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IBM Donates Blue Gene/P Supercomputer to Spur Scientific and Socio-economic Growth in Africa

Supercomputer Will Be Most Powerful on the Continent

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA--(Marketwire - December 4, 2007) - [IBM](#) (NYSE: [IBM](#)) today announced that it will donate a 14-teraflop Blue Gene/P system to the Meraka Institute which will be hosted by the [Center for High Performance Computing](#) (CHPC) in Cape Town, South Africa, in an effort to spark scientific and socio-economic progress in the region.

The \$2 million Blue Gene supercomputer -- able to make 14 trillion floating point calculations per second -- will be, by far, the most powerful supercomputer on the African continent. It will be available free of charge to any qualifying African institution for use on advanced scientific projects. The application process, currently being developed by IBM and the CHPC, will be made public before the system is installed early in 2008 with the goal of granting access to any African institution focused on social, economic, and environmental issues and skills development on the African continent.

The donation was prompted by an extensive series of meetings on economic development opportunities in Africa recently convened by IBM as part of its annual Global Innovation Outlook (GIO) process. More than 150 global business, academic and government leaders agreed that building scientific and technical capability within Africa is one of the fundamental keys to growing its economy.

"Unlike simple donations of cash or even laptop computers, access to advanced supercomputing capabilities immediately places the African scientific community on an even playing field with the rest of the world," said [Mark Dean](#), an IBM Fellow and Research Vice President who brokered the donation. "With this Blue Gene, the CHPC can tackle large-scale, complex computing problems that are pertinent to the African people, including infectious disease treatments, management and prevention, climate modeling, alternative energy and fuel systems, and plant genomics."

Blue Gene's new home, the CHPC, is managed by the [Council for Scientific and Industrial Research](#) (CSIR) through the [Meraka Institute](#). The CSIR is a public research institution whose objective is to facilitate African economic and social development through human capital development, needs-based research and innovation. It will work with top IBM scientists to evaluate proposals from research and academic institutions across Africa to determine access to the computer.

"We are primarily focused on initiatives that have significant scientific, environmental or socio-economic outcomes," said Johan Eksteen, Meraka Institute. "We have a broad view of strategic research projects across the academic and broader research community needing high performance computing capacity. The power of this Blue Gene will help us further our objective of providing high-end computing and expertise for exploratory science, medicine, engineering and social sciences in Africa to make a real positive impact."

Originally designed to model protein folding and nuclear simulations, the [Blue Gene](#) family of supercomputers consistently tops the list of the world's fastest supercomputers.

The donation of the Blue Gene/P system follows an announcement in September that IBM and the Climate Systems Analysis Group at the University of Cape Town launched a global computing effort through World Community Grid to improve regional climate models in order to make better projections about what effects a changing climate will have in Africa.

The project, "AfricanClimate@Home," will use the vast computational power of World Community Grid, a virtual supercomputer comprised of hundreds of thousands of individuals who donate their unused computer time, making it as powerful as one of the world's top five supercomputers. Researchers will use the computational power of World Community Grid to improve the models used to predict the climate by conducting simulations in small regions of Africa and then checking them against real observations.

About the CSIR and Meraka Institute

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in South Africa is one of the leading scientific and technology research, development and implementation organisations in Africa. It undertakes directed research and development for socio-economic growth.

The major objective of the Meraka Institute is to facilitate national economic and social development through human capital development and needs-based research and innovation, leading to products and services based on Information and Communication Technology.

About IBM's Global Innovation Outlook

IBM's Global Innovation Outlook, launched in 2004, brings together leaders from business, academia, and politics from around the world to create new opportunities for business and society. The GIO challenges some of the brightest minds on the planet to collaboratively address some of the most vexing challenges on earth. For more information, please visit www.ibm.com/gio.

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