



MENASAT footprint across the Middle East



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The oil producing Middle East has had a lot of media attention recently, not surprisingly given the escalating price of crude. With the price-per-barrel having just nudged US\$100 at time of writing (2nd January 2008), the GDP of the region's oil-rich countries has tended evermore skyward. Even before the most recent oil-price "gusher", the region's oil exporters were realising average annual GDP growth rates well above the regional mean of almost 6 percent, and this level of economic expansion has been well reflected in – and partly facilitated by – growth in the size of national telecom markets across the region.

The regional thirst for broadband connectivity is a major driver of this growth in the national telecom markets of the Middle East countries – a thirst originating in an ever increasing emphasis on Internet access as a means to improving education at school and university levels, as well as from the applications demands of a range of private sector verticals ranging across oil exploration & production, financial services, maritime transport, and many more.

It is within this broad market environment that the programme for the next GVF Middle East & North Africa Satellite Summit will examine today's unprecedented levels of demand for IP-based services from millions of communications solution end-users across the MENA region. Large-enterprise, SME, SOHO and residential users alike, they all continue to clamour for cost-effective access to such reliable solutions in order to accelerate the accessibility of a multitude of band-

width-hungry interactive applications. To meet this demand multiple delivery platforms and technologies, notably satellite, are rapidly being deployed around the Middle East & North Africa regions.

In the enterprise sector alone, a combination of the aforementioned pent-up demand for broadband access solutions, together with a liberalising satellite market environment, is helping to drive business opportunity across the MENA region.

With this market liberalisation continuing to advance, many countries across the region have established separate telecoms regulatory authorities, with greater or lesser degrees of independence from the policy-making national administration. Eight of the 15 countries in the region have achieved tangible separation between regulatory and policy-making functions, with the seven that lag behind in this separation process – some examples being Iran, Syria, Yemen – being, not surprisingly, the least liberalised markets. Their "liberalising lag" is best indicated in the

fact that as of June 2007 these three Middle East countries, together with Lebanon and Kuwait, plus Iraq (facing understandable special circumstances), still exhibited total state-ownership of their incumbent telco. Amongst the other nine countries none had moved to total privatisation of the incumbent, and demonstrate a mix of minority and majority state-ownership.

From government networks to financial services, from the oil & gas industry to the marine transport environment, and from the education and health sectors to the reconstruction of Iraq, the international satellite communications industry is moving to address fixed satellite service (FSS) and mobile satellite service (MSS) requirements for bandwidth, ground segment hardware, and value-added services. And, more than ever before, the emphasis of the regional communications market agenda is on meeting an ever-increasing demand for cross-border solutions.

Over 5th & 6th March 2008 GVF will be



Photo courtesy of Christine Dolby.



co-locating its Middle East & North Africa Satellite Summit (MENASAT) with the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) 14th International Electronic Media & Satellite Communications exhibition for the Middle East, Africa & South Asia (CABSAT).

In previous years the GVF MENASAT Summit has been co-located with the annual GITEX show, also held at the Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre (DICEC). Also in previous years, during each annual CABSAT exhibition, the GVF has formerly scheduled a one-day satellite symposium. Now, in recognition of the ever increasing importance of the CABSAT exhibition for the satellite communications industry, GVF has enhanced its collaboration with DWTC and has repositioned MENASAT in the calendar to provide a significantly value-added and extended conference component to the CABSAT 2008 exhibition during the second and third days of the show.

GVF has partnered with UK-EMP for the planning, promotion and delivery of MENASAT@CABSAT 2008, the theme of which is 'Growing the Broadband Networking Environment & the MENA Satellite Dynamic'.

The fundamental questions to be addressed at the MENASAT@CABSAT 2008 Summit include:

- How are satellite-based broadband solutions competing in this dynamic environment?
- What are the advantages of satellite-based broadband solutions?
- What are unique characteristics of satellite broadband?
- How do broadband satellite service providers build their business case?
- How will satellite-based services continue to evolve to match future market and demand dynamics?
- Where are the revenue streams to be achieved and profits to be made?

The MENASAT@CABSAT 2008 Summit will bring together industry leaders to identify and discuss the development of new opportunities in satellite services and technologies. The emphasis in 2008 will be on discussion and the interactive exchange of ideas between delegates and representatives of satellite users, as well as operators, manufacturers and analysts, making this an unrivalled networking opportunity for the MENA region.

The 12 session themes for the two days of 'Growing the Broadband Networking Environment & the MENA Satellite Dynamic' will be:

- Regional Access & Applications: Satellite Networking Connectivity Initiatives & the Dynamics of IP Convergence;

- State-of-the-Art Maximisation of Satellite Bandwidth in the MENA Region;
- Applications Study: Business Continuity & Disaster Response;
- Market Vertical Study: Marine Transportation Sector;
- 21st Century Satellite Pure-Plays & Hybrids: Regional Alignment of the Convergence Factor & the Mobile Dynamic;
- Applications Study: Sustainable Economic & Social Development through Education Provision & Health Promotion;
- Regional Study: Communications & the Reconstruction of Iraq;
- The View from the Asia-Pacific Satellite Communications Council (APSCC);
- The New Training Dynamic in Regional Capacity Building;
- Market Vertical Study: The Energy

Industries & GVF Market Sector Initiatives;

- Alternative Satellite Technologies & Next Generation Networking: Market Opportunity in the Evolution of Platforms & Performance; and
- Driving the New Dynamics of the Regional Broadband Satellite Solution.

Full details of the 'Growing the Broadband Networking Environment & the MENA Satellite Dynamic' programme, including full descriptions of the above listed sessions, are available at www.gvf-events.org. Information about opportunities to speak at the Summit can be obtained from me at martin.jarrold@gvf.org, and information about sponsorships can be obtained from Paul Stahl of UK-EMP at paul.stahl@uk-emp.co.uk.

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