



Unique Opportunity for Space Observations on Iridium(R) Next Discussed at Royal Society Meeting

Idea of Flying Earth Climate Observation Sensors on Iridium NEXT Gains Universal Approval, Focus Moves to Funding

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BETHESDA, Md., Jan. 30 /PRNewswire/ -- Iridium(R) Satellite and the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Secretariat are pleased to announce the successful conclusion of a meeting at the Royal Society in London on January 22, 2008. The meeting, "Exploiting the New Earth Observation Paradigm," organized by Trident Sensors Ltd., was a follow-up to the GEO IV Plenary and Ministerial Summit in Cape Town last November.

The meeting brought together over 120 representatives from the international environment and climate science communities, leading U.S. and European weather and space agencies, and aerospace industry representatives to explore plans to host Earth observation payloads on Iridium's NEXT constellation. The unprecedented temporal and spatial coverage of key variables in global climate and environment change was clearly demonstrated, filling voids in monitoring systems and highlighting critical missions. Participants also discussed the unique public-private partnership, the opportunity it affords, and funding methods for these missions.

"The symbolic venue of the Royal Society with its portrait of Isaac Newton, the first president of the Society, provided a perfect backdrop for discussions of the unique opportunity to provide critical infrastructure to fill gaps in long term climate monitoring," stated Professor Chris Rapley, director of the Science Museum and former director of the British Antarctic Survey.

"In today's complex world, monitoring our changing planet is vital for exploiting new economic opportunities while minimizing social and environmental risks. Government funding will remain essential for expanding our Earth observation infrastructure, but commercial initiatives such as Iridium NEXT as well as private foundations and other donors clearly have an important role to play," stated professor Jose Achache, director of the Group on Earth Observations Secretariat.

The Iridium NEXT constellation, which can host 66 Earth observation payloads, can help to revolutionize Earth observations. The launches will start in 2013 and the constellation's operational life will extend beyond 2030. Guest sensors will utilize the real-time communication backbone of Iridium and, along with the constellation approach to sensing, will enable now-casting and

disaster early warning.

"Iridium is proud of the positive response to this initiative and the cooperation between science and industry," said Don Thoma, executive vice president, Iridium. "The meeting identified a series of climate missions that are needed but have no current way to get to space."

Activity will now turn to working with the national weather and space agencies and the science community to identify critical missions and find appropriate funding mechanisms for this program.

The Iridium NEXT initiative is an intensive, multi-year design and development program. NEXT will continue to provide services to the company's growing commercial and government customer base, but with an enhanced array of high-bandwidth data to voice and short messaging services.

About Iridium Satellite

Iridium Satellite LLC (www.iridium.com) is the only mobile satellite service (MSS) offering gap-free, pole-to-pole coverage over the entire globe. Iridium's constellation of 66 low-earth-orbiting (LEO), cross-linked satellites (and multiple in-orbit spares) provides critical voice and data services for regions not served by other communication networks. Driven by increasing demand for reliable, secure, global, mobile satellite links, Iridium has been steadily growing at a double-digit annual rate since 2004. Iridium serves commercial markets through a worldwide network of more than 150 partners, and also provides services to the U.S. Department of Defense, and other U.S. and international government agencies. The company's 250,000 users are in the maritime, aeronautical, government/defense, public safety, utilities, oil/gas, mining, forestry, heavy equipment and transportation industries. Iridium has launched a major development program for its next-generation satellite constellation, called "NEXT," through which it will enable satellite-based innovations beyond communications. The company is based in Bethesda, Md., and Tempe, Ariz., U.S.A. and is privately held.

About GEO

The Group on Earth Observations was established in 2005 after the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the Group of Eight leading industrialized countries (G8) and three ministerial Earth Observation Summits all called for improving existing observation systems. It now boasts over 70 member countries and 46 participating organizations. GEO is coordinating the construction of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), which will link together the world's diverse monitoring networks, instruments, data bases and models and other decision-support tools. GEOSS addresses nine priorities of critical importance to the future of the human race. It aims to help us protect ourselves against natural and human-induced disasters, understand the environmental sources of health hazards, manage energy resources, respond to climate change and its impacts, safeguard freshwater resources, improve weather forecasts, manage ecosystems, promote sustainable agriculture, and conserve biodiversity.

Website: <http://www.iridium.com/>



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