# Tata-led Neotel, NIIT in educational partnership in South Africa

## THE PARTNERSHIP, WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED AT THE RECENT BRICS SUMMIT IN DURBAN

JOHANNESBURG: The Tata-led Neotel telecoms consortium in South Africa has teamed up with the NIIT and a South African community centre network to boost IT skills capacity in the African country. The partnership, which was first announced at the recent BRICS summit in Durban, was officially launched at Neotel's head office.

"We are trying to address one of the most significant socio-economic issues in South Africa, which is education," said Sunil Joshi, managing director of Neotel.

"NIIT brings the skills and the content and the capability necessary, along with our infrastructure, to provide meaningful services", he said.

Joshi said the programme would initially be rolled out in Gauteng province, the economic hub of South Africa, and expanded to the rest of the country after assessment and any corrective changes that might be necessary.

"Our partnership now with Siyafunda Community Training Centres helps us take it to the communities where it will become possible for communities to leverage global education, as well as courses and curriculums which are established and will give back to the communities and to South Africa," he said. Joshi said Neotel's commitment to developing skills in South Africa was part of Tata's principles of always giving back to the communities in which it operated.

Rakesh Misri, vice president of National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) and head of its South African branch, said the new partnership was part of his company's aim of developing people across the globe.

"This partnership will help build a pool of skills among South Africans that can then take up the challenge of assignments from all over the world," Misri said.

Ahmed Ismail, who started the NGO Siyafunda several years ago, said the initiative had been welcomed by local government agencies across the country to the extent that they were regularly opening community training centres to provide ICT training opportunities at low or subsidised cost for under-privileged communities.

"The renowned programmes of NIIT, coupled with the broadband reach of Neotel across the country, will make these quality educational initiatives even more accessible to these communities," Ismail said. PTI