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INTERNATIONAL SATELLITE INDUSTRY SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTS VSAT INSTALLER TRAINING COURSE IN WEST AFRICA

Continued Rollout of GVF Educational Programme Aims to Improve Satellite Communications Quality-of-Service Standards Throughout Every Region of the World

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LAGOS, Nigeria – Satellite industry quality-of-service standards have begun to be strengthened in Africa with the first-ever provision of the *GVF VSAT Installer Course*. The training programme is part of a global campaign launched recently by the international satellite sector to tackle the issue of communication signals interference – a technical problem that often impedes service quality and costs the industry millions of dollars each year in added operational expenses.

“The trainees found the GVF’s curriculum to be very valuable, as well as the hands-on approach of the instructor who was excellent” said Solomon Affun, HR & Training Manager for Accelon, a GVF Member and local satellite communications service provider, which hosted the event last week at its office here in Lagos. “The course provided the information tools necessary to effectively deploy satellite earth stations in Africa.”

The instructor for the course was Geoffrey Daniell, an independent consultant with Geoffrey Daniell Communications and Regional Correspondent for GVF, the U.K.-based non-profit association of the international satellite industry, which has developed and is co-ordinating worldwide rollout of the training programme.

Mr. Daniell, who has more than a decade of experience integrating, installing and commissioning satellite communications earth stations, provided seven days of classroom teaching followed by three days of applied installation instruction and a final test. An official *GVF VSAT Installer Course Certificate* will be presented to students for successful completion of the programme, as well as a wallet card that identifies that person as having met the GVF Standards.

Twenty students participated in the training course, including Accelon staff and external installers who will be working with value-added resellers throughout Nigeria. Further GVF training is envisioned for Accelon personnel as the company expands its operations throughout West Africa and, eventually, the entire continent.

The GVF is currently developing plans to deliver the course in co-ordination with other organisations in Africa, as well as throughout Asia, the Arab Region, the Americas and Europe. The course ranges in duration from 1-10 days, depending on students’ level of expertise. A nominal fee is charged to cover expenses associated with course administration.

“Our objective is to promote higher standards in VSAT installations and, in so doing, to improve the quality and competitiveness of satellite communications,” said George Jusaites, Chair of the GVF Education & Training Working Group, which created and is rolling out the programme. The *GVF VSAT Installer Training Course* materials include a 140-page manual that provides VSAT installers with a set of industry “Best Practices”. These were established through consensus of the GVF working group members, who dedicated one year of work developing the course.

“It is also important that the course be provided on an internationally accredited basis,” said Jock Anderson, Accelon’s Chief Operating Officer. Initial steps were taken in this regard, when the training programme was unveiled in December 2003. Dick Tauber, the Chairman of the World Broadcasting Union’s Inter-Union Satellite Operations Group (WBU-ISOG) recognised the programme as “a real milestone for the industry”. The WBU-ISOG includes many of the world’s largest providers of satellite-based services – all of which share a common interest in assuring the quality of satellite communications signals.

GVF will continue rolling out the course through its global network of satellite communications experts, who are located in every major region of the world. The next course will be held soon in Brasil, where Cristovam Nascimento will serve as the course instructor. Mr. Nascimento has a strong background in satellite communications engineering and has been directly involved in deploying VSAT networks throughout Latin America.

Further GVF course dates and locations are to be announced soon for Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and Africa. Parties interested in learning more about – or becoming involved in – the GVF training programme are invited to contact David Hartshorn, GVF Secretary General, Tel: +44 1727 884 739; email: david.hartshorn@gvf.org.

About the GVF:

The GVF serves as the unified voice of the global satellite communications industry. Headquartered in London, GVF comprises more than 160 companies from 70 countries in every major region of the world and from all sectors of the industry, including satellite operators, earth station and sub-system manufacturers, integrators, teleports, network operators, and carriers, as well as consultants, law firms, publishers and other organisations involved in the satellite industry.