

## **Announcement**

### ***ITU and Nokia Siemens Networks collaborating to Connect Villages***

On the occasion of the *Pacific ICT Ministerial Forum: Connecting the Unconnected* held from 17-20 February 2009 in Nukualofa, Kingdom of Tonga, Mr Sami Al-Basheer, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau and Mr Sandeep Bhargava, Head, Corporate Affairs, Nokia-Siemens Networks, APAC, announced a new joint effort to bring connectivity to villages in the Pacific region.

This collaboration will take place as part of ITU's new *Connecting Villages* global flagship initiative ([http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/flagship\\_initiatives/connecting\\_villages/index.html](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/flagship_initiatives/connecting_villages/index.html)) which aims to help expand access to affordable connectivity – including voice and SMS/text services – in rural and remote areas. Through *Connecting Villages*, ITU is engaging various industry, government, financing and development partners to apply innovative low-cost solutions, while leveraging flexible bottom-up business models and public-private partnerships to reach the remaining unconnected. ITU expects to announce more *Connecting Villages* partnerships in the coming weeks and months.

ITU will provide project management and technical expertise while Nokia Siemens will provide equipment, technical support and experts, leveraging their Village Connection solution ([http://www.nokiasiemensnetworks.com/global/Insight/new\\_growth\\_markets/village\\_connection.htm](http://www.nokiasiemensnetworks.com/global/Insight/new_growth_markets/village_connection.htm)). ITU will also work with beneficiary governments to ensure a supportive policy and regulatory environment, as well as provide administrative support (i.e. authorizations, customs/duty exemptions etc). ITU will also seek financial support from participating governments as well as other potential donors/partners.

Both Parties will work together to secure support from Local Mobile Operators who will be needed to make available supporting infrastructure and facilities such as electricity, telecommunication towers and connection to their mobile network, as well as locally relevant applications and services.