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All eyes on Asia

The ITU Telecom World 2006 conference and exhibition was held in Hong Kong, arguably Asia's most vibrant city, on 4-8 December 2006. Giovanni Verlini, Editor of Satellite Evolution EMEA, reports from Hong Kong.

In terms of numbers, the ITU Telecom World 2006 exhibition and conference was a resounding success: during a busy week, some 62,000 visitors flocked to Hong Kong, China to be a part of the event. The industry's top names were in evidence throughout a packed Show floor and Forum, including participants such as Alcatel-Lucent Technologies, AT&T, China Mobile, China Netcom, China Telecommunications, China Unicom, Cisco Systems, Ericsson, Fujitsu, Hitachi, HP, Huawei, IBM, Intel, LG Electronics, Microsoft, Motorola, NEC, Nortel, OKI, Orange, Qualcomm, Samsung, Siemens, SK telecom,

Toshiba, Verizon, ZTE and more.

The Digital World in all its excitement pervaded the event, with all the ground-breaking technologies that underpin it. "If I have one hope as the show concludes, it is that these technologies can truly transform the way we live, no matter who we are or where we live in the world", said Fernando Lagrera, Executive Manager, ITU Telecom. "To achieve this transformation we must all commit to making ICTs available and affordable to the whole world", he said. "As bags are packed and planes caught, and visitors return to their homes all over the world, how will the ICT industry remember this event? As well as the innovation, the lively debate, the busy halls and the fun, I hope its real legacy is as a milestone in our commitment to bridge the Digital Divide together," he then added.

The event was launched with a glittering opening ceremony on 3 December in the presence of H.E. Wu Bangguo, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, the Honourable Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Yoshio Utsumi, ITU Secretary-General along with Nobel laureate Professor Muhammed Yunus, founder and Managing Director of the Grameen Bank, and a host of other top ICT names.



Living the Digital World

Under the theme 'Living the Digital World', the event explored the trends, technologies and policies that are driving this world. Examples of broadband in action at home and in the workplace or new, converged product offerings could be seen throughout the event, with IP-enabled services such as TV and Video being demonstrated across the Show Floor.

"The global telecommunications business is in a state of dynamic transition as service providers become 'experience providers' and collaboration and interactions drive the next wave of growth in our industry. It was a great pleasure to be able to participate in ITU Telecom World and share Cisco's vision of the digital world with such a broad audience of distinguished telecom leaders, service providers and government regulators from around the world," said John Chambers, Chairman and CEO of Cisco Systems.

New web-based services and applications such as email on the move, multi-tasking or teleworking and a full range of location-based services were demonstrated and the many uses for mobile phones were on display. From mobile broadband to mobile music and TV, participants were treated to a host of colourful displays and high-tech gadgetry. Devices were busy talking to other devices, there were robots, fridges that can communicate, phones talking to vending machines and a whole lot more on show. There was a strong presence from the satellite sector, with a number of technology advances being showcased, which will enable a host of potentially life-saving services to remote areas. WiMAX and an array of other wireless technologies enabling on-the-go broadband access were also explored.

"At a time when convergence on many levels is re-shaping the landscape, ITU Telecom World continues to be the one forum where people from all over the world can meet to discuss industry change and opportunity," said Sebastiano Tevarotto, Vice President (VP) and General Manager (GM), Communications, Media and Entertainment, HP. "HP has supported ITU goals and activities for decades and looks forward to the next ITU event."

Making the right connections

At an event where making the right connections, networking and getting business done were the bywords of the week, it was no surprise that a number of high-level partnerships were formed and announced at ITU Telecom World 2006. Two giants of industry, Microsoft and BT announced a deal to provide IPTV services in the UK; and a pan Asian mobile TV consortium was hatched between SK Telecom, Toshiba, Global Media Networks, and International Mobile Broadcasting to provide the first mobile TV roaming service in Asia.

ITU Telecom World is a global networking platform for the ICT industry and it was here that the newly merged Alcatel-Lucent Technologies chose to unveil its new brand identity and mission, to an audience of peers, partners and customers. Global research specialists, Yankee Group and Analysys International launched a partnership to offer research that puts the China market into an international context. In addition, Aperto Networks formed a WiSE partnership of 50 companies to drive WiMAX interoperability.

A significant milestone was reached in the relationship between ITU and Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus with an announcement of an 'ITC Empowerment Network' to which Connect the World partner, Cisco Systems, announced a US\$1 million contribution and QUALCOMM and consortium Enclusion pledged support.

With so many deals being done and new opportunities announced, networking was clearly high on the agenda for participants. Underlining this was the fact that almost 10,400 networking emails had been sent by the end of the event, using ITU Telecom's online networking system. The feedback from this service was very positive; people were happy that ITU Telecom was helping them connect together both on-line and off-line at the VIP lounge.

Consensus from the showfloor participants was overwhelmingly positive too. "This year's ITU event presents an excellent opportunity for IBM to collaborate with other global thought leaders and address

some of the most pressing issues facing telcos," said Gary Cohen, General Manager, Global Communications Sector, IBM Corporation. "Telcos are challenged by the need to reduce costs and drive revenues, and ITU has provided a strong platform to talk directly with some of the world's leading telcos about how we can help them innovate to compete effectively in the marketplace."

"ITU is the international telecoms industry's opportunity to meet and discuss the trends and developments taking place around the world," commented Rory Cole, Chief Operating Officer (COO) international, Verizon Business. "For global players like Verizon Business this is an invaluable opportunity to share our global perspective in a very focused environment. We know that the benefits we will receive from taking part and sponsoring this event will continue long after the show has ended."

Industry-leading CEOs, government regulators and telecommunications ministers and many more from across the industry packed into the Forum rooms for a closer examination of our Digital World. Hot topics and themes explored in the Forum included mobile, wireless, broadband, convergence, next-generation networks, multiple play, on-demand services, user-generated content and personalized services. A number of sessions included passionate discussion on how all these new technologies can best be harnessed to extend the benefits of ICTs to those who still remain 'unconnected'.

Extending the benefits of ICT to all

Over two hundred and forty young people from 131 countries converged on Hong Kong to attend the ITU Telecom Youth Forum. They followed an action-packed programme of discussion and debate, and had opportunities to interact and develop mentor relationships with senior members of the ICT sector - government officials, industry executives, technology leaders, content providers and strategists.

Some 127 Telecommunication Development Symposium (TDS) Fellows from 78 least-developed and low income ITU member states came together for a symposium, organized by ITU with support from Cisco Systems, exclusive sponsor of the symposium. The TDS discussed how the use of advanced fixed and wireless technologies can help narrow the digital divide, transforming developing countries and helping them compete in the global marketplace.

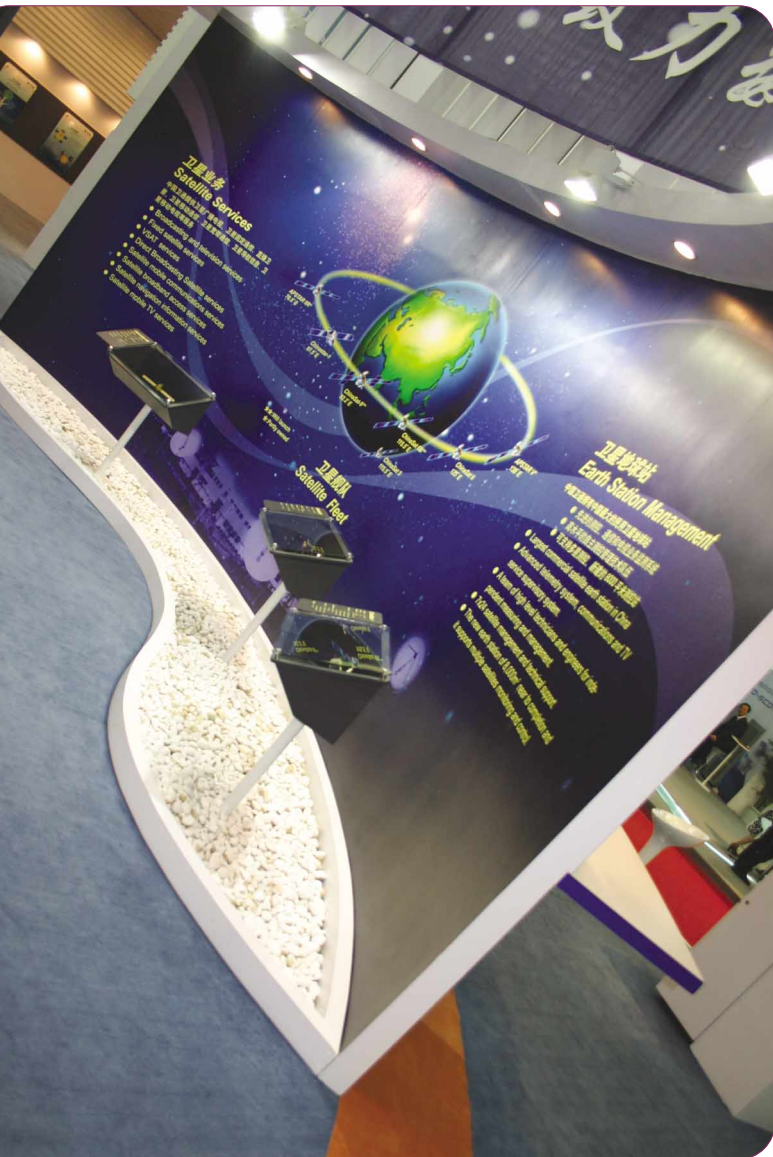
Extending the information society and promoting access to ICTs has been a major underlying theme of the event as a whole. During the week, constructive discussions were held, policies were examined, best practice cases highlighted and the types of technologies demonstrated which will help extend the reach of ICTs.

"ITU Telecom World 2006 is once again the world's leading showcase for the Information Society," said Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, "Convergence is bringing new challenges for telecommunications sector, but we see now real signs that an Information Society for all - the Global Village - is within grasp. Policy-makers should take this opportunity by talking down barriers to growth, trade and development."

The need for industry-wide collaboration and co-operation was a theme highlighted by many event participants. "We all recognise that the benefits of digital transformations will not materialize without co-operation", commented Guy Sebban, Secretary of the International Chamber of Commerce. "Governments need to work with business and other actors to ensure their country can attract the investment and encourage the innovation required to spread the economic and social benefits ICTs bring."

Innovation was certainly the buzzword in the Digital Life Theatre (DLT), a futuristic presentation venue. Themes explored at the DLT included mobile TV, how to create a superior customer experience, digital networking, how the family of the future will communicate, how to optimize user experience and how to create, share and distribute content.

Youth Fellows also shared in the Digital Life Theatre experience, with presentations from Fellows on areas such as ICT literacy or the 'human network'.



Naturally, there were companies from all over the Asia-Pacific region including Thailand's Shin Satellite, China Satcom, and Hong Kong's APT Satellite, AsiaSat and Asia Broadcast Satellite.

Spam on the menu

The problem of Spam was given particular attention during the event with a one day event entitled 'Countering Spam Co-operation Agenda'. Key international and regional organisations involved in the fight against spam gathered to discuss greater collaborative efforts to combat spam and related threats.

A number of organisations worldwide are actively engaged in the fight against spam, but a solution cannot be found unless these organisations share knowledge of the work they have undertaken to date, pinpoint potential overlaps and co-operate to address the gaps. Unsolicited commercial communications by e-mail represent a major plague threatening the Digital World. The workshop considered specific practical next steps that can be taken to work toward a common countering spam co-operation agenda.

The first symptoms of spam were mild irritation to users. Now the disease has progressed to the point where spammers are sending billions of messages per day, choking off the legitimate email correspondence that needs to flow freely within and between or-

ganisations and all inhabitants of the Digital World. Today, spam represents around 90 percent of all email messages.

Robert Shaw, Deputy Head, ITU Strategy and Policy Unit, comments: "Monty Python's new musical Spamalot might be hot fare in the comedy fan's world, but for the Digital World spam is no laughing matter. Not only is it a nuisance, it is now the primary mechanism to deliver viruses used to hijack millions of home computers which are then used without their owner's know to relay on even more spam. These 'zombie armies' are used to send out 'phishing' attacks intended to dupe unwary users to give up personal financial details which are used to siphon money out of their bank accounts."

Shaw noted: "Spam has got to be canned. People are losing their life savings and suffering credit problems, and businesses losing vital sales and customer trust because of downtime. Above all, it has seriously undermined user confidence in online activities, hampering the development of the digital economy. The organisations represented in this event have got a message to the world's top spammers: no matter where you are in the world, we are going to work closely together to track you down and put you out of business."

Grameens Yunus announces new partnership with ITU

Nobel Prize Laureate and Managing Director of Grameen Bank, Professor Muhammad Yunus, announced during a special address to participants in the ITU Telecom World 2006 Opening Ceremony, that Grameen is to team up the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other partners, including Cisco Systems, QUALCOMM and a newly formed consortium, Enclusion, to launch a virtual, global 'ICT Empowerment Network' as part of their collaboration through





the Connect the World initiative (www.itu.int/partners).

"We need to press the international community into action, so I am grateful to ITU for helping push this cause," Professor Yunus said, adding that 'this is just the beginning of an exciting, new, open collaboration and I encourage others to join us in this global effort'.

The newly launched ICT Empowerment Network represents the first concrete area of collaboration flowing from a broader agreement signed by Professor Yunus and ITU Secretary-General, Yoshio Utsumi earlier in the day. This agreement opens the door to broader co-operation between the two organisations, with the aim of combining Grameen's micro-credit expertise with ITU's experience in implementing ICT development programmes and partnerships.

The ICT Empowerment Network seeks to implement the vision outlined by Professor Yunus when he received the ITU World Information Society Award on 17 May 2006.

During his acceptance speech, Professor Yunus called on global ICT companies to take part in a global effort to combine the power of ICTs with micro-credit financing to help the poor to earn sustainable incomes.

To help make this initiative a success, Grameen will reach out to more than 3,000 microfinance organisations and 100 million borrowers worldwide, while ITU will lever the support and participation of its 191 member states and some 650 private sector members from around the world.

"This is a truly powerful partnership that will yield benefits for years to come", ITU Secretary-General, Yoshio Utsumi noted following the signing of the agreement. "From the moment we heard him speak last May, the entire ITU team was motivated to work with Grameen to help make Professor Yunus' vision of empowering the



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underprivileged with ICTs and micro-credit a reality", he added.

The ICT Empowerment Network will consist of numerous independent, self-financed groups of partners that collaborate either in physical centres or virtually. Each group will focus on at least one of three work streams:

- ICT solutions;
- sustainable business models; and
- capacity-building.

The satellite industry

The satellite industry was present en-force at ITU Telecom World 2006. Naturally, there were companies from all over the Asia-Pacific region including Thailand's Shin Satellite, China Satcom, and Hong Kong's APT Satellite, AsiaSat and Asia Broadcast Satellite (ABS). Besides, there was a substantial presence from international operators such as Inmarsat, Thuraya and Eutelsat. The list of satellite equipment manufacturers and service providers was an equally long one: Andrew, Patriot Antennas, UT Starcom and Galaxy Teleport.



IPSTAR launches the iMOVE mobile broadband solution

At the event, Shin Satellite Public Company, the operator of the IPSTAR satellite system, announced that the company is partnering with RaySat Antenna System LLC, a leading provider of cutting-edge satellite antenna technology for two-way mobile applications in the market, to offer the most powerful mobile broadband solution for moving vehicles in the market today using the Thaicom-4 (IPSTAR) satellite.

The IPSTAR 'iMOVE' product consists of RaySat's advanced low profile (5.9") array antenna that can be fitted to any vehicle (such as in SUVs, vans, buses, trains, and vessels). The antenna is able to track the Thaicom-4 (IPSTAR) satellite at all times while the vehicle is moving providing true mobile broadband services. By using the world's most advanced satellite system, IPSTAR, combined with Raysat's innovative mobile antenna, IPSTAR iMOVE offers the fastest mobile satellite bandwidth solution in the market today. It is ideal for high performance and cost-effective mobile video, voice, and data applications and suitable for the enterprise, government, military, broadcasting, and emergency/disaster relief markets.

Both companies successfully tested the IPSTAR iMOVE in Thailand and will jointly market the product throughout the 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific Region where Thaicom-4 (IPSTAR) provides services.

Patompob Suwansiri, Head of Marketing, IPSTAR, at Shin Satellite, said: "The IPSTAR iMOVE is our latest IPSTAR product that we are very excited about as it offers a unique and innovative solution that has not been possible until now. With the powerful combination of Raysat's advanced mobile antenna product and the high performance and unique characteristics of the IPSTAR satellite, we are able to offer our customers the best performing broadband satellite solution for moving vehicles in the market today. With such high bandwidth performance, applications such as high-quality, two-way video conferencing and Satellite News Gathering (SNG) are now possible in any vehicle while it is in motion. In addition, this will prove valuable for disaster/emergency relief applications where communications can be maintained even while travelling to the location. We look forward to jointly marketing this product with Raysat and will offer such services throughout the Asia-Pacific region."

Yoel Gat, Chairman and CEO of RaySat, Inc., the parent of RaySat Antenna System added that: "We are honoured to work with IPSTAR on mobile 2-way application. The unique attributes of the IPSTAR system is not just the very high throughput of the satellite. The IPSTAR modem enables our customers to enjoy the maximum throughput in every location under any weather condition through its advanced adaptive architecture."

David Gross, Chairman and CEO of RaySat Antenna System added that: "We view our relationship with IPSTAR as key in our marketing efforts in the Asian region and hope to make a strong impact on the Satcom-On-The-Move market."

The IPSTAR 'iMOVE' is initially available in Thailand, China, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand and will be available throughout the rest of Asia-Pacific in 2007.

Thuraya

During the week-long show and exhibition in Hong Kong, Mobile Satellite Service (MSS) operator Thuraya Satellite Telecommunications Co. brought the world's smallest satellite phone to the Asia-Pacific region. The phone will soon be available to customers in the Asia-Pacific region, following the introduction of Thuraya's services in 2007.

Currently boasting the largest subscriber base of satellite handheld users, the UAE-based Thuraya will be launching a new satellite (Thuraya-3) by the end of March 2007 to add East Asia to its existing coverage spanning Europe, Middle East, Central Asia, Africa and the Indian subcontinent. The expansion of Thuraya's coverage area will enable it to serve nearly two third of the globe's population. Among the countries benefiting will be China, Indonesia, South



Patriot Antenna Systems were one of the key players present at the ITU event. Photo courtesy of Giovanni Verlini.

Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia.

"We expect to be able to roll out commercial service to our new subscribers in East Asia within months from the launch date," said Thuraya's CEO Yousuf Al Sayed, who anticipates that the Company will acquire approximately 30,000 subscribers in the Fourth Quarter (Q4) of 2007.

Al Sayed added that Thuraya is looking forward to working closely with the telecom sectors of China and other countries in the region in complementing existing telecom solutions and products to ensure meeting the growing needs of their economic, industrial and commercial sectors.

"But essentially, we will aim with our local partners to provide access to telecom services to all people and families in remote, rural areas through the blanket coverage of the Thuraya satellite system," said Al Sayed.

On licensing and regulatory aspects, Al Sayed said negotiations were underway in securing licences in several countries. "We are working closely with the regulatory authorities in the region," he said.

With its large participation in the ITU Telecom Exhibition 2006 in Hong Kong, Thuraya aims to get closer to its potential partners and customers in the region and identify their local needs.

As a sign of commitment towards serving the region efficiently, Thuraya has recently opened a regional office in Singapore to address and support the needs of its distribution partners and subscribers in the region. Recruitment for the new office is predominantly made from within the East Asian region itself.

Thuraya offers a range of affordable solutions from handheld terminals and rural telephony (Public Calling Office and Payphones) to maritime communications, Broadband services and tracking applications, which will enrich current solutions available to people and businesses in remote areas.



Most recently, Thuraya launched its well-received second generation satellite handheld terminals comprising a satellite-only handset (SO-2510) and a smart phone (SG-2520) combining satellite and tri-band GSM, and a Thuraya module that can be used for developing any third-party telecom solution based on the Thuraya system.

ABS

At ITU Telecom World 2006, Asia Broadcast Satellite (ABS), the youngest satellite company in the world, made its official debut. ABS was founded in September 2006, when Thomas Choi and Gregg Daffner with major shareholder Citigroup Venture Capital International (CVCI), and the financial backing of Asia Debt Management (ADM) successfully acquired the Lockheed Martin Intersputnik (LMI) satellite operator from Lockheed Martin. Since the acquisition, the LMI-1 satellite has been renamed ABS-1 - the satellite is still located at 75 degrees East.

Speaking to your correspondent during the show in Hong Kong, Daffner outlined the company's plans for the future: "The Northern Ku-band beam capacity is almost full, and is mainly used for video distribution to cable head-ends. On the Southern beam, however, the signal is far stronger and Direct To Home (DTH) television is possible."

Asked about ABS' plans in this sense, Daffner explained: "Our intention is to launch a free-to-view satellite platform for Asia. The plan is to create a distribution platform with a number of in-country programmers that will work as local partners. The idea is to have anchor tenants in each individual market in the Asia-Pacific region that will create a series of distribution platforms. The key is to have local programmers onboard, as not only do they supply the platform with content, but they also contribute with the knowledge of the local industry."

ABS has already signed up a first series of customers to this platform, most notably programmers from Thailand that are migrating from a pay TV platform to ABS' free-to-view platform. Interestingly, the system is set to have a Conditional Access (CA) system built-in that will be given away for a nominal fee. This is to keep track of viewer numbers and therefore provide advertisers with credible data about audience.

China Satcom

Amongst all satellite companies attending ITU Telecom World 2006, China's emerging satellite operator, China Satellite Communications Corporation (China Satcom), deserves a special mention. This is not because at 350 m2 China Satcom's exhibition stand was by far the largest booth of any satellite company at the Hong Kong show - though this was certainly a remarkable characteristic. Rather, it is China's ambition to establish what is set to become the largest and most sophisticated satellite operator in the Asia-Pacific region that should take central stage.

As one of China's six major basic telecom operators China Satcom joined ITU Telecom World in Hong Kong with its distinctive network resources and professional communication services. The theme of China Satcom's attendance at the exhibition was 'Innovate the satellite communication industry, and dedicate to digital trunking services', representing the company's two core services (satellite communications services and digital trunking services), alongside other communication services integrating satellite and terrestrial services such as satellite navigation and Next Generation Network (NGN) communication.

China Satcom's exhibition stand's main color was blue. The idea of integrating satellite and terrestrial communications was reflected in the solid designation of 'sky and earth': the upper part of the stand was a space representing the abundant satellite resources of China Satcom, while the lower part was a model of a city with a host of communications resources and infrastructure. The two parts together showed the solutions and applications integrating the satellite and terrestrial communication segments.

In the lower part of the exhibition space there was a demo and interactive activities for visitors to experience the professional, differentiated and high quality information and communication services provided by China Satcom.

From Asia to Europe

Since 1971, ITU Telecom World has provided an unrivalled platform for strategic debate and business networking, bringing together the industry's CEOs, government ministers and regulators. The next ITU Telecom event is ITU Telecom Europe 2007, which will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria on 3-6 December 2007. The next ITU Telecom World event will take place on 5-9 October 2009 in Geneva.



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