INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION
TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE (WTDC-98)

Valletta, Malta, 23 March - 1 April 1998

Document 179-E
26 March 1998
Original: English only

For information

PLENARY MEETING

Canada

ACACIA - ITU - AFRALTI

AFRICAN CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

Proposed Collaboration

1 Concept

IDRC-Acacia, ITU and AFRALTI, in Nairobi, Kenya, will collaborate in the development of the first of the African Centres of Excellence to address education and research in rural connectivity and universal access. A second of the African Centres of Excellence is planned in collaboration with ESMT in Dakar, Senegal.

The education programme will raise the awareness of senior African telecommunications executives, managers and technical specialists to the issues, experiences, growing body of knowledge and best practices associated with connectivity and African rural communities.

The key characteristics of the collaboration are:

• It will support the ITU Centres of Excellence programme;

• it will be supported by private sector partners in Canada and Africa;

• it will serve to amplify the growing body of knowledge developing in Africa through programmes such as IDRC's Acacia initiative.

2 Description

The collaboration will see the creation of a Centre of Excellence in Rural Connectivity at AFRALTI with the following attributes:

• It will be led by a chair in partnership with TEMIC;

• the chair will operate with an initial three year mandate and a budget provided by ITU, Acacia, the Canadian telecommunications industry through TEMIC and AFRALTI members;

- the chair will be known as the Canadian Telecommunications Chair in Rural Connectivity and Universal Access;

- the chair will develop course content and deliver courses to students from the executive, managerial and senior technical ranks of African government departments, PTTs, telecommunications utilities and private sector telecommunications and information technology companies;

- courseware to be developed will cover topics such as:

  – policy and regulatory frameworks;

  – infrastructure, both telecommunications infrastructure appropriate for rural outreach and human resource infrastructures required to support facilities such as multi-purpose telecentres;

  – technology issues addressing both telecommunications and information technologies in support of rural telecentres;

  – applications to support rural communities, including distance education, healthcare delivery, geomatics and resource management and government service delivery;

- with TEMIC the chair will establish international linkages with other organizations to share and animate programme development and delivery;

- the chair will develop an Africa-based research programme in collaboration with Acacia, ITU and other founders and members;

- the chair will establish a publicly available knowledge resource, or database, to support the programme and its outreach;

- the chair will establish a facility in which subscribing suppliers can demonstrate, integrate and test products and applications;

- the chair will introduce a distance education component to ease the cost burden of the residential programme.

3 Acacia and AFRALTI

Acacia is an initiative of the International Development Research Centre of Canada and part of the Canadian effort in international development. Acacia is performing action research in partnership with sub-Saharan African communities, other donors and the private sector in Africa and Canada. Through a programme of sector reform, telecentre pilots, capacity building and technology research, Acacia attempts to understand how communications and information technology can be introduced, effectively and sustainably, in marginalized communities to allow these communities to manage their own social and economic development. Acacia has comprehensive programmes in Senegal, Mozambique, Uganda and South Africa.

AFRALTI is the African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute located in Nairobi, Kenya.

_____