

Report of PICTA Meeting Wednesday 6 March 2002

1. The Partnership for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa held a meeting during the African Development Forum III that was held 3-8 March 2002 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting was to:
 - Follow up on the outcomes of recent PICTA meetings
 - Discuss the UN ICT Task Force Africa Stakeholders Network and the support of PICTA to the Network
 - Discuss the preparation for the World Summit for the Information Society
 - The role of PICTA in implementing ADF3 recommendations and how PICTA can support the regional integration effort in Africa

2. The following organizations were present: ADB, AFFORD, Agence Internationale de la Francophonie, Bellanet, British Council, ECA, ECOWAS/CEDEAO European Union, Government of Finland, ITU, PANOS, OSISA-ICT, SADC, UNESCO and the Government of Mali. Members of the African technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) of the AISI were also present (A list of participants is attached as an annex.)

3. The meeting began with a welcoming remark of Ms. Karima Bounmera Ben Soltane, Director of the Development Information Services Division of the ECA. This was followed by adoption of the agenda as presented by the ECA. (The adopted agenda is attached as an annex)

4. The Executive Secretary of the ECA, Mr. K. Y. Amoako welcomed the participants and thanked partners for their support to the implementation of programmes within the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). He reminded the participants that the ADF was kicked-off with the ICT agenda. Therefore ICT is an integral part of the ADF process. He noted that there have been major steps towards building partnership and in advancing the African ICT agenda. Among the key forums and initiatives are the Global Knowledge Partnership, the G8 DOT Force and the UN ICT Task Force. He noted the challenges and opportunities at this juncture, when the momentum for African digital inclusion is building. The World Summit on Information Society and the regional preparatory conference for the Summit to be held in Bamako are other milestones that require reinforced partnership. He finally urged the

- participants to keep the partnership up to advance the African digital inclusion.
5. The meeting elected Mr. Pierre Ouderago of the Agence International de la Francophonie as a chairperson and ITU and ECA as rapporteurs.
 6. As regard of the first agenda item on the follow up of the outcomes of previous PICTA meetings, Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah of the ECA briefed the participants that progress has been made recently in many areas. She indicated that the present meeting is a follow-up to September meeting of PICTA. An informal meeting of PICTA members was also held in November 2001 during the ITU Africa Telecom Conference in Johannesburg. She noted that ECA has launched a monthly PICTA bulletin that has stimulated interest in information gathering and sharing. The Bulletin has become an effective instrument for updating PICTA members with ongoing activities. It was noted that the increasing commitment of ECA to update PICTA members has created an impetus for members' recommitment in information sharing. The bulletin is available at ECA web site www.uneca.org/aisi/PICTAbulletin
 7. It was noted that collaboration between PICTA members has also been improved. The AIF and ECA have collaborated in hosting a pre-forum workshop on ICT and regional integration during the ADF III.
 8. Mr. Amos Tincani of the European Union noted that a number of institutions such as UNDP, ECA, European Union, IICD, and Germany are developing national ICT strategies in Africa. He suggested that PICTA should play a role in harmonizing these initiatives. The PICTA Bulletin, its mailing lists and regular meetings should be used for improved coordination.
 9. As per the agenda item on UN ICT Task Force Africa Stakeholders Network, the late Professor Mamadou Gueye*, Chairman of the interim steering committee of the African Stakeholders Network of the UN ICT Task Force, briefed participants on the regional meeting that was held 22-23 January 2002. The meeting was organized to launch the UN ICT Task Force African Stakeholders Network. He noted that the Executive Secretary of ECA opened the meeting and indicated the United Nations

* Professor Mamadou Gueye passed away shortly after the meeting following a brief illness.

Information and Communication Technologies Task Force (UN ICT TF) African Stakeholders Network should be seen as a great opportunity for strengthened partnerships and collaborations. This would create more synergies in the implementation of Africa's digital agenda and avoid duplication of efforts with regard to ICT initiatives. Prof. Gueye noted that the Executive Secretary provided guidelines to the meeting to:

- (i) Develop modalities for the creation of strong partnerships to avoid duplication.
- (ii) Develop strategies for creating synergies between existing networks such as Partnership for ICTs in Africa (PICTA), the UN ICT Task Force and other initiatives.
- (iii) Formulate strategies for operationalizing the proposed Task Force network for Africa.
- (iv) Formulate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to gauge the effectiveness of the network.

He noted that, the meeting after electing a chair person and briefs on the UN ICT Task Force and on major ICT initiatives in Africa, discussed issues pertinent to digital inclusion in Africa centered around the thematic areas identified by the UN ICT Task Force. Prof. Gueye highlighted that the Stakeholders Network meeting has also adopted the Common Position for Africa's digital inclusion. The regional meeting was also briefed on PICTA activities. Among other achievements of the meeting that he highlighted were:

- Setting up of the African Stakeholders Network
- Election of the interim Steering Committee for the African Stakeholders Network
- Unanimous endorsement of the role of ECA as the Secretariat for the African Stakeholders Network
- Development of a working plan for interim steering committee

A permanent steering committee is planned to be established before the UN ICT Task Force Meeting in September 2002. A full report of the meeting is available at the UN ICT Task Force web site: http://www.unicttaskforce.org/community/documents/506627650_ASN%20%20mins.doc

10. In elaborating the link between PICTA and the Africa Stakeholders Network, Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director of the Development Information Services Division, noted that there is a need for distinction between PICTA and the African Stakeholders Network (ASN) of the UN ICT Task Force. PICTA is a network for executing agencies of major ICT projects and programmes. The ASN is a broad-membership network that includes government. It operates within the perimeter of the UN ICT Taskforce. PICTA can become a member of ASN.
11. The third agenda item on preparation for the World Summit for the Information Society was presented by ITU and the Government of Mali. Mr. Brahim Sanou, Africa Regional Director of the ITU briefed the meeting with the preparation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The Summit follows a resolution of the ITU Plenipotentiary meeting (ITU/PP-98 Resolution 73), ACC recommendation in 1999 and the ITU Council that endorsed the organization of the Summit in two phases. The Summit was also endorsed by ECOSOC in 2001 and by the 56th UN General Assembly in December last year.

The expected outcomes of the Summit include declarations of principles that express political will that create enabling policy and regulatory environment, commitment to improve networks and services and a plan of action for all partners. There are six themes that are proposed for the Summit: ICT in education, developing a framework, the need of the users, services and applications, opening of the gates and building the infrastructure. The first Summit will take place in Geneva 10-12 December 2003. Three preparatory conferences are planned to take place in July 2002 and spring and fall 2003 respectively. Regional preparatory meetings are planned to be organized in Africa, Europe, Asia and the America. The African preparatory conference will take place in Bamako, Mali 28-30 May 2002.

12. Mr. Ousmane Bamba of the Government of Mali briefed the participants on the preparatory conference for the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Bamako. He noted that the African regional preparatory meeting is aimed at providing input to the WSIS and to make recommendations on the mechanisms of cooperation and information sharing to ensure synergy and optimal use of resources. He noted that a Secretariat has already been established to organize the meeting. ECA has been instrumental in shaping the agenda of the meeting. The agenda covers pre- conference workshops and plenaries. The meeting among other things will discuss:

- What Africa brings to information and knowledge age?
- What is the implications of information society to Africa?

- What Africa wants to preserve in the information age?
- How would Africa benefit from the information society?

Mr. Bamba noted that African countries should be informed about the preparatory meeting. The Economic Commission for Africa was requested to inform its member States and institutions. There is a need for technical assistance to the Secretariat, for identification of resource persons and for a financial support. UNESCO indicated that it plans to organize a one day workshop for the Non Governmental Organizations during the preparatory meeting in Bamako.

13. Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane urged for support to the Preparatory meeting intellectually, financially and by spreading the information. PICTA members should actively participate in the preparatory meeting.
14. As per the last agenda item on the role of PICTA in implementation of the recommendation of ADF III, she noted that the role of PICTA in supporting the regional integration effort in Africa should be discussed online based on the final outcome of the Forum.
15. The meeting was adjourned at 15:30 hrs.

Meeting of the Partners for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa (PICTA)

Theme: "Partnership for regional integration in Africa"

Date: Wednesday, 6 March 2002 (13.30 - 15.00)

Venue: Caucus Room 10, UNCC, Addis Ababa

Organised by: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA)

Participants: PICTA members, ECA/DISD, selected Observers

Objectives:

The meeting will focus on partnership for the use of ICTs for regional integration, and follow up of previous PICTA meetings.

Provisional Agenda

Wednesday, March 6, 2002

13.30 - 13.35 Welcome remarks

13.35 - 13.40 Election of Chairperson

Members will select a chairperson for this meeting.

13.50 - 13.55 Follow up on the outcomes of recent PICTA meetings

Introduced by ECA, all members will discuss the follow up activities of the meetings

13.55 - 14.15

Briefing on UN ICT TF ASN. What has been done and the way forward, including participation and support from PICTA members

14.15 - 14.30

Briefing on preparations for World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS): involvement of PICTA members

14.30 - 14.50

The role of PICTA in implementing ADF3 recommendations
How can PICTA support the regional integration effort in Africa?

14.50 - 15.00

Date and venue of next meeting, Any other business, Closing

**Meeting of Partners for ICTs in Africa (PICTA)
6 March 2002 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

List of Participants

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