

NGOs fight on the most vital frontlines of our time ●●

War and disaster are an unfortunate staple of our news cycles. In such times of hardship, the mission-critical communications that connect aid workers can be the only hope of the victims of catastrophe. With exclusive comment from Najwa Natalie Ayoub, Market Development Manager for Government and the UN-NGO/Relief Sector at Thuraya, we take a look at the sector.

Laurence Russell, Assistant Editor, Global Military Communications

Tragically, we live in a world of reoccurring catastrophes caused both by fraying international tensions between belligerent states and the destabilizing ecology of the planet we share. With no sign that such disasters will slow in our future, we must ensure that our first lines of defence are capable of acting effectively when we need them to safeguard life and restabilize societies.

NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) such as the United Nations, Red Cross & Crescent, or World Food Program act outside of the remit of the states they may be based in to supply emergency supplies, medical attention, and stabilization efforts in areas that have been faced with profound hardship. In a time when foreign aid budgets continue to be viewed critically, the work of these independent organizations has never been more vital.



●● *Najwa Natalie Ayoub, Market Development Manager for Government and the UN-NGO/Relief Sector at Thuraya*

As with any effort seeking to operate in remote, destabilized, or underserved environments, reliable communications are key to aid work. Technology of this sort is often akin to the mission-critical devices procured by leading military forces. The work of international aid is just as vital as defence for the purposes of preserving human life and civilization, making the technologies that support both goals integral to peace-making. The situation in Ukraine, for example, serves to exemplify how politically fragile the global ecosystem is against the threat of war and oppression, under which innocent people are always the victims.

Supplying our aid efforts

We approached satellite operator and satcoms technology developer Thuraya, a world-leading supplier for NGO aid organizations, to find out about their efforts to help those facing the greatest misfortunes of our time.

Najwa Natalie Ayoub, Market Development Manager for Government and the UN-NGO/Relief Sector exclusively explains, “Most NGOs enter procurement with a price-sensitive strategy, which Thuraya is well suited to respond to without compromising the high standards they intend to satisfy – namely flexible, lightweight, interoperable and accessible mission-critical communications technology.”

Any number of scandals around large-scale charitable bodies have added new layers of scrutiny to consumers’ understanding of charitable spending. It’s only natural that an aid organization would want to approach procurement very frugally, so Thuraya’s commitment to cost-effectiveness is vital to achieving maximum efficiency in accomplishing their crucial objectives.

“We partnered with Airbus on the production of our new satellite Thuraya 4NGS, which we will see launch in 2024,” notes Ayoub. “Our satellite will support the next generation of innovation for our NGO customers and the people they help in the future,” says Ayoub. “To that end, we’re developing a new portfolio of products specifically for the NGO sector, focused on better delivery of telemedicine services, both in remote treatment and in the rapid training of first aid skills to allow volunteers at epicentres to provide help on the ground.”

The recent pandemic was no small part of the decision to prioritize the delivery of emergency health services, which has served as a testament to how vital antiviral action is for preventing future pandemics. Of course, the waves of development in telemedicine technologies designed to fight COVID possess a universal applicability which is just as helpful when dealing with injuries caused by municipal destruction, malnutrition, and the eradication of disease.

Some experts have even suggested that high-tech telemedicine could revolutionize healthcare worldwide, by



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eliminating logistical barriers to treatment and care, both in the context of emergency aid and for healthcare in general.

Ecological collapse

Ayoub goes on to corroborate what so many scientists, campaigners, and diplomats have been arguing for years—that our deteriorating environment is actively contributing to the severity and frequency of natural disasters.

“Because natural disasters are becoming more prone to happen in the modern world, we’ve seen an uptick in demand for emergency equipment and services like ours, including government early warning and preparation efforts in anticipation of events which we’ve become certain of, such as further flooding in Asia, or drought in Africa,” she says.

While it’s indisputable that people at the global equator will be at particular risk of global warming, sea-level rise, and water shortage, the ripple effects of these events can and have struck

every nation on the Earth. Disaster prevention and mission-critical recovery will be required everywhere.

In the case of a threat coming from climate change, we must recognize that we are all under siege and must fight back as one people.

As is often the case, prevention is key. “The foresight to install disaster prevention and early-warning networks is vital to saving lives,” Ayoub points out. “We can’t afford to have procurement discussions on hardware and connectivity after a disaster has struck, it needs to be ready and waiting for the hazards we’ve been warned about.”

As we enter an era of unprecedented ecological fragility, with the Doomsday Clock once again left at 100 seconds to midnight as of January 2022, there is no doubt that many calamities await us in our future. It’s now up to us to take the necessary steps to adequately prepare for the instability of the world that awaits us.

GMC



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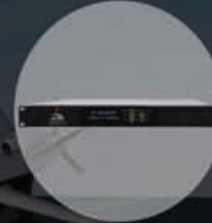
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