Toolkit

Media Relations — Practical Guide

Global Search and Rescue Day — September 10, 2026

For the administrations of member states and programme partners

International Cospas-Sarsat Programme

August 2026

Table of Contents

1. Background and how to use the PR toolkit 3
2. Official press release 4
3. Key messages 4
4. Adaptable pitch for journalists 6
5. Questions and answers 7
6. Practical guide: distributing the press release 10
7. Succeeding in media interviews 12
8. Rules to follow in all circumstances 14
9. Checklist: distribution in 10 steps 15
10. A short glossary of media relations terms 16

1. Background and how to use the PR toolkit

This toolkit contains everything you need to give Global Search and Rescue Day visibility within the media in your country: the official press release (which can be distributed as is), the official key messages, a pitch ready to be adapted for your exchanges with journalists, a question-and-answer document, as well as a practical distribution guide. **No press relations expertise is required.** You will find a glossary of professional terms in Section 10.

The PR toolkit works hand in hand with the **Global SAR Day Social Media Toolkit.**

Participants are encouraged to use the official press release (see Section 2) as provided in order to preserve message consistency. National adaptations should remain faithful to the approved key messages. However, Participants are encouraged to adapt the **pitch (see Section 4)**, as that is where your national statistics, stories and local angles belong.

Your 4-step path

1. **Adapt** the pitch (Section 4) with your national statistics, local angles and, if possible, a rescue story.
2. **Prepare** your spokesperson by using the key messages (Section 3), the pitch (Section 4) and the Q&A (Section 5).
3. **Distribute** the official press release (Section 2), as practical on September 10, by following the guide (Section 6).
4. **Share** your media coverage with the #GlobalSARDay hashtag and send it to the Secretariat (mail@406.org).

2. Official press release

The press release (available in the Annex at the end of this document) is the official text of the announcement, validated by the Secretariat. This approach guarantees an identical message in every country and the coherence of the global outreach planned for September 10.

The following items might be adapted as needed: the **national press contact block** (a contact person reachable in your country), to be completed at the bottom of the release, **translation into your local languages**, which must remain faithful to the official English text, **and the quote, if available, from a local rescued person. If it is not available, withdraw that quote placement from the press release.** Your other national elements — statistics, other rescue stories, regional angles — belong in the pitch (Section 4) and in your exchanges with journalists, not in the press release.

Please include both logos from this document in the header of the press release (logos are available here).

3. Key messages

Use these key messages as they are, but you can adapt them with your national examples.

1. On September 10, Global Search and Rescue Day, the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme highlights three advances which are transforming satellite-assisted search and rescue operations. The Return Link Service now enables beacons to confirm to people in distress that their alert has been received. Emergency locator transmitters with distress tracking (ELT(DT)s) allow aircraft to automatically transmit their position when abnormal flight conditions occur, even before any potential impact. The MEOSAR (Medium-altitude Earth Orbit Search and Rescue) system uses multiple satellites simultaneously to pinpoint a beacon's location within minutes.

2. A proven system with a growing humanitarian impact: Cospas-Sarsat has helped save more than 70,000 lives since 1982, an overall average of 4 people per day, rising to 10 per day in recent years thanks to technological and operational improvements. The system, which relies on 65+ satellite payloads, 32 mission control centres and roughly three million registered beacons, remains free of charge to any person in distress.

3. Behind every satellite alert, there are people. Technology detects the emergency, but it is people who assess and relay alerts around the clock, coordinate the response, and help save lives. Global Search and Rescue Day, held annually on September 10 to mark the first satellite-assisted rescue (Canada, 1982), is dedicated to them.

Official figures to cite

Use these figures (source: Social Media Toolkit, “Key figures” Section) and your validated national statistics:

- **Over 70,000** lives saved on land, at sea and in the air since 1982.
- **70+** satellites in LEO, MEO and GEO orbits.
- **100%** coverage, every point on the Earth’s surface.
- **Less than 5 minutes**: typical distribution time of MEOSAR alerts.
- **406 MHz**: internationally protected frequency for distress beacons.
- **45** participating States and organizations; alerts delivered to over 200 countries and territories, free of charge.

4. Adaptable pitch for journalists

Pitches are used to convince a journalist to cover a given subject. It complements the press release: the release informs, while the pitch creates the desire to cover the news. The pitch is used in the outreach email, on the phone, or during a follow-up.

The pitch is meant to be adapted. This is where you insert everything that brings the campaign to life in your country: your national statistics, your rescues, your Mission Control Centre, your spokesperson, your regional angles, etc. The more local your pitch, the more media pickup you will get.

Hello [journalist],

Today, on Global Search and Rescue Day, the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme is announcing three major advances that are transforming satellite-assisted search and rescue operations worldwide.

Certain emergency beacons can now confirm to people in distress that their alert has been received, new aircraft distress-tracking technology can automatically transmit emergency notifications while an aircraft is still in flight, and next-generation MEOSAR satellites can locate distress signals within minutes and with unprecedented accuracy.

These innovations support a system that has helped save over 70,000 lives since 1982, a system that now contributes to the rescue, on average, of 10 people every day around the world.

Spokesperson [name and title] is available to discuss the following topics*:

- The human stories behind a system that saves lives every day.**
- How the new Return Link Service changes the experience for people in distress.
- Why new commercial aircraft are now unlikely to disappear without a trace.
- How satellite technology is accelerating search and rescue response times.
- The significance of Global Search and Rescue Day, and your country's role in a recent save.***

I will be happy to provide additional information or coordinate an interview.

Thank you,

[Name and contact information]

*See Section 6.1 below
** To be determined in advance
*** To be adapted based on your local context

5. Questions and answers

The Q&A document prepares your spokesperson for the questions journalists are likely to ask, including sensitive ones.

1. Factual questions

What is Cospas-Sarsat?

The International Cospas-Sarsat Programme is the intergovernmental programme which operates the global satellite-assisted search and rescue system. Founded in 1979 by Canada, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union, it now includes 45 States and organizations. Its system detects alerts transmitted by 406 MHz distress beacons from anywhere on Earth and relays them to search and rescue authorities.

How does the Cospas-Sarsat system work?

Once activated, a 406 MHz distress beacon transmits a signal picked up by payloads carried aboard satellites. The signal is relayed to Mission Control Centres that process the alert and forward it to the appropriate search and rescue responders. Alerts from Cospas-Sarsat beacons can be detected and located anywhere on Earth.

How large is the network?

The system relies on more than 70 satellite payloads and 32 international Mission Control Centres. It monitors 406 MHz distress beacon activations, with a global fleet of approximately three million registered beacons worldwide.

How many lives has the programme helped save?

More than 70,000 people since 1982, an overall average of 4 people per day since the programme began. That figure has risen to 10 people per day in recent years, thanks to technological innovations and operational improvements.

What are the three recently announced advances?

The Return Link Service (RLS) allows maritime emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) and personal locator beacons (PLBs) to confirm to the person in distress that their alert has been received. Aircraft equipped with ELT(DT)s can transmit distress alerts, even before potential impact, when abnormal flight conditions occur. The MEOSAR system, whose repeaters are carried aboard the satellites of the world's navigation constellations, uses several satellites simultaneously to determine a beacon's location within minutes.

Who governs the Programme?

Cospas-Sarsat is an intergovernmental programme, founded in 1979 by Canada, the United States, France and the Soviet Union, and governed by the Cospas-Sarsat Council. It now includes 45 States and organizations. Its Secretariat is based in Montreal, Canada.

Is the service free of charge?

Yes. The Programme's mission is strictly humanitarian, non-discriminatory and free of charge to persons in distress. No fee is charged when an alert is received, regardless of the nationality, location, or circumstances of the person in distress.

Why should beacons be registered?

Registration is free and speeds up the identification of the person in distress when an alert is received. SAR responders can access the owner's contact details, the type of vessel or aircraft, as well as the emergency contacts to reach, all of which saves critical time. More information is available at sarday.406.org.

2. Questions about Global Search and Rescue Day

Why September 10?

This date marks the anniversary of the first satellite-assisted rescue in history. On September 10, 1982, three survivors of a plane crash in Canada were located by the Cospas-1 satellite.

What is the purpose of Global SAR Day?

To pay tribute to the people who make up the global search and rescue network, such as the operators who provide 24-hour monitoring in Mission Control Centres. Global SAR Day also aims to raise public awareness of the system and to remind beacon owners of the importance of registering their devices.

How long has Global SAR Day existed?

Global Search and Rescue Day was established by the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme in 2025.

Is Global SAR Day internationally recognized?

It is observed around the world and recognized by the programme's institutional partners, including the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

3. Sensitive questions (reframing answers)

How is cooperation maintained in the current geopolitical context?

Proposed reframing: Cospas-Sarsat is a technical programme whose mission is strictly humanitarian, non-discriminatory, and free of charge to persons in distress. That purpose has

been unchanged since 1979 and forms the common ground shared by the 45 participating States and organizations. The programme does not comment on political matters; its mandate is to detect distress alerts and relay them to rescue authorities in order to help save people anywhere around the world.

What about false alerts?

Like any emergency warning device, distress beacons are designed to prioritize alerting rescuers rather than risk failing to signal a genuine emergency. While false alerts do occur, their existence is preferable to missing a real distress alert. The most effective ways to reduce false alerts include proper registration, correct handling, beacon maintenance, and user education. These measures help authorities assess alerts more effectively while preserving the system's life-saving reliability.

Can the system detect everything? What are its limits?

The Cospas-Sarsat System is designed specifically to detect distress alerts transmitted by compatible 406 MHz emergency beacons. It cannot detect emergencies where no beacon is activated or when the signal's visibility to satellite is blocked. Like any communication system, its effectiveness depends on the availability, proper functioning, and correct use of the distress beacon. Once an alert is detected, responsibility for rescue operations is assumed by the appropriate national search and rescue authorities.

If MEOSAR is not yet fully operational, isn't the announcement premature?

Proposed reframing: The Medium-altitude Earth Orbit Search and Rescue (MEOSAR) system is in service at initial operational capability and nearing the final steps toward full operational capability. The gains in detection time and location accuracy it delivers are significant. The announcement concerns a capability being implemented progressively, as part of the ongoing modernization of the system.

Why aren't all beacons RLS-enabled?

Proposed reframing: The Return Link Service is a recent capability, available on beacons designed to support it. RLS-compatible beacons are becoming increasingly available as older models are replaced. Beacons without RLS remain fully functional: they transmit their alert exactly as before.

6. Practical guide: distributing the press release

6.1 Before distribution: preparing the ground

Distribute the official press release, through email or a news agency. The national press contact block is to be completed, and the local translation must remain faithful to the official text.

Adapt the pitch to your national reality, not the press release. It is the localized pitch that triggers media pickup. Add your national statistics, your spokesperson (SAR authority, space agency or supervising ministry) and, if possible, a rescue story that took place in your country (written authorization mandatory). This local material is delivered in the local outreach email, while the press release itself remains identical everywhere.

Designate a spokesperson and a contact person. The press release must provide the contact person's name, email address and telephone number. The contact person must remain reachable on the day of distribution and for the following 48 hours.

Build a targeted media list. 20 relevant journalists are better than 200 generic addresses. Prioritize journalists who cover aviation, maritime affairs, space, or the outdoors. If your organization does not maintain media contacts, consider working through your ministry's communication office, national SAR authority, civil aviation authority, or government communications service. Reach out to national news agencies, regional media in areas where a rescue took place or where a Mission Control Centre is located, morning radio and television programmes. When contacting newsrooms or media outlets, first proceed by email, then follow up with an email or call a day or two later. To build a media list, you may also consider contacting a local public relations agency, as they usually have many contacts and resources from which to efficiently build a relevant media list.

Prepare the visual material. Newsrooms are more willing to publish a press release accompanied by images. Use the brand asset bank from the Social Media Toolkit (logos, banners, templates, hero video), the image bank and B-roll on sarday.406.org, or your own images that are royalty-free and credited. Follow the brand rules: logos intact, your logo only in the space provided, photo consent for any identifiable person, real photos of your teams rather than stock images.

6.2 Timing: when and how to distribute

Respect the common embargo: September 10, 2026, at 00:01 a.m. (PDT), 04:01 a.m. (UTC). Simultaneous distribution in all Member States creates a global wave effect. If you send the release to journalists in advance (recommended practice for interviews), clearly indicate "UNDER EMBARGO until September 10, 2026, 12:01 a.m." in the subject line and at the top of the email.

Send it early in the morning on a weekday. Outside the embargo, the best window is between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. local time. Avoid Friday afternoons and the eve of public holidays.

Personalize the send. An email addressed to a journalist by name, accompanied by the pitch (Section 4), greatly increases the chances of pickup. Place the official press release, unchanged, as an attachment.

The email subject line is your first headline. Short, factual, with the strongest figure (e.g. “More than 70,000 lives saved since 1982: the satellite system nobody knows about”). Avoid institutional subject lines such as “Press release — International Day”.

6.3 After sending: converting the opportunity

Follow up with journalists. A follow-up by phone or email, 24 to 48 hours after sending, is normal and expected.

Offer interviews. Explicitly propose your spokesperson for radio, television or written interviews. Block their availability on September 9, 10 and 11. Give your spokesperson the key messages, the Q&A, and Section 7 of this document.

Respond quickly. A journalist’s request calls for a response within the hour if possible, within half a day at most.

Share the coverage. On your channels, share the articles obtained with the #GlobalSARDay hashtag, tagging the official Cospas-Sarsat accounts.

7. Succeeding in media interviews

Advice to give to your spokesperson. A media interview is not a simple conversation: it is an opportunity to convey messages, and it must be well prepared.

7.1 Before accepting an interview

As soon as a journalist calls, everything you say can end up in the news report. **Avoid accepting the interview on the spot.** Ask these questions first, then agree on a time to call back (even 30 minutes is enough to prepare):

- What is your name and which media outlet do you represent?
- What type of information are you looking for? What is the angle of the report?
- Who else will you be speaking with?
- Is this a live or recorded interview? How long will it be?
- What is your deadline?

Journalists work under strong time pressure: respect their deadline, or they will find their information elsewhere.

7.2 Preparing your content

- Decide in advance what you will say, and what you will not say.
- Anticipate sensitive questions and use the Q&A (Section 5).
- Prepare your key messages (Section 3) and variations for expressing them.
- Think about the headline: which sentence from your interview would you like to see as a title?
- **Be brief.** The average length of a clip broadcast on radio or television today is 8 to 10 seconds. A short, clear answer has a much better chance of being used in full.

7.3 During the interview

- Speak as you would to a newcomer: simple words, no jargon or unexplained acronyms (say “distress beacon” before “PLB” or “ELT”).
- Use words that convey a human dimension: talk about the people rescued and the teams, not only about satellites.
- Do not be afraid to repeat your key messages — this is expected and effective.
- Stay calm in all circumstances, including when interrupted.

Absolutely avoid: improvising or speculating; revealing confidential information; expressing personal opinions; speaking on behalf of others (administrations, parties, partner organizations);

asking the journalist to let you review their text; answering “No comment” since that phrase is perceived as an admission. Give a reframing answer instead (Section 5).

7.4 Keeping control of the message: two techniques

Bridging — Bringing the conversation back to your key messages: “That’s interesting, but for us, the real issue is…”; “That question is outside my remit, but what I can tell you is…”; “I would add that…”.

Flagging — Signalling what matters: “If there is one thing to remember, it is…”; “This is not widely known, but…”; “What the people listening to us need to understand is…”.

7.5 Avoiding the classic traps

- **The negative question:** answer with a positive formulation, without repeating the journalist’s negative words.
- **Silences:** do not fill them; calmly wait for the next question.
- **Interruptions:** keep calm and finish your point.
- **Familiarity or flattery:** stay cordial but careful; a friendly tone does not change the fact that everything is quotable.
- **“Off the record”:** assume it does not exist. Never tell a journalist anything you would not want to read in their article.

7.6 Preparation by interview format

Television — Dark-coloured clothing, without patterns; arrive early; turn off your phone; sit up straight; look at the person conducting the interview, not the camera; ignore surrounding noise.

Virtual interview — Pay attention to your outfit and your background (real, understated, avoid artificial backgrounds); camera at eye level (stand for the interview if needed); look at the camera; eliminate sources of noise; keep your notes and the press release within reach.

Telephone interview — Settle in a quiet place; have your key messages and a copy of the press release in front of you; speak standing up or on the edge of your chair to give your voice energy; smile (it can be “heard”).

8. Rules to follow in all circumstances

These rules apply to all material distributed under the Global SAR Day banner:

1. **No commercial promotion.** Avoid showing or mentioning a beacon brand or supplier of ground segment equipment, including in images.
2. **Strictly apolitical tone.** The Programme is a technical cooperation with a humanitarian mission. Do not relay any geopolitical question; the Q&A provides reframing answers. Follow the tone rules of the Social Media Toolkit: people first, simple language, no dramatization. The story is one of trust and gratitude, not fear.
3. **Non-discrimination.** Treat parties, participants and partner organizations in a balanced way.
4. **Accuracy of figures.** Use only the official figures in Section 3 or your validated national statistics. These figures take precedence over any other source; when in doubt, contact the Head of Secretariat (sjuneja@cospas-sarsat.int).
5. **Authorizations.** Any rescue story naming a person requires their written authorization; any operator profile requires their written consent and the agreement of their administration. Tell rescue stories with care: no graphic details, and centring the story on the response rather than on the distress.
6. **Validation.** Material produced from the adaptable templates in the toolkits (pitch, sample posts) does not require prior approval from the Secretariat — only your internal validations apply.

9. Checklist: distribution in 10 steps

1. **Complete the press contact details in the official press release** (the press release text itself remains unchanged) and adapt the pitch (national statistics, local angles and story).
2. **Designate a spokesperson and a contact person**, confirm their availability from September 9 to 11, and give the spokesperson Sections 3, 5 and 7.
3. **Build the targeted media list** (20 to 50 relevant contacts).
4. **Gather the visual material** (brand asset bank, sarday.406.org or national images).
5. **Obtain internal validations**, and where applicable, written authorizations.
6. **Send the press release under embargo** to priority journalists (interviews).
7. **Distribute on September 10 at 12:01 a.m. local time** (or in the morning).
8. **Follow up once** within 24 to 48 hours.
9. **Respond to media requests within the hour.**
10. **Share the coverage with the #GlobalSARDay hashtag**, tagging the official accounts, and send it to the Secretariat at mail@cospas-sarsat.int (links and event photos).

10. A short glossary of media relations terms

The professional terms used in this toolkit, explained simply.

News agency (newswire)

An organization that produces news picked up by many subscribing media outlets (e.g. AFP, Reuters, The Canadian Press). Being picked up on the wire instantly multiplies the reach of a story.

Angle

The particular way of approaching a subject for a given audience. The same event can be treated from a human, technological, historical or local angle; it is the angle that decides whether a journalist covers it or not.

Pitch

A short, persuasive text addressed to a journalist to attract their interest and make them want to cover the subject: the hook, why now, the possible angles and what is being offered (interview, visuals, story). The press release informs, while the pitch sells the subject. In this toolkit, the pitch is the adaptable piece: adapt it freely to your national reality.

B-roll

Supplementary video footage provided to television and digital media (images of a Mission Control Centre, of rescue operations, of satellites) that they can edit into their reports. Without images, no television report.

Boilerplate (descriptive or closing paragraph)

A standard paragraph placed at the bottom of every press release, describing the organization in a few immutable sentences. It ensures that all media have the same official description of the Programme.

Press release

An official document announcing news to the media: informative headline, the essentials in the first paragraph (who, what, where, when, why), a quotation from a spokesperson, boilerplate and press contact details. In this toolkit, the press release is immutable: it is to be distributed without any modification (except for the local contact details at the end).

Press kit

The set of documents made available to journalists: press release, fact sheets, biographies, images, B-roll and contact details. For Global SAR Day, it is assembled on sarday.406.org.

Embargo

An agreement by which a media outlet receives news in advance and undertakes to publish nothing before a specific date and time. The embargo lets journalists prepare their reports beforehand and ensures simultaneous publication everywhere — hence September 10, 12:01 a.m. local time.

Live / recorded interview

During a live interview, your words are broadcast as they are, without editing: no second takes are possible, but there is no risk of a truncated quotation. When recorded, the outlet edits your answers: only a few excerpts (8 to 10 seconds) will be kept, hence the importance of short answers.

Deadline

The media's cut-off point, after which a journalist can no longer include information in their report.

Royalty-free

An image or video that the media can publish free of charge and legally, with the appropriate credit. Never provide a visual to which you do not hold the rights.

Key messages

The two or three essential ideas you want people to remember, formulated simply and repeated in every public appearance. The same key messages ensure consistency among all the campaign's spokespersons.

Hashtag

A word or phrase preceded by the # symbol that links posts together on social networks. The campaign's official hashtag (#GlobalSARDay) makes it possible to follow and amplify all posts worldwide.

"Off the record"

Something told to a journalist in confidence, asking them not to publish it. In practice, assume it does not exist: never tell a journalist anything you would not want to read in their article.

Spokesperson

The person designated to speak publicly on behalf of the organization. They are prepared (key messages, Q&A, mock interview) and all interview requests are directed to them.

Questions and answers (Q&A)

An internal document listing the questions journalists are likely to ask — including the most sensitive ones — accompanied by validated answers. It is used internally to prepare the spokesperson, not to be distributed to the media.

Follow-up

After sending a press release or a pitch, a follow-up with a journalist by email or telephone to check their interest. One follow-up is normal; two become pushy.

Media coverage

Any mention obtained in a media outlet resulting from your efforts: article, report, interview, news brief. Coverage is compiled in the monitoring report to measure the success of the campaign.

Media monitoring

Systematic monitoring of what is published about a subject or an organization. Media monitoring makes it possible to record coverage, measure the uptake of key messages, spot opportunities, and detect errors that must be corrected.

Annex

Official press release

Global Search and Rescue Day — September 10, 2026

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 2026, 00:01 AM (PDT) / 04:01 AM (UTC)
PRESS RELEASE

GLOBAL SEARCH AND RESCUE DAY — SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

Satellite-assisted rescue: Three major advances for the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme

Through an array of new services, persons in distress receive confirmation of their signal for help, aircraft experiencing abnormal flight conditions automatically send distress notifications, and an increased number of orbiting satellite payloads enable faster detection and location of distress beacon transmissions.

MONTREAL (CANADA), September 10, 2026 – On the occasion of the second Global Search and Rescue Day (Global SAR Day), the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme reaffirms its readiness to serve humanity with new capabilities transforming the speed and reach of emergency response communication. RLS-capable distress beacons can now confirm to persons in distress that their alert has been received and located by the Cospas-Sarsat system, and equipped aircraft can automatically transmit alert information when abnormal flight conditions are detected. The MEOSAR system uses multiple satellites simultaneously to determine a beacon's location much more rapidly, allowing detection of a distress signal within minutes.

These advances build on an existing network that has helped save over 70,000 lives since 1982 — an average of four people saved per day since the programme began, rising to ten people per day in recent years thanks to technological innovations and operational improvements. Cospas-Sarsat relies on more than 70+ satellite payloads and 32 international mission control centres, monitoring activations of approximately three million registered beacons worldwide, at no cost to persons in distress.

"For decades, the Cospas-Sarsat satellite system has listened for distress signals around the world and alerted search and rescue authorities. With the Return Link Service, we can now close the loop, enabling confirmation between people in distress and the search and rescue groups responding to them," stated Cheryl Bertoia, Principal Operations Officer at the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme. *"For someone in distress at sea, in the mountains, or anywhere else on Earth, knowing that their alert signal has been received, and that help is on the way, can make all the difference. At that critical moment, a simple message of reassurance can turn uncertainly into hope."*

Three technological advances, a single mission

The beacon responds and confirms. Through the Return Link Service (RLS), maritime emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) and personal locator beacons (PLBs) can do more than transmit a signal: they are now able to confirm to the person in distress that their alert has been received, thus providing reassurance that the distress alert has been successfully acquired and its position determined.

Aircraft autonomous distress tracking. Emergency locator transmitters with distress tracking (ELT(DT)s) now enable an aircraft to automatically trigger an alert and transmit its position when abnormal flight conditions occur — even before any potential impact with ground or sea. This capability, adopted in response to recommendations stemming from prior aviation incidents, meets International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards developed in response to lessons learned from major aviation incidents and is intended to significantly improve the ability to locate aircraft in distress while still in flight.

Significantly faster detection and industry-leading location performance. The MEOSAR (Medium-altitude Earth Orbit Search and Rescue) satellite system — whose search and rescue repeaters are carried aboard the satellites of the world's navigation constellations — is nearing the final steps toward full operational capability. By simultaneously using several satellites to very quickly determine a beacon's location, this gain in efficiency will make a major difference when time is a critical factor.

"Every technological advance strengthens the same basic, constant, essential link: the human chain of rescue," emphasized Shefali Juneja, Head of the Secretariat at the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme. *"A satellite can detect an emergency, but it is people who make decisions, coordinate efforts, and save lives. Global Search and Rescue Day is dedicated to them, in recognition of the high-stakes work they accomplish each time someone is in distress."*

Behind every alert, someone is listening

Providing 24-hour monitoring, operators at the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme's 32 international Mission Control Centres receive alerts from beacons and forward them to search and rescue teams around the world. To honour these dedicated individuals, Global Search and Rescue Day was established on September 10 — the date of the first satellite-assisted rescue in history, which took place in Canada in 1982 when three survivors of a plane crash were located by the Cospas-1 satellite.

[TESTIMONY AND QUOTE FROM A SURVIVOR — to be adapted locally, if possible. If not, withdraw this placement]

The Cospas-Sarsat satellite-aided search and rescue programme reminds beacon owners of the importance of registering their devices, a free process that helps speed up the identification of the person when an alert is received. Operations, images, and statistics are available on the sarday.406.org platform.

About Global Search and Rescue Day

Celebrated annually on September 10, Global Search and Rescue Day marks the anniversary of the first satellite-assisted rescue in history (Canada, 1982) and pays tribute to the dedicated individuals of the global search and rescue network. Established by the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme, Global SAR Day marks its second year in 2026. Observed around the world, it is recognized by the programme's institutional partners, including the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). sarday.406.org #GlobalSARDay

About the International Cospas-Sarsat Programme

The International Cospas-Sarsat Programme is the intergovernmental programme that operates the global satellite-assisted search and rescue system. Founded in 1979 by Canada, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union, it now includes 45 States and organizations. Its system detects alerts transmitted by 406 MHz distress beacons from anywhere on Earth and relays them to search and rescue authorities. The programme has helped save over 70,000 persons since 1982. Its mission is strictly humanitarian, non-discriminatory, and free of charge to persons in distress. The Cospas-Sarsat Secretariat is based in Montreal. For more information: cospas-sarsat.int.

-30-

Media contact:

[FIRST NAME, LAST NAME]
[TITLE], [ORGANIZATION]
[EMAIL]
[PHONE]