

to get the final numbers within already agreed ranges, but on industrial tariffs, more precision on the formula to cut barriers was required.

Lamy said he hoped the parties would come closer to agreements so a ministerial meeting could be called.

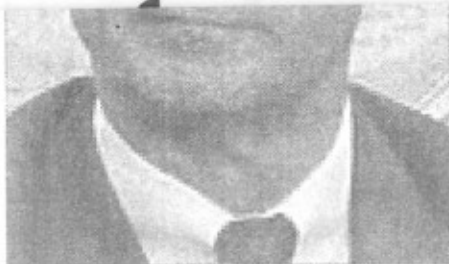
"We are not there as of today, but we may get there in the coming weeks. Again, it is doable. I am not saying I am sure it will be done, but I believe that a number of technical issues can be closed," he said.

"If I convene a small ministerial meet-

ing, they declared their determination to meet in March or April to try to complete a deal by the year-end.

A change in the administration in Washington next year could push back the negotiations by several years or cause them to collapse, diplomats say.

European Union Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said on Friday the trade deal faced a high risk of failure, which would be a first for a multilateral trade round. — Reuters



• Pascal Lamy — Director-General,
World Trade Organisation

ing a new wave of the two fairs that are organised in this country. Again, we should be able to build on our core competencies, by producing market and product information; business matchmaking; and organising trade fairs that would be of international standards. We should be able to strengthen our links with relevant trade and business institutions outside the country so that they could fully participate in our international fairs.

The ball should now be in the courts of the AGI, GNCCI, and the PEF to organise meaningful trade fairs that can stand the test of time.

— Article: Lloyd Evans

Arrow Networks begins to assemble modems

ARROW Network Systems, a local information, communications and technology firm, has begun the extensive testing of locally assembled modems called BLINK for wireless data transmission in the country.

Blink is a WiFi Data Radio for point-to-point and point-to-multi-point wireless connectivity for internet access and wide area networks for companies with multiple branch offices.

In an interview, the Chief Executive Officer of Arrow Network Systems, Mr Kwaku Boadu, said "local assembly of Wireless Data Modems (WDM) is only the first step of our intentions for manufacture of ICT hardware

in Ghana".

He said it had taken the company six years to reach the first stage, due to constraints from resource training and market conditions in West Africa.

"It is important that we start assembling and possibly manufacture certain vital ICT hardware in Ghana to reduce the dependency on imports if we are to develop our knowledge industry and be the ICT hub in West Africa."

The company, which is operating in the Free Zones enclave in Accra, is the local representative of Racom, a major wireless equipment manufacturer in the Czech Republic.

Mr Boadu explained that BLINK, a

WDM, was the equivalent of what computers needed as an alternative to cables to communicate with each other over long distances.

"Computers, therefore, need WDMs in order to provide internet connectivity, or inter-connect a bank or a company's multiple branches across the nation for remote data processing, such as on-line banking, ATMs, debit/credit cards, etc.," he stated.

"Just like mobile phone handsets, every WDM we use in Ghana is imported," Mr Boadu stated, and added that the company had undertaken to assemble the only known WDM in West Africa.

"Ghana is truly setting itself up as the hub of ICT in the sub-region through this

and other ICT services and products," the CEO stated.

The company has already introduced BLINK in Sierra Leone as a World Bank project to interconnect government offices.

The company during the Ghana 2008 African Nations Cup tournament successfully installed BLINK modems used at all the stadia and press centres to upload matches to the Internet.

Several efforts are being made by public and private institutions in the country to make Ghana the ICT hub of West Africa.

The Ghana Free Zones Board has integrated ICT into its investment promotion.

— Story: Boahene Asamoah