



**CEPT**



**CITEL**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The International Telecommunication Union's World Radiocommunication Conference, Geneva, 13 June 2003**

The American and African regional organisations known as the Inter-American Telecommunication Commission of the Organization of American States (CITEL) and the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), signed a Co-operation Agreement today at the World Radiocommunication Conference, organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva, Switzerland.

Through this agreement the countries in the Americas and Africa agree to co-operate together and with the ITU with the purpose of developing stronger relations between them and the ITU, and for further improvement of the functioning of the ITU. Both parties will co-ordinate, as far as possible, their positions on matters of common interest and in particular will co-operate as far as possible in matters relating to the development of telecommunications in both regions by exchanging experience and relevant documentation.

"Closer coordination between regional organizations and the ITU can bring a tremendous level of healthy synergy that can only be of mutual benefit to our respective constituencies", said ITU's Secretary-General Yoshio Utsumi at the signing ceremony. "The work of organizations such as ITU is ever more critical in today's global environment, and the need for co-operation with regional organizations such as CITEL and CEPT is becoming increasingly important", he added.

## **Background**

### **ATU**

The African Telecommunications Union (ATU) is a leading continental organisation fostering the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) infrastructure and services in Africa. ATU provides a forum for African Governments, as well as private and voluntary sector organisations involved in information and communications technology (ICT) to formulate effective policies and strategies aimed at improving access to information infrastructure and services whilst promoting its use as a tool for stimulating economic development.

ATU was established on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1999 as a partnership between public and private stakeholders in the ICT sector in addition to its continuing policy and regulatory harmonisation role as an Inter-Governmental Organisation. Its precursor is the Pan African Telecommunications Union (PATU), which was established on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1977 as a specialized agency of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in the field of telecommunications. The OAU has since been transformed into the African Union (AU) as from July 2002. ATU represents the interests of its Member States and Associate Members at regional and global decision-making conferences and at other initiatives for regional market integration and capacity building.

The mission of the Union is to promote the rapid development of info-communications in Africa in order to achieve universal access, and full inter-country connectivity.

The Union envisions an Africa that is empowered as a full and active participant in the Global Information and Knowledge Society.

The Union is committed to:

- Visionary leadership and supportive team-work structures
- Development of human and capital
- Collaborative partnerships in ICT research and development
- Integrity, transparency and accountability
- Quality and excellence in service to all stakeholders
- Strong bias for action and effectiveness
- Development of information and knowledge society in Africa

ATU's top policy organ, the Conference of Plenipotentiaries (composed of the Ministers responsible for Telecommunications and IT) endorsed at its 1st ordinary session in August 2002, Nairobi Kenya, the following seven (7) goals for promoting rapid development of ICTs within the NEPAD framework:

- Advocating equitable share of global ICT resources

- Establishing strong partnerships
- Promoting investment in ICT infrastructure
- Creating intellectual property / capital
- Attracting and retaining competent staff at the General Secretariat
- Strengthening the financial base of the Union

Further details can be obtained found on the ATU website (<http://www.atu-uat.org>).

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## **Background**

### **CITEL**

#### **THE INTER-AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATION COMMISSION - CITEL**

The Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) is the advising entity to the Organization of American States in matters regarding telecommunications. CITEL was created under article 52 of the OAS letter. Thirty-five countries integrate the OAS; its origins go back to 1890.

CITEL's main objective is to facilitate and promote the continuing development of telecommunications in the Americas region.

#### **CREATION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATION COMMISSION**

The OAS General Assembly approved the present structure of CITEL in June 1993 providing the Commission with a Statute granting CITEL technical autonomy in the performance of its functions. At the same time, a new class of membership was also approved; that of associate member, opening the door to the participation of the private sector. Associate members have a full voice in all of the meetings, but cannot vote. Any recognized operating agency, scientific or industrial or financial or development institution related to the telecommunications industry can become an associate member, with the correspondent approval from the Member State of CITEL. The Associate members contribute to the financing the expenses of the technical committees in which they participate. As of June 2003, the list of Associate Members amounts to almost 240.

#### **CITEL STRUCTURE**

CITEL is currently chaired by Argentina and consists of three permanent committees, the Executive Committee (COM/CITEL), the Committee on Telecommunication Standardization (PCC.I) chaired by Colombia and a Committee on Radiocommunication including Broadcasting (PCC.II) is chaired by Venezuela.

PCC.I acts as a technical advisory body with respect to telecommunications equipment certification processes, tariff principles and standards coordination for telecommunications networks and services with the goal of ensuring the interoperability of such networks and services within the region; PCC.II handles coordination and harmonization of standards related to spectrum use and the planning and efficient use of the radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbits for radiocommunication services, including broadcasting.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

Persons wishing to obtain additional information about CITEL's activities can write to:

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Detailed information about CITEL's activities can also be obtained on the CITEL web site:

<http://www.citel.oas.org>