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**HP Digital Village to Stimulate Economic Growth**

**Accra Mail (Accra)**

**December 3, 2001**

Posted to the web December 2, 2001

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Kent Mensah

A state of the art digital village project led by Hewlett Packard (HP) and Computer Information Systems (CIS), Ghana to help students, teachers and the population as a whole to harness Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been launched in Kumasi.

The project is expected to enhance the economic, educational and social developments of the country. In addition the digital village will also help link Ghanaian educational institutions, agencies and industries with the rest of the world, enabling them to pursue joint research programmes and projects. Drug information centres, for example, would be established, ensuring that healthcare providers have access to up-to-date information on new products and methods of treatment.

The project is being spearheaded by the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), the institution's US-based Alumni Association, the Community Services Foundation (CSF), a non-profit organisation and the University of Pennsylvania's School of Engineering and Applied Science (UPenn).

The initiative centres on building a comprehensive IT infrastructure for KNUST to enable Ghana's foremost science and technology institution to increase the general levels of IT education in the country.

The Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure comprising technology solutions and services from Hewlett Packard (HP) and its Ghanaian agent, Computer Information Systems (CIS) Co. Ltd., as well as high speed digital subscriber line communication links from Ghana Telecom (GT) will be deployed at KNUST by the end of December this year.

The HP Regional Sales Manager for English-Speaking African countries, Mr. Thierry Boulanger said, "Ghana faces some serious socio-economic challenges. Using the digital village we aim to help build a workforce that is skilled in the critical areas of ICT."

He said the project would help the country attract greater international investment, create sustainable vocational opportunities and bolster educational, agricultural, medical and economic development across Ghana.

Business for HP in Africa, the Sales Manager said, is not always about generating revenues, "it's sometimes about identifying and delivering on projects that help develop communities and countries as a whole."

He explained, "This, in effect, narrows the economic and digital divide between Ghana and the rest of the world."

A series of computer resource centres will be established and linked to the infrastructure over the next two years. At least, 50 centres should eventually exist nationwide. These centres will provide cost-effective access to the internet and equip Ghanaian students and people with higher levels of IT education and skills.

The main KNUST library, the outskirts of the campus and the heart of Kumasi city will all house one each of the centres. They will all be linked to the ICT backbone and will be used to facilitate train-the-trainer programmes that educate IT specialists who teach at primary and secondary schools in Kumasi.

Mr. Kwame E. Obeng, of the KNUST alumnus association (US) said the training will include Web-based and online course generation, as well as the preparation and delivery of lectures, seminars and continuous education programmes via video and tele-conferencing.

Mr. Gilbert Farina, General Manager of HP in Africa said the project is a clear evidence that significant steps are being taken along the information road in Ghana, adding that HP is proud to have donated a great deal of technology and services in order to help Ghana on this most important journey.

Present at the function was the Director of Philanthropy and Education of HP, Bess Stephens and the Director of Strategy and Corporate Development of HP, Didier Philippe.

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