

The Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, announced that Canada will sign today an agreement with five countries of West Africa for the establishment of a part of the Pan-African Telecommunications Network. Mr. MacEachen will sign agreements with the ambassadors of the countries concerned, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mali, Niger and Senegal.

The agreements involve a grant of \$4.5 million and loans of \$22.43 million furnished by the Canadian International Development Agency. Following the approximate percentage of the project to be constructed on their territory, the loan will be allocated as follows: Mali \$6.72 million; Dahomey \$5.04 million, Niger \$4.08 million, Senegal \$3.84 million and Upper-Volta \$2.75 million.

The regional project is intended to improve communications between the five countries and the remainder of the continent in a common effort of cooperation. It consists of the construction of two sections of high voltage lines: the first will join Kaolack in Senegal and Bobo-Dioulasso in Upper-Volta, via Bamako, Mali; the second will join Koupela in Upper-Volta to Bohincon in Dahomey, via Niamey in Niger. It also involves the construction of centres of international telephone exchange in Bamako, Mali, Niamey, Niger and Cotonou, Dahomey.

The loans to be made to each country will be used for procurement in Canada of goods and services necessary for the construction of that part of the network situated on their territory.

The grant will cover the costs of technical assistance, the services of the Canadian consulting engineers who will carry out the design and supervise the construction, as well as the costs of a training programme for the African personnel involved.

The contribution of the African countries although it cannot be determined at the present time, will be substantial and will include the purchase and preparation of the work sites, construction and up-keep of access routes and provision of local labour.

In view of the regional character of the project and the need for close consultation and collaboration among the six participating governments a Senior Coordination Committee and a Technical Coordination Committee will be created following signature of the agreements.