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## **SURINAME PILOT COUNTRY FOR ONE LAPTOP PER CHILD PROJECT**

by: Rosita Leeflang

PARAMARIBO – Suriname is the first country in the region where the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) project will be implemented. In Telesur Nortel found a partner to carry out this project. Yesterday, Telesur general manager, Dirk Currie, received the first two laptops from Ray Bulengo, Vice-President for Nortel in the Caribbean Region & Bermuda.

Bulengo, in a brief presentation, expressed that the idea was developed so that every child could develop himself in this manner. Especially for this purpose, the program *Learn It* was developed with special applications that are also delivered with the laptops.

“But we cannot do it alone. We will need the help of, for example, governments and operators to make their infrastructure available,” says Bulengo. The laptops will have access to the Internet via broadband.

Currie was very pleased with this gesture of Nortel. According to him, the idea emerged three years ago when he and Bulengo were on a plane together. Since Nortel benefits from the Surinamer by services through Telesur, Currie recommended Nortel to give something back to the community. Currie tells *de Ware Tijd* that there is no definitive allocation for the laptops as yet. This will be determined in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Community Development. They are thinking in the direction of pupils with a disability in connection with the theme of the International Telecommunication Union this year: *Connect the Disabled*. 25 laptops will be donated to eight schools. Telesur will provide the connection and ADSL.

The idea of the OLPC project emerged in 2005 at the *World Summit on the Information Society*. However, the makers had to study the requirements, such as weather conditions and power supply since these would also have to apply for developing countries. “If you, as a country, want to do it yourself you will not be able to get the products because you have to order them in bulk. Via Nortel that assisted in realizing this plan, smaller quantities can be purchased. That is why this pilot project can be introduced in Suriname,” says Currie. The laptops are waterproof and provided with a build-in camera. In this way, the child is in direct contact with other children in the world. The presentation yesterday afternoon was part of the workshop *Connect the Caribbean Initiative* of which the first stakeholder’s meeting is concluded today as part of the annual meeting of CANTO, the Caribbean Association of National Telecommunication Organizations. On the last day, Friday, the Business Continuity Planning Certified Training will take place.

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