

On July 8th, Bell Canada International (BCI) signed a \$212 million contract with the Moroccan Office National des Postes et des Télécommunications for the supply of 300,000 telephone lines, the training of Moroccans in the operation and maintenance of the system, as well as the management of the project. I am most pleased to announce that the Canadian government, through the Export Development Corporation, is financing a \$212 million loan, which is guaranteed by the Kingdom of Morocco, to permit this sale to proceed.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to congratulate Bell Canada International and BCE Inc. for securing this contract, in light of the fierce competition that existed for this project.

The Government of Canada considers this to be an important contract for the Canadian industry, for Bell Canada International and sub-suppliers in the telecommunications sector in particular, and for the Kingdom of Morocco.

Our government has been making major efforts to promote international leadership in sectors where Canada is at the forefront of global technology. We encourage our Canadian companies to seek international, and not just domestic, recognition for their technological excellence. Government programs, such as the EDC loan for this project, have played a crucial role in propelling Canadian companies successfully into new international markets.

We all know the vital role that technology plays in Canada's continued economic growth. We also know how important exports are to our economy. So when a Canadian high technology company such as Bell Canada International succeeds in penetrating a new offshore market like Morocco - that's good news for Canada. In fact, I expect that this contract will generate some 6,800 person-years of employment in the Canadian economy over the next 5 years.

For Bell Canada International, this contract represents a significant breakthrough in a new market, and an opportunity to create a continuing presence in Africa. In the equipment area, the contract involves the most advanced digital switching technology in the world, manufactured by Northern Telecom, with international features developed by Bell-Northern Research. It also involves a number of other Canadian sub-suppliers. On the manpower side, some 50 Canadians will be based in Morocco to manage the project and provide an advanced training component consistent with Bell Canada International's continuing commitment to the transfer of advanced technology and management techniques.