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Momentum Behind ODF Continues To Grow Internationally

Netherlands, South Africa, Korea Latest Countries To Adopt Pro-ODF Measures

Washington, DC, November 20, 2007. The ranks of governments requiring the use of OpenDocument Format (ODF) continue to grow with recent actions taken by the Netherlands, South Africa and Korea. In conjunction with the 1st International ODF User Workshop on in Berlin, Germany (see <http://www.odfworkshop.org>), the Dutch government released the following statement:

"The Dutch Cabinet is actively speeding up the migration to open standards and open source software. A wide range of actions has been set in progress in order to reach a situation in 2011 by which open standards and open source software are 'business as usual'. Within this context, the introduction of the Open Document Format for use by government and the public sector in The Netherlands fits well. As of April, 2008, Ministries and State Services will support ODF, next to other document formats already in use, to be followed by other governmental organisations no later than December, 2008. To support the deployment of open standards and open source software, building a sustainable community between the public and the private sector is important. The launch of the Open Doc Society on 23th October 2007, a private Dutch-Belgian initiative to promote ODF, can be seen as an example," the statement said.

The action by the Netherlands comes on the heels of news that South Africa had become the latest country -- and the first in Africa -- to adopt ODF as a government standard for document exchange between government agencies and the public. Speaking at the ODF workshop, Aslam Raffee, CIO of the Department of Technology, Government of South Africa, referred to the newly-issued Minimum Interoperability Standards (MIOS) v4.1, which said, "to ensure the enhancement of interoperability across Government, a minimum set of standards are included in this document as a required Government-wide standard. To this end, this updated version of MIOS contains an explicit definition of Open Standards as well as the inclusion of the ISO (International Standards Organisation) Open Document Format."

The Korean Agency for Technology and Standards also announced that it had approved ODF as a national standard (KS). Although ODF's use is not compulsory in Korea, the action is regarded as significant in that ODF is the only Korean-approved standard for office document formats, and will be influential in terms of the choice that public institutions eventually make in Korea.

"This has been an incredibly successful year for ODF by any measure, with a record number of governments taking steps to adopt ODF," said Marino Marcich, Managing Director, ODF Alliance, whose membership will soon surpass the 500 mark. "We congratulate the Netherlands, South Africa,

and Korea for recognizing ODF, each in its own way, and look forward to the movement's continued momentum in the new year. ODF enables diverse government agencies to work better with one another at lower cost and gives them access to their own information, so it is no wonder that so many governments are taking this action."

The OpenDocument Format Alliance is an organization of governments, academic institutions, non-government organizations and industry dedicated to educating policy makers, IT administrators and the public on the benefits and opportunities of ODF.

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