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- A monthly round-up of space industry developments for the information of our clients and friends -

SES Completes New Skies Acquisition

On March 30, ***SES GLOBAL*** (Euronext Paris and Luxembourg Stock Exchange: SESG) announced that it completed the acquisition of ***New Skies Satellites*** following satisfaction of the transaction closing conditions, including obtaining regulatory approvals from the U.S. ***Federal Communications Commission***, on March 29. That same day, trading in New Skies' shares on the New York Stock Exchange was suspended and holders of ordinary shares received $22.52 per fully diluted share, leading to an enterprise value of $1.15 billion. The New Skies' assets, including five in-orbit satellites and a sixth scheduled for launch in 2006, will be integrated into the SES Global group as a third operating division (alongside ***SES Astra*** in Europe and ***SES Americom*** in North America) concentrating on the Middle East and South Asia. Analysts have pointed to New Skies' access to the largely closed Indian direct-to-home broadcast market and significant backlog of U.S. Government contracts as key selling points in the transaction. Following the acquisition, SES Global and its affiliates will operate 43 satellites at 32 orbital locations, providing seamless coverage of the globe and earning anticipated annual revenues approaching $2 billion.

ICO and Measat Sign Launch Contracts

Measat Global Bhd's wholly owned subsidiary, ***Measat Satellite Systems Sdn Bhd***, entered into a $44 million contract with ***PanAmSat Corporation*** on March 13 for launch of its Measat 1R satellite. The novel "full service" arrangement provides for launch services by ***Land Launch*** on a ***Zenit 3-SLB*** launcher from the ***Baikonur Cosmodrome*** in Kazakhstan and includes launch campaign management services by PanAmSat. Measat 1R, an ***Orbital Sciences Corporation*** Star-2 bus spacecraft, will include 12 C- and 12- Ku band transponders designed to support next-generation direct-to-home, Internet and video distribution services in the Asia Pacific region and with global beam coverage of Eastern Africa, the Middle East and Australia. On March 16, ***ICO North America*** announced the selection of ***International Launch Services*** to deploy its next-generation Mobile Satellite Service spacecraft, currently under construction by ***Space Systems/Loral***, on an ***Atlas V-421*** launch vehicle from the ***Cape Canaveral Air Force Station*** by July 1, 2007. ICO is among several companies, including ***MSV***, ***TerreStar*** and ***Inmarsat***, planning to use geostationary satellites to provide high-speed links to fixed and mobile terminals, including hand-held telephones, throughout North America.

Loral Skynet Returns to North America

Loral Skynet, a subsidiary of ***Loral Space & Communications*** (NASDAQ: LORL), announced on March 20 that it has resumed offering Fixed Satellite Services (FSS) to customers in North America after a two-year absence pursuant to the terms of Loral's agreement to sell certain of its North American assets to ***Intelsat*** in March 2004. Loral Skynet currently operates two satellites that provide coverage of North America, ***Telstar 14/Estrela do Sul*** and ***Telstar 12*** (both Ku-band) and will also offer FSS services via the four leased transponders it will operate on Satmex 6, a high-power C- and Ku-band satellite scheduled to begin service this summer. With the resumption of services in North America, Loral Skynet is once again a global satellite operator providing a wide range of communications, video and IP-powered hybrid satellite and terrestrial network services in every major geographic region.

Ciel-2 Awarded to Alcatel Alenia Space

On March 17, ***Alcatel Alenia Space*** announced that it was selected by ***SES Global*** affiliate ***Ciel Satellite*** of Canada to deliver the ***Ciel-2*** satellite. The spacecraft, based on the ***Spacebus 4000 C4*** platform, will be equipped with 32 Ku-band transponders configured into regional and spot beams maximizing the frequency reuse up to nine times. Ciel-2 is scheduled for launch in late 2008 and will be positioned at the 129°W orbital position with coverage of North America.

SPAINSAT and HOT BIRD™ 7A Launched

An ***Ariane 5 ECA*** launch vehicle successfully launched the ***SPAINSAT*** governmental communications spacecraft and ***Eutelsat***'s ***HOT BIRD™ 7A*** broadcast satellite on March 11 from the European spaceport in ***Kourou, French Guiana***. SPAINSAT is the first Spanish satellite dedicated to secure government communications and will be operated by ***HISDESAT*** at the 30ºW orbital position. The 3,680-kg. spacecraft, manufactured by ***Space Systems/Loral*** and based on its ***LS-1300 bus***, is equipped with 13 X-band and 1 Ka-band transponders and will assume the relay duties handled by the ***Secomsat*** military payloads on the ***Hispasat 1A*** and ***1B*** satellites. HOT BIRD™ 7A, based on the ***Alenia Alcatel Space Spacebus 3000 B3*** platform, includes 38 Ku-band transponders and is intended to augment capacity at Eutelsat's 13ºW prime video neighborhood, which currently broadcasts 850 television channels and 550 radio stations to over 113 million homes in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East via 100 operational Ku-band transponders.

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