools, hospitals, and rural telecenters, VSATs are being seized upon to elevate economic, educational, and health standards.

In turn, higher economic and social standards are attracting foreign investment, creating employment opportunities, increasing exports, yielding stronger hard-currency earnings. [GVF](#)

For additional information please contact the GVF Secretariat at:

Tel: +44 1727 884 739

Fax: +44 1727 884 839

Email: david.hartshorn@gvf.org

URL: <http://www.gvf.org/>

Address: Global VSAT Forum, Fountain Court, 2 Victoria Square, Victoria Street, St Albans, Herts AL1 3TF, UK

Attention: David Hartshorn, Secretary General