

## 4) Integrating Africa into the New Economy

“The digital revolution has unleashed an unprecedented wave of technological change. Used responsibly, it can greatly improve our chances of defeating poverty,” argues Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations. Canada is a world leader in both the development and application of the technology that drives the new Sub-Saharan African on-line, knowledge-based economy. In fact, Canada is ahead of the United States in per capita measures of Internet penetration into the home and consumer utilization of many e-commerce functions. As Africa is relatively “unwired” but willing to leapfrog technologies to fill the many critical gaps in its telecommunications and IT infrastructure, it is an eminently suitable market and partner for Canada. Our objective should be to assist Africa's full engagement with the new economy and its digital revolution:

*Objective:  
Africa in the New  
Economy  
Canada's leading  
role in the new  
economy can  
positively shape  
our future  
commercial  
relationship with  
Sub-Saharan  
Africa.*

- ◆ By developing a thorough network of on-line resources and e-commerce applications among African posts to both showcase Canada's leading edge in the field and to highlight Africa's opportunities as they materialize;
- ◆ By working with relevant Canadian trade associations, entrepreneurs, venture capital firms, and training institutions to build Africa's capabilities to integrate and employ this technology;
- ◆ By promoting an education and knowledge agenda in Africa, initially by establishing a Knowledge 2000 Task Team to co-ordinate government and industry initiatives in South Africa with a mandate to promote wealth-creating activities in education and training in Africa:
  - This may include developing a Canadian Learning Centre as part of the strategic follow-up to the March 2000 Learning and Technology mission to South Africa. An inward mission to Canada is also under consideration;
  - In the longer term, a Learning and Technology Mission to West Africa may be organized.
- ◆ By developing direct Internet links to Canadian universities and colleges in all our missions in Africa

Taken together, these four overall objectives or themes go beyond what is typically understood to be trade development. But trade development with Africa will require a unusual measures until the day when most of Africa is growing rapidly and Canadian business people routinely consider Africa as one of their normal export or investment markets.

