

*Dr Eui Koh, President of the APSCC*

With the launch of Vietnam's first spacecraft, a new era for satellite communications will dawn in Indochina.

## Heaven and Earth: Vietnam's first satellite

▶▶ **The Indochina region comprising Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, is emerging as an area with growing needs for satellite services in telecommunications, broadcasting and other sectors. Responding to this situation Vietnam has taken its first steps towards establishing its own satellite presence in the region.**

Despite the agreement made in the recent Vietnam-US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) for the gradual opening of Vietnam's telecommunications market to US companies, the country's marketplace is currently dominated by state-owned carrier Vietnam Post & Telecommunications (VNPT). The carrier has a near monopoly on all of the country's services including fixed-line, mobile, data, Internet and satellite. Vietnam today has two million mobile phone users, a number expected to double by 2005. VNPT is the sole operator of Vietnam's two Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) 900 cellular networks, although a competing nationwide Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) mobile network was launched earlier this year.

In January 2002 VNPT received approval to proceed with plans for the country's first communications satellite project, Vinasat. Work on the US\$197 million Vinasat project is underway, with preparatory work already completed on the first satellite, Vinasat-1. Set for launch in 2005, the satellite will be equipped with 28 transponders and be used for telephone communications, Internet access, television and radio transmission and information networks. Responsibility for the operation of Vinasat-1 will lie with VNPT. However Vinasat-1 will also serve the needs of the ministries of defence and public security, and other public utilities including Vietnam Television.

With the costs of building and launching satellites rising since the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, financing for the medium-sized Vinasat satellite poses the most significant challenge for the Vietnamese government. Recognising the importance of the Indochina region, The Asia-Pacific

Satellite Communications Council (APSCC) has chosen to bring attention to the area and assist its development by dedicating a seminar to it. The historic city of Hanoi, Vietnam has been chosen by the APSCC as the venue for the first seminar to be held in a country other than Korea. The 'APSCC Special Seminar on Satellite Communication Systems in Indochina', to be held on 8-9 October, will bring together experts from across the range of satellite and related industries to share their knowledge with seminar participants from this important developing part of the Asia-Pacific region. Expected to benefit all sectors of related industries throughout the countries of Indochina, it will be particularly relevant to the Vinasat Project teams.

The joint organiser of the APSCC Special Seminar, the Ministry of Posts and Telematics of Vietnam is responsible for the administration of posts, telecommunications and information technology; regulation of public services and management of state-owned stocks in enterprises in the field of posts, telecommunications and information technology. The ministry will host a reception for seminar participants and give a general introduction of the Vinasat Project.

The APSCC Special Seminar comprises six sessions focusing on:

- Satellite manufacturing;
- Orbital location and co-ordination issues;
- Satellite services and applications;
- Satellite insurance and financing;
- Launch vehicle services; and
- Ground segment and services.

Presentations will be given by speakers from leading companies and agencies, among them:

- the Ministry of Posts and Telematics, Vietnam;



*The flags of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Images courtesy of flags.net*



- Ministry of Communications and IT, India;
- Alenia Spazio;
- SCC;
- Orbital Sciences Corporation;
- NEC Toshiba Space Systems Ltd.;
- Alcatel;
- Intelsat;
- New Skies Satellites;
- AsiaSat;
- SES Americom (HK);
- Loral Skynet;
- Boeing Launch Services, Inc;
- China Great Wall Industry Corp;
- Arianespace;

- Gilat Satellite Networks Ltd;
- Shin Satellite Public Co Ltd; and
- other participants to be confirmed.

There will be ample opportunity to take part in meetings with government officials, representatives of local companies and the Vinasat Project teams, as well as informal opportunities to network with seminar participants during the golf and sightseeing tours organised by the APSCC.

The APSCC hopes that this seminar will mark the beginning of greater interest in and cooperation with Indochina as well as those countries' participation in the affairs of the Asia-Pacific region. ■

## APSCC: a profile

The Asia-Pacific Satellite Communications Council (APSCC) was conceived and proposed at the '1992 United Nations Workshop on Space Communication for Development in the Asia-Pacific' organised by United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UN-OOSA) and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea and held in Seoul, Korea on 24-27 November 1992. The main outcome of the workshop was the agreement among the participants to establish the APSCC, which would be vital for the co-ordination and implementation of satellite programmes that could meet the growing demand for satellite services in the Asia-Pacific region. The participants at the Workshop agreed in principle to the proposal made by the Republic of Korea to establish APSCC. The participants also asked the UN-OOSA to communicate the proposal and the outcome of their deliberations on it to the respective Governments of the ESCAP region. The APSCC was formally established with the adoption of a constitution and the election of officers at the Inauguration Council Meeting held in Seoul on 25 October 1994, attended by 30 representatives from administrations and regional service operators in the region.

APSCC is a non-profit international regional organisation which aims to promote satellite com-

munications and broadcasting in the Asia-Pacific region through regional cooperation among members of APSCC for the social, cultural and economic prosperity of the region. To achieve these objectives, ongoing efforts are being made to exchange views and ideas on policies, technologies, systems, and services, which have the potential to benefit the region, to accelerate the introduction of services via satellite and to develop and broaden the national and regional satellite communication and broadcasting services of Asia-Pacific countries. APSCC is also active in the formulation of recommendations on technical standards within the region and the world. For more information visit the official website [www.apscc.or.kr](http://www.apscc.or.kr) or contact the APSCC Secretariat. ■

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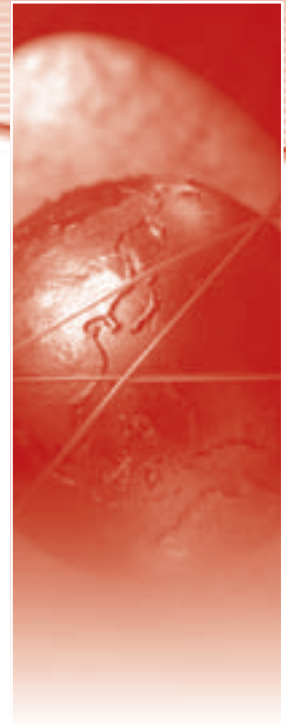


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