

News Bytes

iConnect collaboration with i4d. Information for Development (i4d), which is a monthly magazine published in India by a leading Asian not-for-profit organization called Centre for Science - Development and Media Studies (CSDMS), and the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) have announced their collaboration on a series of articles on "evidence based real life experiences and impact in the field of ICT for development". The articles will be contributed by local journalists in IICD's focal countries. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/>

KPN computers for African schools. Royal Dutch Telecom (KPN), a leading telecommunications company in the Netherlands, has signed an agreement to donate 10,000 used computers to schools in Africa. KPN is replacing its computer park and the used computers will be handed over to SchoolNet Africa (SNA). SNA is an African not-for-profit organization, which promotes the use of ICTs in education in Africa. IICD and SNA have been working together for several years on the Global Teenager Project and KPN's interest is in investing in the knowledge economy and in ICT education. The aim of this project is to enable secondary school students from all over the world to exchange knowledge and experiences through the Internet. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/>

Regional Observatory on e-Gov. The observatory, which is currently being developed, will assist senior decision-makers in the public, private and civil society sectors to closely follow up ongoing e-

government developments in the East Africa Community (EAC) member States as well as at national levels. The observatory aims to provide a valuable insight on the implementation of various e-Government strategies, initiatives and projects. This forms part of the regional e-Government strategy being developed by EAC with support from ECA, the Government of Finland, and ePol-Net through the Canadian e-Policy Resource Center (CePRC) and Industry Canada.

News Briefs

Ethiopia doubles its coffee take in Internet auction. This was the first web auction and the coffee was sold for US\$3.22 per pound. More: http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20050701/od_uk_nm/oukoe_food_ethiopia_coffee_1

Rwanda's dream for hi-tech Africa. Rwanda is hoping to become a technology hub and lead Africa into a new Information Age. More: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/1/hi/programmes/click_online/4663893.stm

Sudan's refugees find water through radar. A new technique using satellite radar images may hold the key to providing the water needs of 200,000 Sudanese living in sweltering heat in camps along the Chadian border. More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4696335.stm>

Cellphone Banking in South Africa. First National Bank (FNB) cellphone banking uses SMS technology for customers to conclude banking transactions, increasing mass-market reach and adding functionality. More:

http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=199220&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news_business/

MTN Foundation/Nigeria takes SchoolsConnect To Abuja, Two Other States. The MTN SchoolsConnect project is an education empowerment initiative sponsored by MTN Foundation and managed by SchoolNet Nigeria. MTN Foundation is set to embark on the second phase of its SchoolsConnect programme in Kwara and Rivers States and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. More: <http://www.mtnonline.com/corporate/press.asp?NewsID=79>

Focus: Stakeholders stake-out for the Information Society

Workshops have recently been held in The Gambia, Niger and Swaziland as part of ECA's efforts in building a stronger role for stakeholders in the Information Society in general and ICT policy-making in particular. Dubbed NICI Dialogues, these events are meant to create sustained interest of various stakeholders at the national levels.

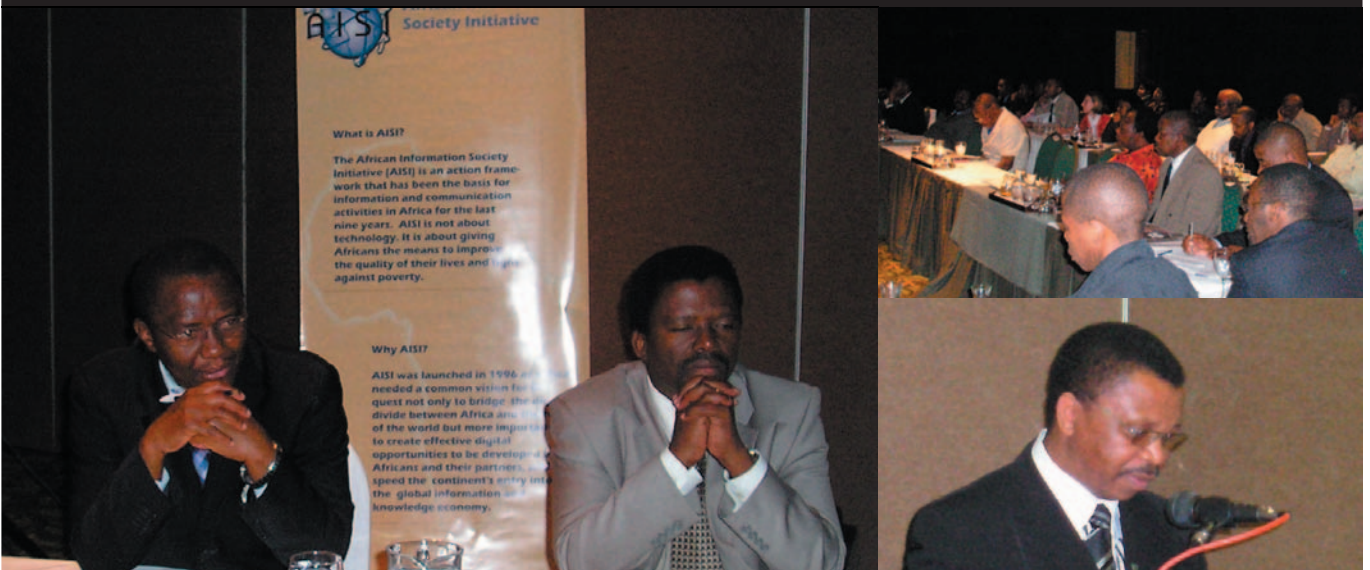
The workshop was the first of its kind in **The Gambia**, organized jointly with the Department of State for Communication, Information and Technology (DOSCIT) with 58 participants from the National Assembly, women's groups, media and youth groups and discussed their roles in the implementation of the country's National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) policy and plan, which will be adopted shortly. One workshop participant George Christensen of the Gambia's Radio 1 FM said, "this

Images from the Stakeholders Workshops

NIGER



SWAZILAND



THE GAMBIA



is the first time media and other stakeholders, such as members of the National Assembly, have been involved as stakeholders in the implementation of the ICT policy and plan". One key outcome was the establishment of The Gambian Women's Network for ICT Promotion (GAWONET). More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/GambiaWS/index.htm>

MPs from Niger's National Assembly also congregated at a workshop held in Niamey to familiarize themselves with ICT issues in general and their role in implementing the just-approved NICI policy for the country. The workshop entitled 'Parliamentarians' role in building an Inclusive Information Society in Niger', was attended by over 60 MPs, which stimulated lively discussions especially on the justification for inadequate basic ICT infrastructure in the country. As highlighted by Hon. Issaka Hassane Djegoule, vice chair of the National Assembly stated that "The Parliament of Niger has adopted the NICI policy and established an MPs ICT Committee and this action justifies the interest of Niger's Parliament in advancing the ICTs in the country and it is our hope that this interest grows".

The stakeholder workshop in Swaziland centred its debates on MDGs, PRSPs and the NICI process. The Chairman of the Swaziland ICT Task Force, Mr. Mbuso Dlamini, said the workshop provided an opportunity where, for the first time, "we are having a clear understanding of the relation between, MDGS, PRSP and ICT for development activities, and also the policy dialogue framework which various networks constitute and which is needed as a starting point for multi-stakeholder partnerships." This workshop was unique because it took place at the early stages of the NICI process, leading to the establishment of stakeholders' networks for youth, Media, private sector, women and Librarians as part of Swaziland's NICI policy and plan.

Spotlight: ICTs and Education

Under the spotlight in this edition, four *iConnect Africa* correspondents examine ICT and education issues with case studies from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia.

Schools in Burkina Conquer New Technologies

Initiatives aimed at integrating ICTs in the educational system in Burkina Faso are underway. World Links, a World Bank initiative set up in Burkina in 1997, "aims for better integration of the ICTs in schools and brings together groups of pupils to conduct searches on the 'net' for information on courses being given in class. However some fundamental challenges have to be faced including access to relevant and suitable material, and adequate capacity by teachers who are also new to computers. The story written by *Ramata Soré* is available in French and English at: <http://www.icconnect-online.org/Articles/icconnectarticles.2005-05-30.1594187837>

Turning Ghana's Youthful Population Into Skilled Human Resource?

Ghana aims to increase its per capita income from \$400 to \$1000 per annum within the next 10 to 15 years. Plans to bring about this development include turning the country's large youthful population into a skilled human resource. This is buttressed by an ambitious e-learning programme underway in Ghana as part of the President's Special initiative on Distance Learning, (PSI-DL), launched in 2002 using ICTs. Another initiative, the Global Teenage Project, (GTP) whose programmes are implemented by various primary and secondary schools, delivers content through the Internet in learning cycles of 10 weeks. For the full details of this story by correspondent *George Koomson*, including the results of an assessment of the GTP initiative go to: <http://www.icconnect-online.org/Articles/icconnectarticles.2005-05-09.7326350124>

ICT in Education: Content Issues as Kiswahili reigns.

Kiswahili dominates the Tanzanian education sector and any ICT and education strategy cannot ignore this fact. In support of language development, the Kamusi project and related initiatives by the University of Dar-es-Salaam and the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) have been launched to form the Open Ki-Swahili Localization Team, also known as KiliNux. Early this year the team presented the first edition of a Kiswahili spellchecker (<http://www.o.ne.tz/spellchecker>) that works natively with Jambo OpenOffice.org. *Aloyce Menda's* full story can be read at: <http://www.icconnect-online.org/Articles/icconnectarticles.2005-05-11.3497297733>

Uganda's ICT connectivity in schools.

There are disparities between rural and urban schools with respect to access to ICTs in Uganda and an initiative by World Links for Development Programme, of the World Bank Institute aims to address this issue through Internet connectivity to schools in developing countries. The disparities can also be attributed to the lack of an approved ICT policy in Uganda, which could have served as a vision and strategic guide to the integration of ICTs into the education system in the country. There are now several initiatives launched to make ICT available to schools, and the Uconnect and SchoolNet projects are a case in point. For more information on the impact and penetration of ICTs in the education sector raised by *John Eremu*, as well as the key infrastructural challenges that need to be met go to: <http://www.icconnect-online.org/Articles/icconnectarticles.2005-05-30.6804494476>

Zambian teenager's ICT skills boosted.

Zambia's Global Teenager Project (GTP) launched in 1999 under IICD has opened up a window of opportunity for schools to bring the full potential of ICTs into the classroom. The project

has a “Learning Circles” initiative, which are web-based, virtual environments for intercultural exchange and provide a safe, dynamic and fun environment for GTP’s exciting educational programme. However, challenges still remain including infrastructure, as well as human resource capacity that impact on teaching computers in schools. In this story, correspondent *Tovin Ngombe* examines the role Zambia’s new ICT policy is likely to have on

the future of the country’s ICT educational programme. For the full story, <http://www.icconnect-online.org/Articles/icconnectarticles.2005-05-11.6315606816>

About iConnect Africa

iConnect Africa is a quarterly web, print and email service that aims to raise awareness in the wider African development community regarding the possibilities

offered by ICTs in development. It is produced by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD). It reports on activities that form part of the Africa Information Society Initiative (AISII) and Building Communication Opportunities (BCO) initiative. *iConnect Africa* draws content from its partners, links resources and expertise and encourages collaboration.

Forthcoming Events: August – October 2005

Event Title	Description	Date/Venue
World Youth Development and ICT (WYDI 2005)	This conference is being organised with a theme of “Young People Creating Global Culture”. The event aims at bringing together more than 250 young professionals, community leaders, non-governmental organisation (NGO) leaders, university students, ICT professionals, among others. More: http://www.wydi2005.tk/	11 - 12 August 2005 Arusha, Tanzania
Community Informatics (CIRN) Conference 2005	Registration is now open for the CIRN 2005 conference, which forms part of the Information Society Week to be held in Cape Town. http://www.cirn2005.org	August 22-30 Cape Town, South Africa
International Conference on ICT & Cyberlaw	This is being organized by the Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO) that plays an important role in research and development in the field of management, ICT and Cyberlaw. Details and registration form: http://www.arado.org.eg or contact (dalian23@arado.org.eg).	August 21 2005 Herghada-Egypt
World Information Technology Forum (WITFOR) 2005	The Forum is hosted by the Government of the Republic of Botswana, in collaboration with the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP). WITFOR is a state-of-the-art, high-level international forum, aimed at ICT policy-makers and practitioners. More: http://www.witfor.org/	31 August - 2 September 2005 Gaborone, Botswana
Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization FORUM 2005	CTO will be holding its third annual international ICT Forum from 5-6 September 2005 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The Forum will be held under the theme “ICT Business and Development: The Challenge of Access” and is open to all stakeholders. The event will be organized with the support of the Cameroon Government. The Commonwealth ICT Ministerial meeting will also be held during the Forum. More: http://www.cto.int/forum2005	5 - 6 September 2005 Yaounde, Cameroon
Third Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Tunis Phase of WSIS	The third meeting will be held in Geneva, Palais des Nations, from 19-30 September 2005. PrepCom-3 will be a critical step in the preparatory process for the Tunis Summit, which will take place in Tunis from 16-18 November 2005. More: http://www.itu.int/wsis	19 - 30 September 2005 Geneva, Switzerland