

# PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mehmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



## Telekiosks Handed Over to Government

*Oct 28, 2004- Kabul* - Nine Internet Telekiosks in Kabul were handed over to the Government today in a ceremony held at the Ministry of Communications (MoC). The handover, which includes management of the kiosks and ownership of all of its equipment, marks the improved ability of the Government to manage information and communication technology.

The Telekiosk project began in 2003 as a joint effort between UNDP and the MoC, with financial support from the Government of France, to offer affordable and easy-to-use places for Afghans to use the internet and computer software. Free computer training was offered to the public, and it is estimated that 70,000 Afghans, both male and female and most of them first-time computer users, have taken advantage of the kiosks since 2003. The handover is also a recognition of the numerous private internet cafes, many based on the project model, that have been established since the project began.

The ceremony this morning was attended by HE Masoom Stanekzai, Minister of Communications; Ercan Murat, UNDP Country Director; and HE Jean Pierre Guinhuit, Ambassador of France. In addition to the signing-over ceremony, HE Mr. Stanekzai presented Letters of Appreciation to three UNDP staff members in recognition of their services in the implementation of the project.

Mr. Murat said, "The more ICT access that is made available and used in all walks of life, the more benefits this country can reap. This handover is a critical step toward the Government's ability to deliver communication services to the people of Afghanistan."

The equipment includes 55 computers, printers, electrical equipment, furniture and generators. Thirty-three staff members in the Ministry of Communications have been trained to manage all aspects of the Telekiosks, including wireless network installations, IT specialists, trainers, administrative support staff and website management.

His Excellency Masoom Stanekzai, Minister of Communications, has said about the project that it "enables the community to access information and to communicate to the external world through the use of new technology like e-mail."

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