

Jean Ping Calls for More ICT Projects in Africa

By Mireny John, Addis Ababa

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union Jean Ping has called for increased investment in ICT projects in Africa.

Mr. Ping made the remarks during his key address to the 14th ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) held in Addis Ababa today.

He said that the AU was concerned at the snail's pace development of ICT projects on the continent, but was confident the challenges would be solved if African countries would resolve to invest more in that sector, as well as by mobilizing support from the more developed partners.

However, he said, Africa should bring its ICT priorities on the table while negotiating for partnerships, like pressing for increased investment in ICT-related infrastructure, as that strategy would also help the continent speed-up its own integration initiatives.

He cited the recently completed Addis Ababa telemedicine project which was supported by India, as a living example of how Africa could reduce its digital divide through effective partnerships.

He said the AU would continue to provide the necessary tools and policy guidelines to promote ICT development in Africa.

On his part, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Mon reiterated that "ICTs development was inevitable" adding that African smallholder farmers need support through ICTs to enable them achieve some of the basic Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) like ending hunger.

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