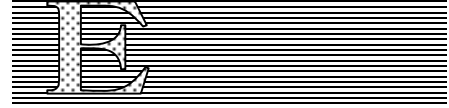




**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**



**Distr.: GENERAL
E/ECA/ISTD/ATAC/V/R1**

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Second Meeting of the Fifth African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)
On the African Information Society Initiative (AISII)

Report of the Retreat

Maputo, Mozambique

30 – 31 May 2007

INTRODUCTION

In May 1996, the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). In resolution 812 (XXXI) adopting the Initiative, the Conference of Ministers mandated ECA to institute an African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) made up of African experts in all aspects of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the Information Society to provide advice on the implementation of AISI. ATAC members were also expected to play an advocacy role, identifying best ICT practices, and assisting ECA mobilize resources for its work programme.

Since 1997, five committees had been established (ATAC I, II, III, IV and V). ATAC V held its first meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 12 - 14 December 2006. The meeting made recommendations to organize a retreat to further discuss the programme of work of the repositioned DISD into ISTD (ICT and Science & Technology Division) of ECA in order to provide appropriate advice on implementation. Accordingly a retreat was organized in Maputo, Mozambique from 30-31 May 2007 back to back with the e-Government and Gender workshop organized by ECA and Industry Canada.

Session I Opening Session

1. Welcoming and introductory remarks

In her opening remarks, Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ICT, Science and Technology Division (ISTD) introduced and welcomed the Hon. Minister of Science and Technology, Mr. Venancio Massingue and thanked him for according his time to grace the opening. She advised participants that the presence of the Hon Minister at this meeting was significant given that he had been the Chairman of the first ATAC and that this retreat, being held at the 10th anniversary of the AISI, provided an ideal opportunity to reflect on the future of the initiative. The Director briefed participants on the ECA repositioning exercise that had resulted in the transformation of the former Development Information Services Division (DISD) to the ICTs, Science and Technology Division (ISTD). Although, “Harnessing information for development” remained the overarching mandate for ISTD, the focus should also encompass the new orientation in Science, Technology and Innovation. She highlighted the important role that ATAC members would play in assisting ECA realize its new work programme and business plan and advised that one of the major objectives of the meeting was that of soliciting for advice on programme focus areas in light of the reorganization. In this regard, the discussions of the meeting would focus on mapping out implications of the ISTD and examine the work programme.

The Director proceeded to introduce to the Hon Minister, the ATAC members attending this retreat:

- ◆ Prof. Clement Dzidonou - Chairperson
- ◆ Ms. Olive Chikankheni - Vice-chairperson
- ◆ Dr. Ahmed Hussien - Rapporteur

- ◆ Ms. Opportune Santos
- ◆ Mr. Ebrima Jobe
- ◆ Mr. Mzwandile R. Mabuza
- ◆ Mr. Moses Bayingana

Apologies had been received from Mr. Abdoulaye Ndiaye (Senegal), Dr. Nagwa El Shenawy (Egypt) and Ms. Natalie Sunker (South Africa).

The list of participants and their addresses is attached in Annex 2.

In his opening remarks, the Hon Minister welcomed participants to the meeting and congratulated ISTD for the sterling work in the policy development area and ATAC for the continued important role as an independent vehicle for programme validation. He stressed that the destiny of Africa lay in the hands of Africans themselves and that self-belief was key to ensuring the successful delivery of set goals. The Hon Minister advised that Science and Technology and Innovation heralded development with ICT as an enabling technology catalyzing new dynamics to the development of all the other areas. In Mozambique, Science and Technology was regarded as a cross cutting issue that was relevant for all sectors. The challenges in the process were identified as human resource development and financing. This called for prioritization of projects with a high impact. The Hon Minister pledged his support to the Division and urged the meeting to continue its good work in delivering tangible results towards Africa's development.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The provisional agenda was adopted with modifications - Annex 1.

Session II Setting the Scene

From DISD to ISTD - Mapping-out the implications of the Reorganization of the ECA on the Divisions mandate and programmes including the AISI in the post reform ECA:

Prof. C. Dzidonu, Ghana, Chairperson of ATAC

In his presentation, Prof. C. Dzidonu explained the background and how the activities of the former DISD can be transformed to the new ISTD composing the functional areas of ICT, S&T and Geoinformation. To chart a way forward, it was therefore important to establish whether (i) these functional areas were independent but grouped under the same Division for the administrative reasons or (ii) they are functionally fused areas. The ATAC Chairperson made reference to the aim of the ECA for setting up the new Division, and that is: to bring science-related activities together in one cluster and promote synergies among the various sections. Further, the Chairman asked whether the Division's mandate has changed fundamentally or marginally as a result of introducing the new functional areas.

The presentation touched on five scenarios (illustrated in Annex 3) representing the possible relationship between ICTs on one hand and S&T on the other. This serves as a basis for deliberations leading to the identification of the most viable link bearing in mind the Division's work towards its sub programme mandate, which is: "Harnessing information for development". The five scenarios reflected the link between ICT and Science & Technology thus:

- A: 'ICT' and 'S&T' are not linked – they are separate entities
- B: 'ICT' and 'S&T' can co-exist side-by-side
- C: 'S&T' is part of 'ICT'
- D: 'ICT' is part of 'S&T'
- E: The 'T' in 'S&T' is part of 'ICT' – meaning all Technology is ICT
- F: 'ICT' is part of the 'T' in 'S&T' – meaning ICTs are Technologies and there are some technologies which are not ICTs. In other words the 'T' in 'S&T' consist of ICTs and non-ICTs as well

The presentation highlighted the Division's activities, which would be the basis for mapping the activities in the constituent sections. In analysing the new functions, it was prudent to determine whether the core activities of the Division were not expected to change that much or that the Division would continue to discharge its roles and carry out its core activities in the ICT and the Geo area and at most, extend these to support Science & Technology related undertakings (policy formulation, implementation, stakeholder meetings, studies etc).

In the discussions which ensued, the members were advised that the mandate of the Division had not changed in terms of Sub-programme 4 and that the work on policy formulation would probably now encompass ICT, Geo and Science & Technology i.e. development of STI policies. An advisory body to cater for Science & Technology would probably be established on the same lines as ATAC. On the issue of whether the Division's mandate had changed fundamentally or marginally, the meeting was advised that the changes were marginal as they did not impact on the prescribed programme of work. It was generally agreed that Science & Technology was cross cutting and within the ECA, some components were housed in other Divisions. This therefore called for a need to prioritize and focus on elements which would add value and have a significant impact towards harnessing of information for development in order to fulfill this marginally extended mandate.

The meeting concurred that whilst it was important to clearly define the mandate of the Division, it was prudent to be mindful of what was happening in African countries as the demand side - the reality on the ground. Generally at the demand side, a Science & Technology Policy and also a NICI existed as separate entities. Would countries require a separate or integrated ICT / Science & Technology policy?

The conclusion of the discussions was a proposal to adopt an option F of the five-presented scenarios of the ICT, Science & Technology relationship. This proposal assumed fused functional areas (ICT / Science & Technology) and the unbundling of S&T into: 'science' & 'technology' clusters – and by so doing ICTs can be considered as part of the 'technology' cluster (re: Scenario F) focusing on the technology component of S&T (Option F). Science can exist without technology but there was no technology which was not science-based.

Session III The ISTD Work Process, Procedures and Work Programme

Presentation on the Elements and the Action Points of ISTD Strategic Plan:

Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD

In her presentation, the Director of ISTD highlighted the Science & Technology challenges for Africa. She focused on the unattractive working conditions prompting brain drain, lack of physical infrastructure & limited access to ICTs, limited capacities to develop, adapt and exploit scientific and technological solutions, limited knowledge and expertise on the role that Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) systems could play in fostering innovation, knowledge diffusion and competition, and limited resources to create viable and competitive physical/virtual networks of excellence between African / International institutions of higher education and STI institutions. She further advised on research, R&D expenditure and activities in the continent citing examples of some African countries.

In discussing the Science and Technology mandate of the UN system, she cited General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/204 on the important role of science, technology and innovation in enhancing economic well-being. She further informed the meeting that Science and Technology formed the basis for the Knowledge economy and as such, Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) was singled out in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) processes and the outcome document of the Millennium Summit.

She further dwelt on the role of the new subprogramme in the repositioning of ECA, the initiatives to support programme implementation and the means for delivering the Work Programme 2008-2009 on ICT and Science and Technology through three separate programme elements (ICT, Geoinformation and S&T) with cross-cutting activities. In this context, the Director underlined the delivery mechanisms and expected results.

She advised that ISTD was part of the internal change management process of the entire commission and that it was essential to create niches and comparative advantages for the new Division through strengthening information and knowledge sharing, facilitating establishment of an enabling environment for the knowledge economy, supporting economic development in member States and harnessing STI in the development process. As the ICT programme element was already viewed as one of the strengths of the Division, it was essential to find a niche for S&T without having to slow down the pace of ICT activities. In this regard the Director put forward immediate major initiatives for S&T as establishment of an on-line discussion list with African scientists on current state of S&T on the continent, building of an African S&T Repository, launch of the Access to Scientific Knowledge (ASKIA) Initiative, convening of an African Conference on S&T and establishment of the S&T Advisory Group (STAG). She further advised that S & T was extremely broad, it was 'everything and anything' with a lot of specialists (energy, medical sciences, agriculture, etc.) but there was need not to stray far from what the division was doing earlier. She emphasized the need for the Division to define its scope of S&T in order to as far as possible fit this scope within the work of the Division. She accordingly emphasized the need to review the knowledge base in Africa – production of

knowledge resources to promote development; S&T in promoting economic entrepreneurship; and S&T in the use of ICT.

Presentation on the Outcome of CODI V on the Work Programme of the ISTD:
Makane Faye, Regional Adviser ISTD

In his presentation, he advised on the old ECA machinery and the new one adopted by the 2007 Conference of ministers. In this context a Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology (CODIST) was created and its Terms of Reference finalized by the fifth session of the Committee on Development Information (CODI-V), which it will replace in 2008. He advised on the CODIST membership and objectives. CODIST will guide the overall programme implementation by, among others strengthening the role of ECA in assisting its member States to develop their national information and communication infrastructure, geographic information technologies, integrating S&T in development programmes and strategies, and promoting exploitation and usage of knowledge and information services.

On CODI-V resolutions relevant to ATAC members, the presenter put emphasis on resolutions which had a bearing on the newly created Science and Technology programme element as follows: establishment of National CODIST Committees, follow-up of CODIST activities with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), adoption of innovation systems that strengthen public-private partnerships and development of linkages between research institutions, universities and enterprises. He requested ATAC members to be fully involved in implementation of the resolutions.

In the discussions which followed the two presentations, ATAC members advised that they were relieved of worry they had the previous day on the possible scope of activities of the new Division and they noticed that ISTD was narrowing the scope of S&T by defining what S&T was and defining areas it would work in. ATAC members agreed that S&T was broad, and for the work of division to be practical, there was need to have focus on specific areas that add value to the work of the Division. They noted that ISTD was a small division with a small budget and needed to add value to whatever new activities it was going to embark on. It was suggested that the Division should concentrate on those S&T activities, projects and initiatives defined within a narrow scope that would ensure that the Division delivered on its programme mandate in the area of 'Harnessing Information for Development'. The focus should be on adding value and making impact within the budgetary constraints and the programme mandate of the Division.

The meeting also suggested that in view of the division's comparative advantage and excellent work in ICT, the S&T activities should add value and not break the existing momentum. They further suggested that 80% of ECA's ICT Policy development activity should go to NICI implementation, while 20% could go to the development process of new and on-going NICIs as recommended by the first meeting of ATAC 5. They requested ECA to develop a scoring card on NICI implementation in member States in order to monitor development and impact, to better advise countries on where focus should be and also to attract partners to countries, which deserve support.

Participants agreed that although the mandate of the Division has changed (extended) to include S&T, the ‘bread and butter’ roles, responsibilities and core activities of the Division are not expected to change much and that it is expected to continue to discharge its roles and carryout its core activities in the ICT and the Geoinformation area and extend these to support S & T related undertakings (policy formulation, implementation, stakeholder meetings, studies etc). In this context, the meeting recommended that activities to be undertaken on S & T should be geared to actions which would make impact in the African scene.

The meeting noted that Science covered lot of issues and was a basis for Technology, including ICT and other technologies. Hence in order to understand the relations between ICT and S&T, it was important to unbundle the issue of S&T by dissociating the Science aspect from the Technology one and clearly underscore intersections between ICT and S&T.

Session IV – The ISTD in the Post Reform Era: Concrete Programmes and Actions

Mapping out Concrete Actions and Programmes for ISTD and ATAC in the Post Reform Era

The meeting developed as the way forward, the matrix below to map out activities on ICT, Geoinformation and Science and Technology for ECA’s activities in the coming years.

Mapping out Concrete Actions and Programmes for the ISTD in the Post Reform Era			
	ICT	GEO	S&T
Policy Formulation and Implementation Support	Guidelines, templates & Score cards on implementation should be developed	X	X
Resource Mobilization Support (Weight should be put to characterize intensity)	X	X	X
Capacity Development Support Services	Emphasis to be on implementation of NICI	Training of technical staff on Land management	Emphasis to be on Science project management
Advocacy and Awareness Raising	X	X	X
Stakeholder Engagement & Outreach Services and Activities	Stakeholders engagement on ICT should be geared to support of implementation	To be done within the context of NICI process	Outreach on S&T to the scientific community and policymakers managing science, during on-line and face to face meetings
Engagement with Development Partners	Engagement		Conference on

List of partners should be provided	should be in implementation	X	Science in Africa & Support to implement other identified activities
Engagement with Private Sector	There is also need to engage private sector to mobilize resources on how best they can facilitate implementation. Need for models, templates and guidelines on engaging local and international private sector in implementing NICI. Need to provide portfolio of implementation tools, e.g. score card, document on case studies and best practices on implementation to sensitize government and guide private sector. Implementation of the NSDI component of Geo	X	Incubation process needs a series of studies on models and best practices to sensitize government. Capacity building on linking science to entrepreneurship
Organization of Forum and major initiatives	AISI, ATAC, ARAPKE, GAID, GK3, ADF, Measuring ICT for Development, UNGIS	CODIST-Geo, EIS Africa, AFREF, ATAC, UN-SDI, UNCSTD	ANSTI, Science in Africa, Science and Technology Advisory Group (STAG), ASKIA
Representation at Global/Continental level (NEPAD, RECs, AU)	X	X	X
Consensus building and facilitation	Internet Governance Forum	X	X
Conducting Studies, Exploring Best Practices and Case Studies, and Identifying Centres of Excellence	X	X	Status of scientific research in Africa. Status of level of

			R&D in African universities, research institutions and industry. Study on industrial and agriculture prototype developed in African universities and African universities and research institutions.
Production and Distribution of Knowledge and Information Products	X	X	X
Policy Documents (produced by countries), Studies	On thematic and emerging issues. Guidelines and templates as described earlier to facilitate implementation		
Facilitating international collaborative initiatives	X	X	Support research within African universities through collaborative arrangements
Guidelines, Methodologies and Templates	X	X	On policy coherence and also from some of the studies which would generate models. Compendium of S&T Best practices
Conference Proceedings, Others (NICI implementation technical briefing papers, guidelines and indicators, Outcome of meetings and conferences)	X	X	X

While mapping the above activities for ISTD, ATAC members discussed activities that were ICT only, Geoinformation only and Science and Technology only. Following this mapping it was noted that most of the Geoinformation activities could be undertaken in the ICT framework in term of policy and action plan, and that Geoinformation was typically an application in ICT. The cases of policy in Rwanda, Malawi and Ghana were indicated where Geoinformation was fully integrated in the ICT policy. Accordingly, and in order to register a discernible impact in the delivery of advisory services, ATAC recommended that ECA should not send Geo and ICT staff separately to member States for policy advice but as one single team. In addition, countries requesting for the development of S & T policies, should be assisted by a multidisciplinary team.

Session V – Wrap up and closing

Recommendations on how best the ISTD can function to effectively deliver on its mandate and programmes in the post reform ECA

ATAC members discussed the vision, goals and objectives of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) and found them more than relevant and up to date as a framework for spearheading development of the knowledge economy in Africa. They recommended its continuous use and asked the Chairperson of ATAC 5 to prepare a statement to this effect.

Date & venue of next meeting, and Any Other Business

On Any Other Business, the meeting agreed on the following delivery schedule of ATAC 5 output:

- 31st May: Meeting ends
- 8 June: The first cut and the rough cut of the report to be discussed between Chair, Rapporteur and ISTD staff
- 12th June: Draft report to be sent to the list for comment by ATAC members
- 15th June: Draft report to be finalized by ATAC members
- 19th June: Final report to be finalized by the Chairperson
- 22th June: Summary and Recommendations to be finalized by the Chairperson and transmitted to the ECA Executive Secretary

Closing remarks

ATAC participants expressed individually their satisfaction for the work achieved during the two days.

The Director of ISTD thanked participants for their useful contribution. She advised that she was happy to have made the current selection of ATAC membership because they were very knowledgeable of the Commission's activities as NICI focal points who understand better what we do and can also share with us some of their problems in terms of the work we do for them, consultants who have been working for us for several years or members of ECA's various stakeholders networks; hence the recommendations they provide are relevant to ISTD work.

The Chairperson of ATAC, Professor Clement Dzionu thanked all the participants for their active participation, especially in advising ISTD on implementing its work programme for the coming years. He said all members are committed to supporting ECA in implementing the activities of the newly created Division. He agreed to prepare a summary of outcome for the ECA Executive Secretary.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm on the 31st of May 2007.

Annex 1

AGENDA

Wednesday, 30th May 2007

Session I:

Opening Session

14:30 – 14:50

Welcoming and introductory remarks
Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD

14:50 – 15:10

Discussion and Adoption of Agenda and Programme of Work

15:10 – 15:30

Brief Statement on the Purpose of the ATAC/ISTD Retreat
Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD

15:30 – 16:00

Plenary Discussion

16:00 – 16:30

Coffee Break

Session II:

Setting the Scene

16:30 – 17:00

From DISD to ISTD: Mapping out the Implications of the Reorganization of the Division on its mandate and programmes including the AISI in the post reform ECA.
Prof. C. Dzidonu, NICI Consultant, International Institute for Information Technology (INIIT), Ghana

16:30 – 17:00

Discussion

Thursday 31st May 2007

Session III:

The ISTD Work Process, Procedure and Work Programme

9:00 – 10:00

Presentation on the Elements and the Action Points of ISTD Strategic Plan
Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD

10:00 – 10:30

Presentation on the Outcome of CODI V on the Work Programme of the ISTD
Makane Faye, Regional Adviser ISTD

10: 30– 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 13:15	Plenary Discussion on the ISTD Strategy Plan and the CODI Action Lines and Work Programme
13:15 – 14:15	Lunch Break
<u>Session IV:</u>	The ISTD in the Post Reform Era: Concrete Programmes and Actions
14:15 – 15:45	Mapping out Concrete Actions and Programmes for the ISTD in the Post Reform Era Rapporteur (Based on the Session I to III Discussions)
15:45- 16:15	Plenary Discussion
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee Break
<u>Session V:</u>	Closing
16:15– 16:45	Recommendations on how best the ISTD can function to effectively deliver on its mandate and programmes in the post reform ECA.
16:45 - 17:30	Date & venue of next meeting and AOB
17:30 – 18:00	Closing remarks

Annex 2

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Annex 3: Relationship Between 'ICT' and 'S&T'

