

## **Satcom for Inclusive growth - the way forward towards accelerating 'Digital India': BIF**

**New Delhi, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022:** 'India SatCom 2022', the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of Broadband India Forum's (BIF) annual flagship event commenced today. Considered as a well reputed and one of the oldest events on Policy, Regulatory & Technology related aspects of Satellite Communications since 2015, the theme for India SatCom 2022 is '*Satcom for Inclusive Growth* ' and the Conference is being held physically in New Delhi on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

The inaugural session witnessed participation from almost all the key stakeholders for Satcom - **Dr. PD Vaghela, Chairman, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) as Chief Guest with Shri S. Somanath, Chairman, ISRO & Secretary - Department of Space (DoS), Dr. Pawan Goenka, Chairman, IN-SPACe , Mr V Raghunandan, Secretary, TRAI, Dr. Mike Short CBE, Chief Scientific Adviser, Department for International Trade, Government of UK; Mr. Suneel Kumar Niraniyan, DDG (Satellite), Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications; Mr. Benoit Sauveroché, First Counsellor - Communications Networks, Content and Technology, Delegation of the European Union to India as Special Guests of Honour. They were joined by; Mr. Pranav Roach, President, Hughes Network Systems India Ltd.; Mr. Mihir Rale, Chief Regional Counsel, Disney Star India and Mr. Jitender Ahuja, Head, Product & Services (Enterprise), TATA Nelco representing Mr. P J Nath, MD & CEO.**

The event during the day will see participation from other industry stalwarts, along with senior government dignitaries from ISRO, DoS, DoT, TRAI, NSIL as well as other leading government stakeholders.

**A BIF White Paper on 'Emerging trends in Satcom & Broadcasting' was released by the honourable dignitaries.** This White Paper examines the emerging and new trends in the satellite technologies in the future and the important applications & use cases which will make it enter the mainstream and core of 5G and the 6G networks in delivering high-speed broadband and converged access (broadband & broadcasting) to users. It examines aspects from a standpoint of technologies, standards, applications & use cases, broadcasting and associated regulatory challenges besides new requirements for spectrum in a holistic manner.

The eminent speakers shared their views on the immense potential of satcom to augment the Digital Communications Infrastructure and Ecosystem in the country, and how it may be leveraged to help realise the national goals of 'Broadband for All', leading to acceleration of Hon'ble PM' vision of 'Digital India'. They further deliberated on various technological solutions, business models and other critical policy and regulatory measures needed to bring Satcom into the mainstream, reduce cost, improve ease of doing business, and bring about more collaboration between the private and public sector, to enhance growth along with investment opportunities in this vital domain.

With a flurry of public-private partnership projects and growth of startups in the sector, accompanied by government measures on the policy as well as regulatory fronts in the recent times, Satcom in India is well on its way to establish itself as a viable and reliable means to achieve the goals and aspirations of a 1 Tn Digital Economy, besides supporting a number of mission critical and disaster management situations caused due to natural calamities. A number of enabling and

expeditious policy and regulatory measures are expected to propel exponential growth in the sector and position satcom as a mainstream option along with terrestrial technologies to deliver Broadband for All.

**The event later will see felicitation of the some of these private companies on their achievements in the Satcom Sector.**

Satellite internet could be an extremely effective solution for people residing in India's rural or remote areas, where providing terrestrial connectivity is a challenge - both in terms of feasibility and cost competitiveness. This is simply because Satellite connectivity is not associated with challenges of Right of Way, besides deployment costs of fibre and towers in inhospitable terrains associated with such areas. It is estimated that the cost of providing terrestrial connectivity in rural regions shoots up by almost 10-20 times, making it economically unviable for terrestrial technologies to reach the last 20% of the population.

Presently, satellite penetration in India is only 0.3 million subscribers (ICRA), and all for enterprise use. This outlines the huge pent up demand and scope of growth for satcom services in India. This untapped potential, and the growing need to augment the quality and capacity of data connectivity services in line with the incredible uptake of the same - both in the urban and rural markets - necessitates that satcom be leveraged to extract optimum benefits and utility for the people.

Satellite broadband would propel development of unique use cases in various disciplines, including Education, Healthcare, Disaster Management, e-Governance, Infotainment, Agri-tech, Transport and Logistics, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), Aeronautical and Maritime connectivity, Connected Vehicles, amongst several others. Satcom will play a major role in providing both connectivity as well as backhaul services to the networks for these crucial sectors. Since it is crucial that such key digital services are facilitated through various measures to reach the under-connected and unconnected effectively, mainstreaming Satcom would enable reaching out and delivering efficient internet connectivity to these remote locations in India, for enhanced Digital Inclusion.

**BIF President, Mr. TV Ramachandran**, shared on the occasion, *"The Government & the Regulator have clearly demonstrated their intent to facilitate the mainstreaming of satcom through a number of initiatives for providing efficient, reliable and affordable digital connectivity to the Indian citizens. Thanks to these measures coupled with a vibrant startup industry raring to go, we expect to see Satcom help bridge the Digital Divide, especially for providing inclusive connectivity to the farthest, remotest and most difficult-to-reach regions of the country thereby helping in augmenting Digital Inclusivity. Through use of Satcom for various use cases such as IoT, healthcare, agri-tech, supply chain management, transportation, etc. it would also be beneficial for our vision towards Atmanirbharta and Industry 4.0, thereby further fuelling the economic growth of the country."*

With an enabling policy and regulatory framework that is technology neutral, ensures a level playing field and provides fair and non-discriminatory market access to any type of technology initiative, Satcom stands an excellent chance to help fulfil digital goals and aspirations of 1.4 billion citizens of the country.

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### **About Broadband India Forum**

Broadband India Forum (BIF) functions as a policy forum and think-tank that works for the development & enhancement of the entire broadband ecosystem in a holistic, technology-neutral and service-neutral manner. BIF has established itself as a thought leader and a credible and effective voice, to help propel the nation to achieve the country's ambitious vision of creating a Digital India. To achieve this, BIF works to promote the rapid development of policies, so as to facilitate affordable and high-speed ubiquitous broadband throughout the country.

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