

International Telecommunication Union

For immediate release

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New Internet Training Centre inaugurated in Tonga

ITU joins Tonga, Cisco Systems and Tupou Tertiary Institute to expand ICT opportunities

Geneva, 16 February 2009 – An ITU Internet Training Centre opened in Tonga today aimed at providing new opportunities for youth in the region. The training centre was inaugurated by Prime Minister and Minister of ICT, Mr Feleti Sevele in the presence of Mr Sami Al-Basheer, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, Ms Helen Stig, the Cisco Academy Area Manager (ANZ&PI) and Mr Alifeleti Atiola, Director of the Tupou Tertiary Institute (TTI).

The ITU Internet Training Centre opened in connection with the Pacific ICT Ministerial Forum: *Connecting the Unconnected* to be held from 17–20 February 2009 in Nukualofa, Kingdom of Tonga.

This new partnership will assist in delivering on one of the key themes debated at the Pacific ICT Ministerial Forum: how to enhance learning and development (human capacity building) opportunities in the region. Launched in parallel with a Centre of Excellence partnership with the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA), these two practical initiatives represent important steps to promote the use of ICTs and their role as a foundation for economic development in the region.

Using the train-the-trainer approach, the Internet Training Centre is currently training three instructors and four technicians on the Information Technology Essentials (ITE) curriculum which will then be offered to students at TTI from 23 February this year. ITU has also sponsored two instructors from the Internet Training Centre in Samoa to take advantage of this opportunity. TTI will also offer the Cisco Certified Networking Academy (CCNA) course with the support of Cisco and their regional academy, the Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE Meadowbank, Australia. The centre will provide students with certification that is in high demand, preparing them for employment at home or abroad. The addition of the ITE and CCNA curricula this year will help TTI move closer to its objective of offering a bachelors degree in information technology.

An initiative of the ITU Academy (<http://academy.itu.int/>), Internet Training Centres aim to help developing countries meet their human resource requirements for skilled Internet and “new economy” professionals by establishing Internet and IP-related training programmes in existing training/educational institutions. ITU works with public and private sector partners to set up Internet training centres, and the Internet/IP related training programmes are then transferred to training and educational institutions in developing countries.

ITU has worked with Cisco Systems, through their Networking Academy programme (www.cisco.com/web/about/citizenship/socio-economic/NetAcad.html) to establish approximately 70 new Internet training centres in developing countries, with special emphasis on empowering young women to gain marketable ICT skills.

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About ITU

ITU is the leading United Nations agency for information and communication technology issues, and the global focal point for governments and the private sector in developing networks and services. For nearly 145 years, ITU has coordinated the shared global use of the radio spectrum, promoted international cooperation in assigning satellite orbits, worked to improve telecommunication infrastructure in the developing world, established the worldwide standards that foster seamless interconnection of a vast range of communications systems and addressed the global challenges of our times, such as mitigating climate change and strengthening cybersecurity.

ITU also organizes worldwide and regional exhibitions and forums, such as ITU TELECOM WORLD, bringing together the most influential representatives of government and the telecommunications and ICT industry to exchange ideas, knowledge and technology for the benefit of the global community, and in particular the developing world.

From broadband Internet to latest-generation wireless technologies, from aeronautical and maritime navigation to radio astronomy and satellite-based meteorology, from convergence in fixed-mobile phone, Internet access, data, voice and TV broadcasting to next-generation networks, ITU is committed to connecting the world.