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EXTENSION OF THE PAN-AFRICAN E-NETWORK PROJECT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORKS OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND AFRICA
(*Item proposed by the Republic of Senegal*)

EXTENSION OF THE PAN-AFRICAN E-NETWORK PROJECT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORKS OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND AFRICA
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1. The project « Pan-African Online Network Services » or « Pan-African E-Network », the result of the partnership between India and the African Union, is a shining example of South-South cooperation designed to reduce the digital divide in the African continent.

2. This project, proposed by the former President of India, His Excellency Dr A.P.J Abdul Karam, during his address to the inaugural session of the Pan-African Parliament held in Johannesburg on 16 September 2004, aims to establish a Pan-African electronic network between India and African countries via VSAT links and submarine telecommunication cables. This Indian initiative was warmly welcomed by the Pan-African Parliament as a project established at the opportune time to enable the attainment of the MDGs in Africa.

3. In fact, the Pan-African E-Network project enables Tele-Education, Tele-Medicine, Internet, Video Conferencing and VVIP (Very Very Important Personality) connectivity for diplomatic communication to be provided to Member States of the African Union. It also supports E-Governance, E-Trade, Infotainment, Resource Mapping and Meteorological services.

4. The overall cost of the project, fully funded by India, is estimated at US$ 116 billion for a period of five years and it covers the cost of supply, installation, commissioning of equipment and software, end to end connectivity, satellite bandwidth, O&M support as well as the provision of Tele-Medicine and Tele-Education services to African countries.

5. Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd(TCIL), an Indian state company, was therefore retained for the execution and management of the project of which the official inauguration of the first phase took place on 26 February 2009 in New Delhi, India, under the chair of the Indian Minister of External Affairs and current President of India His Excellency Shri Pranab Mukherjee.

I.   Accession of Member States of the African Union to the Project

6. The first phase of this project was officially launched on 26 February 2009 with eleven(11) countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Gambia, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal and Seychelles) and the 2nd phase on 16 August 2010 with twelve(12) countries(Botswana, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, Uganda and Zambia.

7. Currently, 48 Member States1 have joined the project which undoubtedly shows its interest and relevance to the African continent.
    (List of Member States attached in annex)

II.   Project's operational mechanism and objective

8.   Twelve(12) universities (7 from India and five in Africa), 17 specialized hospitals(12 from India and five in Africa), 53 Tele-Medicine centres and 53 Tele-Education centres in Africa should be connected to this network.

9.   In India, the twelve specialized hospitals (Apollo Hospital and the Sri Ram Chandra Medical College and Research Institute in Chennai, AIIMS, Escorts Heart Institute and Moolchand Hospital in New Delhi, the Fortis Hospital in Noida, KEM Hospital of Bombay, Soins et Services Hospitaliers (Hospital care and services) in Hyderabad, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences in Kochi, Manipal Hospital and Narayan Hrudayaylaya in Bengalore and the Santosh Hospital in Ghaziabad) and the seven reference universities (Amity University in Noida, University of Madras in Chennai, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in New Delhi, Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) in Pilani, University of Delhi, IIT Kanpur and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengalore) currently provide Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine services to member African countries of this network..

10.   On the African side, five regional university centres (RUCs) chosen in Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritius, Malawi and five specialized hospitals (RHSSHs) based in Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Mauritius, Egypt and in Senegal are supposed to act as mirrors to their Indian counterparts to provide similar services in Africa after the expiry, in July 2014, of the deadline agreed upon for the funding by the Government of India.

11.   On the one hand, this important project therefore aims to provide Tele-Education services to African students, enabling them to pursue higher studies sanctioned by Diplomas (Post Graduate, Graduate, Diploma and Certificate) in disciplines such as Business Administration, Computer Science, International Trade, Tourism, Science, Engineering and Finance.

12.   On the other hand, the Tele-Medicine component aims to provide online medical consultation for one hour every day for each African country participating for a period of 5 years in diverse medical disciplines like Cardiology, Neurology, Urology, Oncology, Gynaecology, Infectious diseases/HIV-AIDS, Ophthalmology, Paediatrics, etc.

13.   Regarding the Tele-Medicine services, some of the best medical specialists in India are available for online consultations for African patients. Another important element of the Tele-Medicine is the Continued Medical Education(CME) in diverse specialities designed to update knowledge and improve clinical skills of medical practitioners and paramedical staff in African countries.

III.   Results
1.List of Member States in annex

14.   The Project has been functioning successfully for four(4) years, with currently 48 countries connected to the network.

15. Regarding Tele-Education services, the unique characteristic of this Pan-African Project is to provide Graduate and Post Graduate studies to more than 10.000 students in a completely digital environment, therefore no use of paper from the beginning to the end of the programme.

16. The Pan-African e-Network also enables more than 5000 Doctors from Africa to receive Continued Medical Education(CMT) to improve their skills in the highly specialized disciplines. Presently, more than 3500 CMT sessions have been conducted in member African countries through the network in addition to the Tele-Medicine services.

17. Moreover, in order to bring improvement in the coordination of work between the Heads of State of the African Union, their offices are also connected, enabling an interaction by e-Governance. The equipment with a V-SAT node has been installed in the various sites for highly secure and periodic video conferencing sessions between the Heads of State of Member countries. The mechanism is fully operational and active.

18. On the whole, about 10500 students from Member countries have been registered in diverse disciplines with certification programmes in Indian universities like Amity University, IGNOU, University of Delhi, university of Madras and BITS Pilani.

19. The registration of the majority of students is by the following member African countries :

> Uganda (1558), Malawi (1493), Rwanda (1099), Cameroon (470), Democratic Republic of Congo(246), Gabon(116), Senegal(49).

20. Regarding Tele-Medicine, about 2912 Continued Medical Training sessions have been conducted in English and 279 in French as well as 523 Tele-Medicine consultations(TMC) conducted by the various specialized hospitals in India.
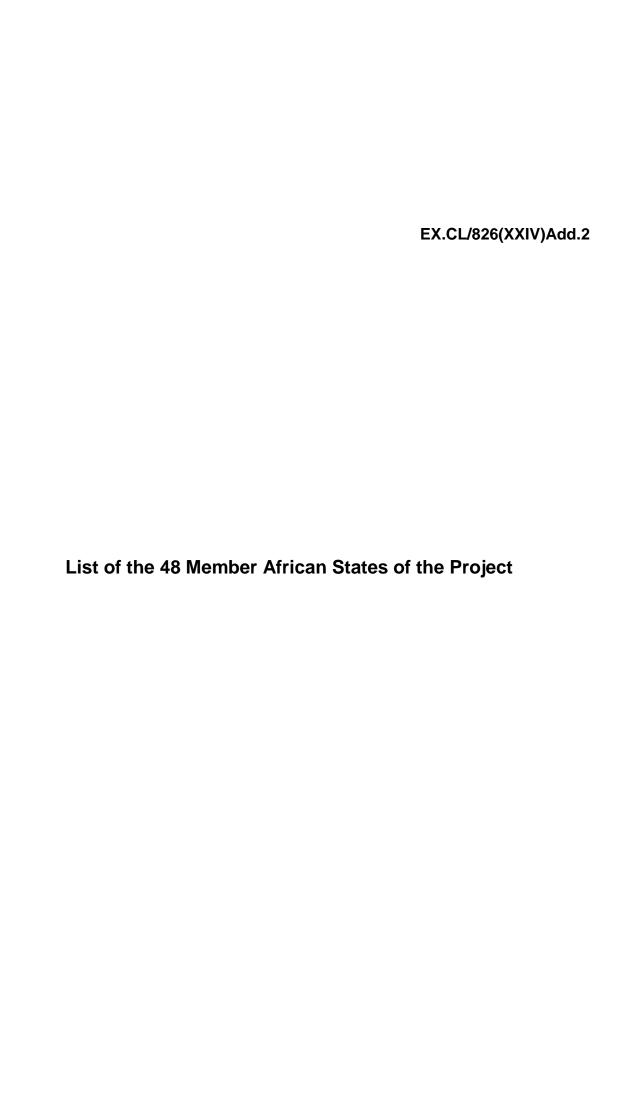
IV. Training of African Technicians for the Project's sustainability

21. In addition to providing education in Africa and specialized health care to our patients and continued medical training to 500 Doctors and 1000 nurses in member African countries of the Pan-African e-Network, the project has considerably contributed to the building of the capacities of African Technicians in these areas.

22. In fact, the project has also tried to train local Technicians, Doctors and Engineers in the following activities :

> i) Installation of VSAT and computer equipment/UPS, software and commissioning of the system on each site in order to obtain adequate mastery of the system's architecture and working methods;

> ii) The system 's daily management and operation;

iii) Furthermore, workshops have been organized on the technical presentations of the system installed, including software applications (Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine applications). The first workshop took place in New Delhi on 12 and 13 August 2009 during which the response was very satisfactory. The second workshop of this type took place again in New Delhi on 14 and 15 March 2011. Likewise, a regional training of the technical labour force of each of the member countries covering the concepts, the system's architecture and operational procedures was organized in New Delhi from 16 to 19 march 2011;

iv) On-site training for Doctors and Nurses on the system's software applications, the operation and the handling of medical and diagnostic equipment by medical Engineers of the OEM was organized by TCIL in RSSH Hospital Fann in Senegal from 3 to10 may 2013 with the Continued Training software and from 3 to 7 June 2013 with a Tele-Medicine consultation software. The training was successful and productive.

V.   Prospects and expected decision

23.   At the end of the agreed period for the management and maintenance by TCIL/RBE in July 2014, the project should be transferred to the African Union for governance and maintenance.

24.   Given the importance of this project for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by African countries and the absence of a strategy for the continuation of the project in case of withdrawal of the Indian partner, it would be desirable to request the Indian Government to extend the funding of the project for another three-year cycle.

25.   On the one hand, the extension would enable many students who wish to register for various programmes to do so and on the other hand, it would enable the African Union to prepare and submit to Member States an appropriate strategy to take over from TCIL after these three additional years.

26.   The issue was raised by the Ambassador of Senegal in India during the meeting held in New Delhi on 5 September 2013 between the African Union Commission, the Indian Authorities and the Group of African Ambassadors based in New Delhi. The Indian side expressed its readiness to favourably consider any request from the African Union Commission in this regard.

27.   A common position of Member States of the African Union on this issue is therefore necessary in a bid to submit this request to the government of India.

List of the 48 Member African States of the Project

1. Benin
2. Botswana
3. Burkina Faso
4. Burundi
5. Cameroon
6. Cape Verde
7. Central African Republic
8. Chad
9. Comoros
10. Congo
11. Cote d'Ivoire
12. Democratic Republic of Congo
13. Djibouti
14. Egypt
15. Eritrea
16. Ethiopia
17. Gabon
18. Gambia
19. Ghana
20. Guinea
21. Guinea-Bissau
22. Kenya
23. Lesotho
24. Liberia
25. Libya
26. Madagascar
27. Malawi
28. Mali
29. Mauritania
30. Mauritius
31. Mozambique
32. Namibia
33. Niger
34. Nigeria
35. North Sudan
36. Rwanda
37. Sao Tome and Principe
38. Senegal
39. Seychelles
40. Sierra Leone
41. Somalia
42. South Sudan
43. Swaziland
44. Tanzania
45. Togo
46. Uganda
47. Zambia
48. Zimbabwe

2014

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