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Cisco, Intel, Microsoft, Government of Kenya and USAID Launch Joint Project to Enable 21st-Century Education in Kenya Schools

Collaboration Includes Wireless and Internet Connectivity, PCs for Classrooms, Teacher Training, ICT Skills Training, Digital Content and a School Technology Innovation Center

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Today at the Clinton Global Initiative annual meeting, Cisco, Intel Corp., Microsoft Corp., the government of Kenya and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced a joint commitment to improve education in Kenya. Launched in collaboration with Kenya's Ministry of Education, the Accelerating 21st Century Education (ACE) project aims to improve the quality of primary and secondary education through the effective use of information and communications technology (ICT).

The parties are working together to develop a best-in-class model for deploying ICT in education. Reflecting a combined commitment valued at more than US$9 million, ACE will create "one-to-one e-learning" classrooms in 60 focus schools across Kenya. One-to-one e-learning, a model in which every student has access to a computer, helps foster an environment where young people can develop skills such as problem solving and critical thinking.

ACE will deploy more than 6,000 networked computers for student and teacher use; train approximately 7,000 teachers to effectively integrate technology in the classroom; train technical support staff at each school to maintain the technology; deploy a wireless infrastructure within the schools; provide access to digital educational content; and develop the local ICT industry in Kenya to promote economic development and sustainability.

In addition, Cisco, Intel and Microsoft will work together to establish a School Technology Innovation Center (STIC) in Nairobi -- a model that has been promoted in other countries through the Microsoft(R) Partners in Learning Program. The center will be dedicated to research on innovative emerging technology solutions and serve as a repository and showcase for best-known methods of teaching, learning and educational technology.

"ACE ties in with our mission to increase access to education, improve the quality of education and raise school enrollment rates for children from marginalized areas of East Africa," said USAID Kenya Mission Director Erna Kerst. "We hope this collaboration will encourage more Kenyan children to complete school, improve teacher training practices and enhance professional development for teachers and school administrators with support from USAID."

USAID works closely with the government of Kenya on educational programs aimed at

ensuring that more Kenyan children enroll in school, stay in school and receive a high-quality education that equips them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the 21st-century economy. These education programs support more than 400,000 children from the most marginalized communities -- including those orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic -- as well as systemic changes in teacher training colleges and key educational institutions.

Commitment to Action Takes Holistic Approach to ICT in Education

The ACE project focuses on 40 secondary schools and 20 primary schools across Kenya. It will deploy 6,000 student personal computers (PCs), 120 teacher laptops, 60 servers and the supporting wireless infrastructure to establish two e-learning classrooms at each school.

The project will also train 2,000 teachers at the schools, as well as 5,000 pre-service teachers at teacher training colleges in Kenya. In addition, ACE will offer education leadership forums to help lead teachers at the participating schools define a strategy for creating 21st-century learning environments. Training will be provided through the Intel(R) Teach Program and the Microsoft Partners in Learning Program, which offer proven ways to integrate technology into the curriculum for enhanced classroom learning.

To promote a sustainable implementation of ICT in education, two instructors and one network administrator at each of the 60 schools will receive networking and IT training through the Cisco(R) Networking Academy(R). The Networking Academy collaborates with educational institutions, governments and community-based organizations to provide students around the world with foundational ICT skills along with career skills such as problem solving, collaboration and critical thinking for increased access to career and economic opportunities.

"Collaboration among public and private-sector organizations can significantly enhance the quality of education for students around the world and strengthen the communities where they live," said Tae Yoo, senior vice president, Corporate Affairs, Cisco. "By taking a holistic approach to education that includes the effective integration of ICT, the government of Kenya in cooperation with Cisco, Intel, Microsoft and USAID is taking a bold step forward to create a sustainable model of education reform and equip students with the skills they need to be successful in the 21st-century."

ACE aligns closely with the goals of Kenya's Ministry of Education, which recently digitized its national curriculum. The project will provide digital content to help deploy the revamped curriculum, with an initial focus on math and science subjects for primary grades 4-6 and for the first two years of secondary education. As part of this effort, Intel and the Ministry will collaborate on developing localized content for the Intel(R) skoool(TM) Learning and Teaching Technology, an interactive Internet resource for learning math and science. Microsoft is also working with the Ministry to develop a new education portal where teachers can access e-mail and online educational content.

"By mobilizing our combined resources, we can help Kenya's Ministry of Education put the implementation of its National ICT Strategy for Education on the fast track," said Lila Ibrahim, general manager of the Emerging Markets Platform Group at Intel. "We believe that public-private collaborations like the ACE project are the most powerful means to invest in 21st-century learning and at the same time can help to stimulate the local economy."

Extending the Benefits of ICT in Education Investments

To encourage the sharing of knowledge related to tested best uses of technology in education, all of the key practices and methods learned from ACE will be captured in a School Technology Innovation Center (STIC) that Cisco, Intel and Microsoft have committed to establish in Nairobi.

Like STICs in other countries, the Kenya center will serve as a hub where education leaders and teachers from the region can access the latest information on technology solutions that are proven to enhance innovative teaching and learning, thus improving the skills needed by students to thrive in the 21st-century. Center visitors will also be able to view research on innovative educational technology solutions, witness technology demos, participate in trainings, and learn from best-practice models and outcomes.

"Providing technology access and IT skills to students is a cornerstone for future innovation, economic growth and individual opportunity in the competitive global marketplace," said Linda Zecher, corporate vice president of Worldwide Public Sector at Microsoft. "By combining the experience and resources of public and private sector partners in a holistic way, the ACE project will help the Ministry of Education further its efforts to transform learning and increase opportunity for all of Kenya's students."

To demonstrate the benefits of technology in the classroom, the STIC will feature 20 Intel-powered classmate PCs, networked via Cisco wireless infrastructure, and the latest software offerings from Microsoft, including the new Windows(R) 7 operating system. The classmate PC is an affordable, full-featured, compact and rugged student laptop designed to promote interactive and collaborative learning among students and teachers. The STIC will also feature other technology products that are well-suited to teaching and learning.

Over the course of three years, the ACE project is expected to directly benefit an estimated 39,000 students and 7,000 teachers through improved educational infrastructure and training. Kenya's Ministry of Education estimates that an additional 300,000 people will benefit indirectly from the STIC and other aspects of knowledge sharing.

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