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## **NetHope Leads First Advanced VSAT Installation and Maintenance Workshop in Nairobi**

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**Monday, 13 October 2008**

**NAIROBI, Kenya** -- NetHope, a US based global information technology alliance of 25 of the world's largest aid agencies, in partnership with the Global VSAT Forum (GVF), the African eDevelopment Resource Centre (AeRC), and iDirect, are excited to announce that an advanced VSAT installation and maintenance training program was launched this week in Nairobi. The training was delivered through a new regional capacity-building facility that was established to enable the African communications community to more fully realize the objectives of 'Connect Africa', an initiative of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) that aims to greatly expand connectivity throughout the continent.

Attending the first workshop were staff from five NetHope aid organizations, representing five countries including Kenya, Sudan, Benin, Eritrea and Tanzania. The course is part of three levels of increasing complexity and culminates in Level 3 GVF VSAT hands on training, skills testing and certification.

In many places in the developing world and especially Africa, VSAT is the only practical solution but the technical expertise to set up and maintain systems is hard to find and expensive to contract. Training the local NGO workforce will enable faster less costly installations and increase "up time" once sites are operational.

"Delivering local training is one of the pillars of NetHope's operations," said Bill Brindley, NetHope Director and CEO. "We plan to build upon our collaboration with GVF, AeRC and iDirect to train 150 local workers over the next 18 months in Nairobi. The GVF training will also be offered through training centers in West and South Africa in early to mid 2009." The Nairobi pilot program will become a standardized component of NetHope's ICT Skills Building program and will be offered to all member organizations, starting January 2009.

In support of the NetHope program - and as part of its commitment to the ITU 'Connect Africa' initiative - GVF matched each paid registration with delivery of an additional complimentary seat in the training course. "The satellite industry is proud to serve as a partner of NetHope and of the ITU Connect Africa initiative," said David Hartshorn, Secretary General of GVF.

Likewise, iDirect donated 3 complete VSAT systems and installation tool kits to NetHope to enable sustainable training. David Wren, Director of Field Services said, "having the right knowledge without the right tools is a weak link in the chain. We want to ensure that NetHope



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technical staff have the means, knowledge and experience to do a proper field installation the first time".

NetHope aid organizations plan to install hundreds of new VSAT sites in the next 18 months. VSAT solutions are also especially critical to deploying relief in the wake of disasters. Donations for tuition and VSAT tools kits are needed to scale local workforce development.

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*NetHope ([www.nethope.org](http://www.nethope.org)): NetHope is a new generation Information and Communications Technology consortium of 25 of the international community's leading non-governmental organizations. NetHope is dedicated to the best use of available technology resources by its member agencies in order to improve their ability to deliver community benefit in the developing world. It does this by working as a highly collaborative team, sharing ICT knowledge, solving common problems, creating industry relationships to support the public benefit work of all of its members, and educating members as well as the wider community of NGOs,*

*A not-for-profit incorporated in the USA, is a global information technology consortium of nineteen of the world's leading humanitarian organizations. Headquartered in McLean, Virginia, NetHope empowers its members to offer improved services to their beneficiaries by developing innovative and sensible IT solutions, negotiating pricing discounts, providing program management services and a forum for sharing knowledge and experiences.*