



As a joint initiative of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the United Nations University (UNU), The African University Network (AFUNET) is a practical response to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Plan of Action. The network's main objective is to enhance the capabilities of African universities to take advantage of the opportunities associated with the emergence of the global information society.

AFUNET will strengthen collaboration between universities across Africa and globally through exploring and implementing various measures to provide network connectivity and extend affordable and easy ICT access and services. AFUNET seeks to coordinate cooperation between similar initiatives and already existing networks and inspire openness and efficiency. In this lies the need to provide tools to facilitate a knowledgeable student output which will actively engage in research and teamwork with other institutions world wide.

When fully developed, AFUNET is envisioned to operate as a non-profit entity providing universities with connectivity, services and a number of support functions. The network will provide services ranging from basic access (e.g. general connections, network and equipment lease, monitoring and maintenance, student administration, LMS, content management system, office administration, course development support, email, video and voice security) to research access (e.g. maps, videoconferencing and multimedia lab) to experimental services (e.g. multicasting, multimedia and software testing)

During 2005, a feasibility study will be conducted and the results will be presented at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis. The main participants in this first phase includes the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and its Africa regional and field offices, the United Nations University (UNU), United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU/INRA), United Nations University Institute for Technology (UNU-INTECH) and United Nations University/Global Virtual University (UNU/GVU). Partner universities from Africa will participate as providers of information on the current state of their Internet connectivity.

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