



*PICTA Bulletin* is a monthly publication that provides information on activities of members in the partnership, as well as offers news on ICT-related activities in Africa. This bulletin is also available at: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/picta/PICTAbulletin>

**NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS**

**PICTA Online Discussion Launched.** A four-week online dialogue between PICTA members was set up on 15 September, 2003 in preparation for the annual PICTA meeting due to take place on October 16 - 17 in Tunis, Tunisia. The discussion is structured around two sessions: engagement in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and a retrospect on PICTA. So far, the issues that have been addressed in the discussions are: what activities and/or initiatives are PICTA members involved in related to the WSIS process? what do these activities and/or initiatives hope to accomplish? what do members think should be PICTA's contribution to NEPAD? and how can PICTA members best collaborate towards implementation of NEPAD's ICT cluster within the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AIS)? The second session is designed to create a shared understanding on PICTA's achievements to-date. Discussions will focus on identifying clear, achievable and future-orientated recommendations. For further information, please contact the discussion facilitators: Allison Hewlitt ([ahewlitt@bellanet.org](mailto:ahewlitt@bellanet.org)) or Lucie Lamoureux ([llamoureux@bellanet.org](mailto:llamoureux@bellanet.org))

**Global Forum on ICTs and Gender: "Optimizing Opportunities" recommends that gender issues be adequately addressed in the WSIS process.** The Forum was held from 20 to 23 August 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the Government of Malaysia, the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and the Asian Pacific Women's Information Network Centre (APWINC). Private and public sectors, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CSOs) to examined strategies overcome gender-related barriers in both developing and developed countries. The strategies will translate into policies to support women's access to ICTs and successful networking to enhance women's participation in the information economy. A declaration to the WSIS process concluded the Forum and

recommended that gender issues be more adequately addressed at the Summit. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org/gender2003>

**ECA/AITEC Africa e-government Forum.** ECA, in collaboration with African Information Technology Exhibitions & Conferences (AITEC), organised a Forum on e-government during the African Computing & Telecommunications Summit (ACT 2003) that took place from 26 to 29 August 2003 in Abuja, Nigeria. The Forum was attended by participants drawn from public administration, military, private sector, and academia. A presentation on the Gambia's experience with e-government highlighted the results from a national ICT survey that was conducted in preparation for the National Action Plan on e-government Recommended during the Committee on Development Information (CODI-3). A presentation was also made on the national e-strategy for Nigeria, including an inventory of public administration websites. A discussion on benchmarking e-government highlighted the SCAN-ICT methodology on soliciting the views of African decision makers on e-government, and evaluating online public administrations. Open Source Software (OSS) discussion stressed the need for initiatives such as South Africa's use of OSS in e-government projects. Participants also discussed e-government, opportunities and challenges, the role of e-government for fighting corruption and promoting good governance. For more information, contact Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org))

**Highway Africa 2003.** Organised by the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University, the conference took place from 8 to 10 September 2003 in Grahamstown, South Africa on the theme "Mainstreaming Media in the Information Society". A representative from ECA took part in a panel discussion organised on the theme: "African Information Society: opportunities and challenges". Ongoing activities by ECA to address the challenges of Journalists in the context of AISI were presented. Other issues that were discussed include infrastructure, equipment, training needs, Internet access costs and the role of community radios. Following the discussions, concrete recommendations were made to boost the important role of journalists in the AISI. For more information, contact Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org)) or go to <http://www.highwayafrica.org>

**e-Gov 2003 Pretoria.** The e-Gov 2003 conference took place from 8 to 10 September 2003 on the theme: "Missions, Solutions and Results for a Citizen-Centred Government Using Technology as the Tool". During a panel session on e-Africa solutions for the continent.

ECA made a presentation outlining its activities on AISI and e-government. National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI), and monitoring and benchmarking of SCAN-ICT. Other issues on the table included: the importance of Private-Public-Partnership, combatting illiteracy, maximization of mobile telephony and usage, building services that respond to the needs of citizens and ICT regulatory frameworks. The role of OSS and security management issues were also heavily debated. For more info, contact Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org)).

**The Fifth Meeting of the UN ICT Task Force meet in Geneva.** Held on 12-13 September, 2003 just before the Third Preparatory Committee meeting (PREPCOM3) for WSIS, the meeting discussed the Task Force's contribution to WSIS and explored ways to harness the power of information and communication technologies for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). More: <http://www.unicttaskforce.org>

**IICD Case-Study Series on ICT-Enabled Development:** The UUNET Bandwidth Barn. The Barn provides infrastructure support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) focused on ICT products and services in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The Bandwidth Barn offers shared office space for these SMEs to reduce overhead costs for Internet connectivity, telephone, and reception, and brings the benefits of "clustering" to the budding ICT sector in Cape Town. More: [http://www.bridges.org/iicd\\_casestudies/citi/](http://www.bridges.org/iicd_casestudies/citi/)

**APC-Africa-Women: Special on access and control of ICTs.** The second edition of APC-Africa-Women's newsletter, Pula, explores the concepts of access and control in relation to ICTs. In this edition, it looks at the convergence of radio and new media through an initiative in Sierra Leone called 'Development Through Radio'. In its policy section. It describes the major challenges that face African women's use of ICTs. In 'ICT Champions', Karine M'Bengue talks about an investigation into an ICT capacity development project for women's organisations in Senegal. More: <http://www.apcafricawomen.org/pula2.htm>

**Report on APC's third "ICT Policy for Civil Society" workshop: bringing together East Africans to promote better ICT policy.** The Third APC-lead 'ICT Policy Training Course for Civil Society' training course was held in Kampala from 16 - 19 June 2003. Developed by APC through the support of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), the course is designed to build the capacity of civil society organisations to understand ICT policy and regulation so that they can begin to engage and influence policy processes that affect ICT adoption and implementation at national, regional and global levels. More: <http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=13400>

**Pro-Poor Satellite Broadcasting, Myth or Reality?** ALIN-EA (Arid Lands Information Network - East Africa) is providing email, Internet and digital satellite broadcasting in collaboration with the WorldSpace Foundation. This technology allows users in remote areas to receive information from the Internet from a radio which receives signals from a satellite. By tuning special receivers to track the nearest satellite, people

can receive over 40 channels of development information, news and entertainment. When connected to a computer via an adapter card, the radio receiver can be used to download information that can later be stored, printed out or shared by email. ALIN-EA has just published its research to assess the impact of, and potential, for the use of this technology to enhance the livelihoods of poor people in isolated rural communities in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. More: <http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=14072>

**Internet comes to rural Nigeria.** Fantsuam Foundation has launched the first rural-based internet access in Kaduna State. The service is available to hundreds of people who have to otherwise travel long distances to major cities, Jos, Abuja or Kaduna, to access the internet or email. More: <http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=14076>

**School on Digital Radio Communications for Research and Training in Developing Countries.** The International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), which operates under the aegis of UNESCO and IAEA, is organizing a "School on Digital Radio Communications for Research and Training in Developing Countries", to take place in Italy from 9 to 27 February 2004. The School will cover radio-based computer networking in academic and research environment, focusing on specific issues of Developing Countries. It will include tutorial lectures and laboratory work on state-of-the-art and affordable technologies in both computer networking and radio techniques for digital communications [<http://wireless.ictp.trieste.it>]. The target participants are selected ICT professionals as well as trainers and researchers in their respective institutions. For further info, contact Carlo Fonda, Aeronomy and Radiopropagation Laboratory, Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Strada Costiera 11, 34014 Trieste, Italy, Telephone: +39 040 2240317, FAX: +39 040 224604, E-mail: [cfonda@ictp.trieste.it](mailto:cfonda@ictp.trieste.it)

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**12 – 15 October 2003, HELINA 2003 Conference: ICTs in the Fight against HIV/ AIDS in Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa.** The International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) will convene HELINA 2003, the fourth HELINA (HEaLth INformatics in Africa) conference in South Africa from 12 to 15 October 2003, focused on ICT in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa. The conference aims to bring expert clinicians and researchers in HIV/AIDS together with regional and international experts in health informatics in a unique forum. The goal of this meeting is to introduce all participants to the broad range of issues of mutual concern facing those who develop and manage HIV/AIDS interventions, and the potential for ICTs to further these aims. More: <http://www.uku.fi/english/organizations/helina-l/msglog/2003/0001.html>

**12 – 18 October 2003, ITU Telecom World 2003, Geneva, Switzerland.** This Year's ITU TELECOM Forum will feature discussions ranging from broadband

and mobility, to new business models and new sources of revenue. More: <http://www.itu.int/WORLD2003/>

**14 – 16 October 2003, World Congress on the Digital Divide (WCDD), Palace Hotel, Tunis, Tunisia.** The event will be hosted by the World Federation of Engineering Organizations' Committee on Information and Communication. Some 2000 engineers, scientists, lecturers and senior officials from around the globe are expected to take part in the Congress. The WCDD aims to make known the engineering and scientific communities' opinions of and solutions to the digital divide separating the developed and developing countries. The WCDD has been recognized as one of the preparatory meetings for the WSIS. This meeting will take place simultaneously with the WFEO's General Assembly. More: <http://www.coi-tn.org/wfeo-cic/>

**14 October 2003, African Engineers Day: Contribution of African Engineers to the Information Society, World Engineering Congress, Tunis, Tunisia.** The ECA in collaboration with the World Federation of Engineering Organisations – Committee on Information and Communication, is organising this special event during the World Engineering Congress to discuss the roles that can be played by African engineers in addressing the challenges and opportunities to Africa of the information society, and their participation in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process. More: <http://www.wfeo-cic.org>

**14 – 17 October 2003, World Knowledge Forum, Grand Hilton Seoul, Korea.** The Forum will be attended by more than 1000 participants, such as senior government officials, policymakers and industry leaders from all over the world. The subject for discussion this year will be the creation of a new world order and economy. There will be a lively discussion of ways in which we can develop a successful government-private sector partnership. This occasion will also provide several opportunities for bilateral meetings with top opinion leaders from the world's politics, business, academia and media. The Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) and International Organisation for Knowledge Economy and Enterprise Development (IKED) will organise a joint panel with representatives from different key spheres - small business as well as big business, policymakers and academics - to identify the key factors holding up the potential of SMEs in the Information Society, and how key stakeholders can be motivated to join forces in concrete measures to improve the situation. More: <http://www.wkforum.org>

**16 – 17 October 2003, Annual PICTA Meeting, Tunis, Tunisia.** The annual meeting of PICTA will take place from 16 to 17 October 2003 in Tunis, Tunisia in conjunction with the World Congress on "Engineering and Digital Divide" scheduled from 12 to 19 October 2003. ECA, in collaboration with Connectivity Africa and the International Development Research Center (IDRC), is pleased to invite all PICTA members to the meeting where there will be an attempt to carry out the meeting using an Open Space Technology process that is designed to allow people to share their interests and create new ideas, partnerships, and/or initiatives. For more information on Open Space Technology, please consult

<http://www.openspaceworld.org/wiki/wiki/wiki.cgi>. On the second day, there will be discussions on Outcome Mapping, a learning-based approach to evaluation offered by IDRC's Evaluation Unit. PICTA members can register online at [www.wfeo-cic.org](http://www.wfeo-cic.org). Bellanet, with support from Connectivity Africa, is facilitating electronic discussions prior to the meeting (September 15 - October 10). For further information, contact Aida Opoku-Mensah ([aopoku-mensah@uneca.org](mailto:aopoku-mensah@uneca.org)) Website: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/picta/pictameetingTunis.htm>

**23 - 25 October 2003, International Symposium on Volunteerism and the Development of Human Capacities in the Information Society, Dakar, Senegal.** The theme of the symposium will be "From principles and agreements to specific action" and it aims to define the role of volunteers in the Information Society in view of WSIS. The conference will look at the mobilization of volunteers for Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) projects. It will analyse volunteer mobilisation in five specific areas: 1. Infrastructure; 2. Training; 3. Development of Internet Content; 4. Partnerships and Financing; and 5. Legal Framework. There will be a focus on reinforcing collaboration and partnerships with organizations that have the necessary skills and networks. Delegates from around the globe will present their ICT-Volunteer projects. The deadline for submission of abstracts of presentations is 20 September 2003. More: <http://www.worldwidevolunteer.org/isv2003/en/index.cfm>

**4 – 6 November 2003. Second East Africa Gender Budget Conference, Kampala, Uganda.** The Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), on behalf of the East African Gender Budget Network (EAGBN), is organising the second East African gender Budget Conference scheduled to take Place on 4th - 6th November 2003. More: Julius Mukunda Mugisha Programme Director - Gender Budget Programme Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), P.O Box 7176, Kampala, Uganda, Plot 80 A Kiira Road, Tel: 256-71943590(mobile), Tel: 256-41-540241(office), Fax: 256-41-540243, Email: [fowode@utlonline.co.ug](mailto:fowode@utlonline.co.ug)

**11 – 13 November 2003, Forum on Telecommunication Regulation in Africa, Accra, Ghana.** The main objective of the Forum is to prepare a Regional Action Plan for 2003-2004 that will enhance regulatory activities in Africa. It is expected that the Forum will play a pivotal role in preparation of the Global Symposium for Regulators (Geneva, 8 – 9 December 2003) and provide an opportunity for African regulators to deliberate on the African input to the GSR. More: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/afr>

**9 – 11 December 2003, World Electronic Media Forum (WEMF), Geneva, Switzerland.** Radio and television leaders from five continents will meet in Geneva with the goal of highlighting the essential role of media in the information society. Kofi Annan, UN secretary general, and Pascal Couchepin, Swiss president and President of the first phase of the WSIS, will speak during the WEMF opening session on December 9. Presentations by five heads of major radio and TV companies, each representing one of the main regions of the world, will follow. A joint declaration adopted by the main broadcasting organizations around

the world will be officially given to Kofi Annan and Pascal Couchepin so that they can pass it on to the heads of State and Government attending the WSIS. With a 9-language Internet site ( [www.wemfmedia.org](http://www.wemfmedia.org)) and the latest technology - from webstreaming to High Definition TV, satellite and videoconferencing - the debates in Geneva will aim to reach listeners and viewers from around the world. Interactive sessions will highlight three themes, world violence, media violence, media freedom in the information society, and media influence of the world agenda. For more information and interviews, contact: Guillaume Chenevière, Executive Director of the World Electronic Media Forum, Telephone +41 (0)22 717 20 23; e-mail : [media@wemfmedia.org](mailto:media@wemfmedia.org); website : <http://www.wemfmedia.org>

**9 – 10 December 2003, WAFUNIF Symposium at WSIS, Geneva, Switzerland.** The World Association of Former United Nations Interns and Fellows (WAFUNIF) is organising this symposium on the theme, "How to Upgrade the Communication Infrastructure and Improve the Quality of Life in Developing Countries". The Symposium is designed to address the feasibility of creating effective policies and multi-stakeholder partnerships to enable all countries, especially developing countries and economies in transition to benefit from the ICT revolution. Emphasis will be given to the emerging paradigm shift from the personal computer to the pervasive ubiquitous communication platform (based on embedded software and hardware) and broadband IT technologies. More: Email: [wafunif@wafunif.org](mailto:wafunif@wafunif.org) Website: [www.wafunif.org](http://www.wafunif.org)

**11 – 15 January 2004, First African Conference on the Digital Commons, Cape Town, South Africa.** Organised by the Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA), the African Virtual Open Initiatives and Resources (AVOIR) project at the University of the Western Cape and the ECA, the conference will address the challenges and opportunities of the creation and use of free / open source software and open content and their development potential for Africa. More: <http://idlelo.uwc.ac.za>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**eTRANSPARENCY CASE STUDY COMPETITION: £150 For All Accepted Cases; £300 Prizes.** The eGovernment for Development Information Exchange is seeking short case studies involving use of ICTs to improve public sector transparency in developing/transitional economies, and invites applications for an e-transparency case study of this type. Submission can be made online at: <http://www.e-devexchange.org/eGov/casestudy2.htm> All cases submitted by OCTOBER 10 2003 will be considered for payment. All case studies accepted for publication will attract a £150 payment. The best three cases – judged on knowledge-building value – will attract a total £300 payment. If you have any questions about the competition or case formats, contact Richard Heeks ([richard.heeks@man.ac.uk](mailto:richard.heeks@man.ac.uk)). More on egov4dev: <http://www.e-devexchange.org/eGov/topic2.htm>

**The Online Community Knowledge Center (Jordan).** The Community Knowledge Center (CKC) is a bilingual (Arabic and English) electronic information portal

developed in Jordan. The Portal began as a UNDP/Jordan initiative aiming to provide interested individuals and professionals working in community development with a one-stop-shop for the retrieval and exchange of development information and data with national, regional, and international resources to promote sustainable livelihoods and build local capacities in Jordan. The CKC is a powerful tool to promote exchange of knowledge and information and build local capacities. More: [www.ckc-undp.org.jo](http://www.ckc-undp.org.jo)

**New book from APC highlights priorities for World Summit on the Information Society.** "There is little doubt that access to ICTs is expanding, yet this process excludes the majority of people in developing countries. Many who do have access are unable to use it freely to promote their social, economic and political interests. When people gain access to these technologies, it is mostly as consumers, rather than owners or creators. The growing concentration of ownership and control of ICT can limit its remarkable potential for social empowerment," says APC in a new book entitled "Involving Civil Society in ICT Policy: the World Summit on the Information Society" launched at the third preparatory conference (PrepCom3). More: <http://www.apc.org/books>

**ICT for Development Platform: A hub for the exchange of knowledge and experience.** How can the potential of ICTs be used in poverty reduction and development efforts? The "ICT for Development Platform" offers concrete answers to this question. The event, which consists of an exhibition and a programme of conferences, will take place on from December 9-13 during WSIS at the Palexpo in Geneva. It is being organized by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the international Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) network.

Under the motto "Connecting people for a better life" the ICT for Development Platform will be the biggest event in the world, dealing specifically with the application of ICTs in development cooperation. It will bring together representatives from all social spheres - governments, national and international organizations, UN agencies, the private sector and science. In an area of 16,000 m<sup>2</sup>, 200 exhibitors from more than 50 countries will present innovative solutions and projects providing an overview of the variety of ICT applications possible in development cooperation. Parallel to that, there will be a 40 panel discussions, seminars and workshops devoted to different trends, perspectives and strategies in ICT for Development. More: <http://www.ict-4d.org>

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*PICTA Bulletin is a monthly information sharing service designed to keep members informed of each other's activities in the area of ICTs in Africa.*

*Please send relevant information, stories or exchanges you may want to share with other members to [atertime@uneca.org](mailto:atertime@uneca.org) for inclusion in subsequent issues of the PICTA Bulletin. If you have any comments and/or suggestions, please contact:*

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