



For Immediate Release

CTO to extend its rural ICT developmental agenda to semi-autonomous Southern Sudan

Bringing universal access to people everywhere

LONDON, October 26, 2010 – As part of its mandate to ensure that no community is left out in the international campaign to provide universal access to information and communication technologies and services, the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), in conjunction with the government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), will be organising a two-day international forum on rural ICT connectivity from 23rd to 24th November 2010 in the GoSS city of Juba. The conference, under the theme “Connectivity for Communications, Commerce and Governance”, is expected to set the tone for thought-provoking discussions on the development of friendly policy and regulatory frameworks, mechanisms for funding ICT infrastructure, development of sound and profitable business models, and enhancement of partnerships between public and private sector entities to achieve connectivity for all.

With high-level delegates expected from some twenty countries in Africa, Europe, the Americas and Asia, the forum, among other things, will deliberate on topics relating to the establishment of rural telecentres, the effective use of ICTs for public services, the deployment of affordable technologies, and the alternative uses of Universal Services Funds to connect the unconnected.

Speaking on the upcoming conference, the CEO of CTO, Dr Ekwow Spio-Garbrah said, “For more than two years the Government of Southern Sudan, through its Ministry of Telecoms and Postal Services, has been an active Sector Member of the CTO, and has contributed in diverse ways to support the organisation’s mandate of promoting ICTs through research, studies, consultancy and advisory services, capacity-building programmes, training and knowledge-sharing events. We realise that Southern Sudan is an area with very unique geographic, demographic and developmental challenges. They need special help and focused attention. It is our hope that this conference will serve as a platform for ICT stakeholders across Africa and beyond to share experiences, strategies and expertise in guiding Southern Sudan on its quest to extend connectivity to all unconnected areas.”

On his part the Minister of Telecommunications and Postal Services for GoSS, Hon Madut Biar Yel commended the CTO for accepting to partner with his ministry to undertake such a timely initiative, and assured that GoSS will do all it can to make delegates feel welcome in Juba. He said he is confident of the value to be derived from the two-days of deliberations, leading to better preparedness for the Ministry to realise its objectives in the field of ICTs in the years ahead. Hon Biar Yel also hoped that through the conference GoSS will learn from the experiences, challenges and achievements of other African and non-African countries in the area of ICT delivery, given that they share similar topographical landscapes. On the other hand

the Hon Biar Yel expressed the hope that the international ICT sector would take this opportunity to learn more about Southern Sudan and the opportunities it presents.

Leading global entities and operators, including Seacom, EASSy Cable, MTN, Ernst & Young, Nokia Siemens Networks, Sofrecom, Ericsson, Netwise, ECI Telecom, RCS Communications, representatives of a number of Commonwealth Governments, and ICT policy-makers and executives from across the world will be attending the conference to network, collaborate and discuss innovative business models and niche services aimed at improving the reach, quality and capacity of connectivity in Southern Sudan.

About The CTO

The CTO is an inter-governmental organisation which provides technical assistance services to its member countries through research and studies, consultancies and advisory services, capacity building and training workshops, and through knowledge-sharing events. With a history dating back to 1901, the CTO is a partnership between the Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth governments, regulators, businesses, civil society organizations and other ICT stakeholders. The CTO's mission is to reduce global poverty through the more efficient utilization of ICTs, and its development agenda reflects the priorities set in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). (www.cto.int)

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