



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***Primary and High schools of Albania to get ICT skills and be connected to the Internet***

**Government of Albania to address the digital divide at primary and secondary schools all over the country**

**Contact details for press:**

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**TIRANA, 19 December 2005** - The Ministry of Education and Science will organize a round table discussion on the E-School Programme, which will enable students of Albania attending primary and secondary education to acquire Information technology skills and knowledge and be connected to Internet services.

Around 1749 primary schools and 384 high schools will be the primary beneficiaries of this project. This e-Schools Programme enables students to acquire the adequate skills and take advantage of modern information and communication technologies in an innovative, fun, dynamic and meaningful way. The primary and secondary schools will be equipped with computer labs, while teachers will be trained to manage them and impart a curriculum, which takes advantage of modern ICTs.

*Up to 75% of high schools students and 5-10% of primary school students are expected to benefit from the programme by the end of 2006. The percentage of students with access to ICT will increase to at least 90% in high schools and 40-50% in primary schools in 2007, with most of schools students connected to ICT.*

This program opens the door to additional development opportunities that ICT offers to communities, by linking them to the private sector, to social services and to markets while providing and reinforcing information on a number of development-related subjects.

Through this program, Internet Centers will be created that would be operational in schools after class hours to benefit non-students such as women, businesses for the purpose of improving or developing ICT skills and furthering socio-economic development.

The e-School programme will mobilize partnerships and resources to establish a sustainable ICT-enabled environment in primary and high schools following a model, which will create revenues and managerial capacity in support of the school labs.

The e-Schools are at the core of development and will support Albania's aspirations of European Union integration, while ensuring high educational standards. To implement this project the Government of Albania will seek partnerships through a variety of stakeholders mainly the donors' community, academia, civil society, the private sector, and local governments.

The e-schools programme is being launched in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and other partners. The government of Albania and UNDP have signed a memorandum of understanding which defines 4 new areas of cooperation: Combating extra-legality and undertaking tax reform; Information and Communication technologies for Schools; the Brain Gain initiative; and environment and tourism.