

News flash



Botswana

TalkBack commemorates World Telecommunication Day

Gaborone: 18 May 2005: A UNDP initiated television programme was used during the commemorations of the World Telecommunication Day to showcase how people can use information technology to close the digital divide between the urban and rural areas. TalkBack, a component of the Teacher Capacity Building (TCB) programme undertaken by UNDP in collaboration with three other stakeholders, is an interactive television used in schools in Botswana to disseminate information about HIV/AIDS.

During the commemorations an ordinary school in the remote village of Shakawe, some 1500 kilometres, from the country's capital Gaborone, was linked through satellite with the studios of Botswana television where students and members of the general public interacted with a panel of resource people on the subject of HIV/AIDS. The occasion was also used to interact with the Minister of Communication, Science & Technology, Ms Pelonomi Venson. The interaction included sharing information, questions and answers. The occasion was thronged by thousands of people from Shakawe village and the surrounding settlements in the Okavango.

Addressing the audiences, UNDP Resident Representative stated that UNDP is proud to be working with the government of Botswana in developing future information communication technologies. He cited TCB's TalkBack as one example where the two are working hand in hand.



UNDP Resident Representative Mr Bjoern Foerde, addressing the audience

The UNDP chief further cited the Community User Information System (CUIS) based in three pilot cities in Botswana, as yet another example by which UNDP and the government are trying to “bring services to the people” wherever they are in the country.

CUIS is a practical approach intended to bridge the digital divide,

increase information flow and empower rural communities by providing them with user-friendly, local language information, knowledge resource and internet connectivity. The Villages of Hukuntsi, Letlhakeng and Gumare are currently running pilot sites.



Some members of the TalkBack audience video-conferencing from Shakawe to the studios of Btv in Gaborone

During the commemoration week the Resident Representative visited the Gumare site where he was briefed that the Kitsong Centre was popular with both students and general members of the public wishing to use internet services.

The Member of Parliament for the area, Mr Vistor Moruti, mentioned that for Botswana to commemorate the World Telecommunications Day using the state-of-the-art technology such as was used in the day, was a sure sign that the country is moving

towards becoming an information society. He urged people to work hand-in-hand with government for these developments to go forward.



Member of Parliament for Okavango, Mr Vistor Moruti, thanked all who contributed towards the successful commemoration of the World Telecommunications Day

Earlier on when talking to her audiences through the television conferencing, the Minister of Communication, Science & Technology, Ms Pelonomi Venson, stated that with the kind of infrastructure in place Botswana could become an information society and facilitate fast communication between people and nations.

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