

PRESS RELEASE

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Telecenters of the Americas Partnership to Provide Disadvantaged Communities
Access to New Technology Across the Northern Hemisphere

WASHINGTON, DC - Jan 14, 2004 /Send2Press Newswire/ -- Five leading technology networks recently launched the Telecenters of the Americas Partnership (TAP), a network of community technology centers where people can access and learn to use new communication technologies throughout North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Created to bond people and communities across borders, the alliance between Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet), the Aspira Association, Pacific Community Networks Association (PCNA), ChasquiNet, and Somos@Telecentros, represents over 4000 community technology centers across the Americas.

"We seek to share best practices between countries, streamline workload and costs, enabling individual technology centers to maximize resources and, ultimately, better serve their communities," states Kavita Singh, executive director of CTCNet.

The team is developing a system that provides easy access to the best telecenter tools and resources; a survey of successful telecenter activities; and the creation of a long-term plan outlining the structure, activities, and budget for an effective, TAP partnership.

The announcement of the partnership was made during a videoconference from sites in San Juan, Mexico City, Vancouver, Washington, DC, and at the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, Switzerland, where CTCNet participated in a panel on community technology centers hosted by Microsoft.

The WSIS panel, Enhancing Human Capacity and Empowerment, examined innovative approaches being implemented to connect disadvantaged communities with access to information and lifelong learning by providing technology skills. The participants shared best practices learned and challenges faced by community technology centers globally. Panelists included representatives from the Committee for Democracy in Information Technology (Brazil), Drishtee (India), and the UNHCR ICT in Refugee Education.

Singh comments, "Many people in lower income communities and people with disabilities still have very limited or no access to technology in the US." She continued, "Countries around the world have serious infrastructure and resource issues that do not exist to the same extent in the US, so we must ensure that we do not leave whole populations behind in a country that has the resources to address these issues. With the advent of e-government, access and training must be available for all people."

For more information on TAP and CTCNet visit <http://www.ctcnet.org>.

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