



**Message of the Secretary General of the African Telecommunications Union (ATU)
Mr. Akossi Akossi on the Occasion of the African Telecommunication Day
7th December 2006**

The Future of Powerline Communications in Africa

Powerline Communications or PLC technology holds high potentials for the development of African telecommunication and broadband markets. Utilizing the infrastructure of our energy networks PLC can contribute to the development of Information and Communication Technology availability and adoption in several ways.

- Firstly, PLC may reach areas without other fixed line infrastructure and provide telephone and Internet access to remote areas. In this context it is very likely to be used together with other alternative platforms such as fixed wireless or satellite broadband.
- Secondly, PLC may help to provide alternative operators with a more independent means of connecting end-users by offering an alternative to the incumbent's copper network. In this context this will aid our continent to develop infrastructure competition which increases innovation, lowers prices and leads to higher levels of penetration.
- Thirdly, PLC may assist operators to distribute last mile connectivity through fixed wireless or fiber within high-rise buildings. In this context operators may use parts of the existing electrical wiring instead of deploying new and costly structured cabling.
- In addition PLC supports our energy utilities by allowing them to more efficiently manage and operate energy distribution. Accordingly this will contribute to creating an economically viable business case for PLC operation.

PLC hence presents a concrete opportunity for Africa both regarding broadband market dynamics as well as economic and citizen driven politics. Although Africa has not yet introduced projects of sizes comparable to leading international installations (e.g. USA, Germany) started in the first years of this decade, this can actually be our benefit. This is because we can actually draw on technical advances and commence activities based on third generation technology with much higher performance and far better cost structure.

Now we need to address issues of regulation and standards and unite African stakeholders in order to ensure full exploitation of potentials for developing ICT on our continent. The ATU is glad to contribute to this process and welcomes cooperation and joint measures towards this goal.