

Africa Telecommunications Day commemorated

The South African Department of Communications commemorated Africa Telecommunications Day early last week in celebration of the establishment of the African Telecommunications Union (ATU). The ATU, established by the African Union on 7 December 1977, fosters the development of ICT infrastructure and services.

It is also the regional body for the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and co-ordinates the regional positions in relation to the standardisation, radio communication and development ICT agenda.

Communications Minister, Radhakrishna (Roy) Padayachie and his deputy, Obed Bapela, spearheaded the celebration. Minister Padayachie emphasised that this year's theme for the ATU celebrations, spoke to the pillars that the department plans to address within the telecommunications sector in the next 12 months.

Importance of ICTs

"The theme for this year, ICT services for the promotion of peace and security in Africa, speaks to our short and long term goals as a ministry. We are committed to educating the general public about the importance of ICTs in the advancement of society's goals and the creation of a better life for our people. In taking the theme forward the South African government is committed towards the advancement of peace and stability in the continent of Africa," said Padayachie.

The biggest achievement of the ATU is the central role it has played in the coordination of Africa's ICT development needs to meet the global standards of best practice. It has been called on by the African Union to develop innovative ways of making use of ICT and other means of disseminating, exchanging and using information conducive to peace and development.