

Le Courrier

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October 7, 2004

(translation by Renate Bloem, improved by Francis Muguet)

Digital Solidarity is gaining momentum

The Digital Solidarity Fund will be inaugurated on November 17th.

It counts on new sources of financing.

The Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF), the seat of which is in Geneva, is doing rather well. A few weeks before its official inauguration, that will take place on November 17th in Geneva, it has new members -the last which joined is the city of Santo Domingo , bringing its total membership to a total of twelve. Created during the World Summit on the Information Society upon the initiative of Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal, and the City of Geneva, the DSF goal is to reduce the gap between the poor and rich in the field of information.

A mission of the DSF, headed by Christian Ferrazino of the Government of the City of Geneva, by Guy-Olivier Segond, President of the Fund and Alain Clerc, Executive Secretary, has recently gone to New York, Ottawa, Montréal, Québec and to Santo Domingo promote its project. Meeting together yesterday at the Palais des Nations for a press conference, they recalled the main objectives of the DSF:

More proximity

The Fund will fight against North-South cleavage by a proximity action. "Local authorities are by definition closer to the citizens than the national government. They know better the aspirations and the needs of the local population", Mr. Segond said. The former State Councillor added that "The action will be based on the traditional North-South traditional co-operation by supplementing it by an increased collaboration between the emergent South and the less advanced South, often better adapted to local realities".

But the DSF is characterised by a specific financing model. When joining the Fund, public authorities must include in all their ITC contracts a clause that oblige contracting companies to pay 1% of the amount of the contract to the DSF.

^aTo make a comparison, adding all the expense on ITCs of all organisms of the City of Geneva, we arrive to the interesting sum of 50 millions Swiss Francs" explained Mr. Ferrazino. Therefore, One may understand that this small percentage is going to represent the core of the DSF's budget. Currently, the DSF possesses 4 million Swiss francs, a sum which corresponds to contributions already paid (500 000 SF) by its members.

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