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Suriname

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Digicel launches in Suriname

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By Caribbean Net News Suriname

PARAMARIBO, Suriname: Caribbean mobile telecommunications operator Digicel has launched its 23rd operation in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) nation of Suriname -- heralding the end of a 25-year telecommunications monopoly.

Digicel has made an initial investment of US\$60 million in building a state-of-the-art network that offers coverage to many Surinamese communities for the first time ever. The Caribbean company is also the first operator to offer a continuous service across the South American countries of Suriname, French Guiana and Guyana. With a population of close to 500,000, Suriname's mobile penetration is estimated at just over 55 percent.

Suriname is introducing a number of first-to-market services and high-value offerings such as prepaid and postpaid roaming, rollover minutes, free activation, free voicemail as well as free credit with every prepaid account purchase. The widest range of handsets for all pockets have also been introduced including for the first time ever BlackBerry and Digicel's own exclusive range of Coral phones starting from as low as SRD 70 (US\$25).

Ronald Venetiaan, President of Suriname, welcomed Digicel to Suriname, adding: "We are heralding a positive new era in telecommunications development in Suriname and I'm delighted that Digicel has come to Suriname to be a part of this change. We are confident that the company will have a positive impact on the lives of the people of Suriname as well as encourage further growth in our economy."

To date, Digicel employs close to 150 Surinamese staff and it is estimated that an additional 1,000 jobs have been created through its local dealerships and partners. Digicel Suriname, which has opened 28 stores and 5,000 recharge locations, is headed by Philip van Dalsen, who brings more than seven years' international experience in mobile and fixed telecommunications management.

"Reaching our 23rd market is a significant milestone for us and I want to welcome Suriname to the Digicel family," said Digicel Group CEO Colm Delves. "This is going to be a very exciting market for us and bodes well for our growth strategy ahead as we continue to build our customer base and roll out network in the Caribbean and beyond. We are proud to offer the best coverage, the best quality and the best value to the people of Suriname."

Digicel's investment in the Caribbean and the Central American region exceeds US\$1.5 billion. In 2006, the company recorded a milestone of subscriber growth in excess of 100%. Digicel currently has more than 5.7 million customers and directly employs a total of 3,500 people.

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