

Kenya gets undersea broadband fibre optic cable

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Workers haul part of a fibre optic cable onto the shore at the Kenyan port town of Mombasa. An undersea fibre optic cable bringing broadband Internet connectivity to east Africa, reached the Kenyan coast from the United Arab Emirates on Friday, the president said.

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The East Africa Marine Systems (TEAMS) fibre optic submarine cable project is a joint venture of the Kenyan government and Emirates Telecommunication Technology (Etisalat) and a consortium of local investors.

It is expected to boost internet connections and greatly reduce the cost of

telecommunications, especially data transmission in the region. It is expected to become operational next month.

President Mwai Kibaki said the project was a landmark in Kenya's national development history.

"With the launch of this project Kenya is now equipped with one of the most advanced and cost effective, nation-building tools," said Kibaki, adding it would allow east Africans to be "fully digital citizens of the 21st century"

The 4,500 kilometre (2,790 mile) cable links Mombasa on the Kenyan coast to Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates.

Initially projected at 82 million dollars when it was initiated in 2006 an alternative to the East African Submarine Cable System which the government felt was dominated by South Africa.

Alcatel-Lucent won the contract to lay the cable.

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