

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

Support to NEPAD

Period of report: 2003 -2004

Orientation of work in support of NEPAD

ITU remains committed to provide full support to its African member states by implementing projects within the framework of the NEPAD, which will enable them to bridge the Digital Divide.

Areas of support for NEPAD

Infrastructure and communications

ITU is currently implementing a NEPAD Preliminary Assistance Project aimed at assisting African countries identify and formulate a project document with bankable projects in the telecommunication and ICT sector which would be used for sourcing funding to implement such projects.

ITU experts visited several African countries in order to collect data and hold consultations with relevant authorities. That trip helped them better understand their needs and plans in order to come up a concise document which takes into account all pertinent issues in addressing the NEPAD objectives for the sector. This exercise was followed by analysis of the data and preparation of the project document. The current project will be concluded at end of July 2004.

In addition to the above project, ITU through its Bureau for Telecommunication Development (BDT) continues to implement a number of activities within its framework and mission related to the NEPAD's objectives for the telecommunication and ICTs. Within the Operational Plan for 2004,

approximately CHF 1.4 million has been allocated for implementation of projects and activities that will benefit a number of African countries. These activities in the form of specific country projects as well as training (seminars and workshops) include:

- Centres of Excellency in AFRALTI (Nairobi) and ESMT (Dakar);
- Telemedicine projects;
- E-government;
- E-commerce;
- Multi Purpose Community Telecentres;
- Seminars & Workshops;
- Sector reforms involving policy, legal and regulatory support, harmonization of policies among countries, etc.

At the continental level, ITU is working very closely with the African Union Commission, the African Telecommunication Union (the AU specialized agency for telecommunication), the African Governments as well as the regional economic bodies such as ECOWAS, SADC, UEMOA and COMESA in order to implement the above projects and activities. At the global level, a number of partnerships are in place for the different projects and activities. For example, the ITU and the European Union are jointly implementing a US\$ 995,000 project aimed at supporting the countries to establish an integrated ICT market in West Africa in order to foster the development of related networks. This support in ECOWAS countries will enable realization of :

- Draft model ICT policy and legislation ;
- Draft model license agreement(s);

- National universal service policies, regulation and procedures;
- Model interconnection agreements;
- Spectrum and numbering management guidelines;
- Market data collection and sharing tools;
- Motivated and trained focal points in 15 countries and in ECOWAS/UEMOA headquarters;
- Training for at least 150 professionals on regulatory and market creation issues.

By granting seed money to projects, ITU continues to support resource mobilization efforts of its member states, which serves to attract financing from other development partners supporting development of ICTs in Africa.

Also, the ITU continues to work with several partners in delivering training to many African specialists in the field of technology, policy & regulation, human resources as well as tariffs. This continues to be a key priority in ITU's support to the NEPAD. In recognition of the difficulties faced by a number of African countries, the ITU is developing a programme where it will provide support to staff of the regulatory agencies in order to provide them with skills for conflict resolution and perform technical audits on operators.

Financial commitment to NEPAD

ITU has allocated funding of approximately US\$580,000 under its Telecom Surplus Programme, as an initial move to support African countries' efforts in implementing the NEPAD vision. It is envisaged that this phase would be followed by resource mobilization where the ITU will continue to play its catalytic role, which will enable Africa to bridge the Digital Divide and take full advantage of the ICTs in accelerating economic development and poverty reduction.