

OPEN DOCUMENT FORMAT

ODF ALLIANCE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Global ODF Conference Convened in Berlin to Discuss  
Implementation of OpenDocument Format**

***20 Governments From Around the World Discuss ODF Migration***

Berlin, Germany, October 30, 2007. Officials representing 20 governments from around the world gathered in Berlin, Germany, at the 1st International ODF Users Workshop on October 29-30, 2007. The group discussed moving from ODF policy consideration to actual deployment in countries that have already made the move to open standards, or those who are actively considering doing so in the near future. The theme of the workshop, which was hosted by the German Federal Foreign Office in collaboration with the ODF Alliance, was how best to use an open format to preserve access to information now and in the future.

In a message welcoming participants, the German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, said: [<http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/AAmt/071024-IT-ODFWorkshop.navCtx=23336.html>]

“Modern information technology has turned the world into a village with amazing speed. It links people and builds bridges in a way which even quite recently we would have believed impossible.

“An open, unhindered exchange of information in all areas of life is of fundamental importance for today's knowledge-based society. It is an important foundation for our shared objective: a peaceful, democratic, pluralistic society. The Open Document Format, as a completely open and ISO-standardized format, is an excellent vehicle for the free exchange of knowledge and information in the globalized age.”

Marino Marcich, Managing Director, ODF Alliance, said, “That so many governments have gathered around the world to discuss ODF is remarkable in and of itself, a sign of the momentum and growing interest in ODF on the part of governments. Participants benefited from the real-life migration experiences of governments. Pro-ODF policies are not only being adopted by a rapidly growing number of governments, but, as we heard these past few days, ODF is already being deployed in many parts of the globe.”

Last week, South Africa became the latest country to adopt ODF as a government standard for document exchange between government agencies and with the public. Speaking at a session on ODF and interoperability, Aslam Raffee, CIO of the Department of Technology, Government of South Africa, referred to the forward of the newly-issued Minimum Interoperability Standards (MIOS) v4.1, in which Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, South Africa's Minister for the Public Service and Administration, 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."

"Open standards and ODF, more specifically, are about better interoperability," said Peter Strickx, Director-General, Architecture and Standards, of FEDICT Belgium. "This workshop, with participating government representatives from all over the world – Brazil, India, China, South Africa, among others – is a true illustration of the ways in which ODF opens the doors to global interoperability and information sharing."

Juan Conde Jimenez, in charge of the Free Software Section for Secretariat of Telecommunications and Information Society of the Junta de Andalucia, Spain, discussing the region's Digital Interoperability Framework, said the workshop was "reassuring to him to find so many governments working to the same end."

Speaking at a session devoted to the experiences of municipalities in migrating to ODF, Horst Braeuner, CIO of Schwaebisch Hall, Germany, said, "ODF is the format of the future for a growing number of governments. We are not alone in using open formats. Governments should be confident in their convictions regarding open formats. For its part, the ODF Alliance should help raise public awareness of the benefits of the format."

"It has been a valuable opportunity to share experiences, make connections and learn about progress being made across an emerging global public sector community," added Gavin Beckett, Bristol City Council (UK).

The workshop summary, conclusions and presentations will be posted shortly on the workshop web site: [www.odfworkshop.org](http://www.odfworkshop.org).

*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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