

## **2005 PICTA – GKP Meeting**

7 – 8 September 2005

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

### **Welcoming Remarks**

Mr. K. Y. Amoako

Executive Secretary, ECA

Dear PICTA, GKP members and friends,

First of all let me welcome you all to this annual PICTA meeting. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for accepting our invitations to participate in this annual gathering. In doing so, you have once again demonstrated your sustained commitment to addressing ICT4D issues that are critical to our continent's development.

The fact that this year's meeting is joined by GKP Africa members and held as a PICTA-GKP meeting is also commendable in that it will help in initiating a unique interaction between a wide range of organizations and provide an opportunity to encourage the two collaborations to cooperate and find synergies

We, at ECA, consider this meeting to be very timely, since Africa's clear position has to be reflected in all initiatives that are taking place at global fora, particularly the upcoming second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. We are confident that it will not only open up opportunities for PICTA members to create more synergies among themselves but it will also help us in fine-tuning our future collaborations.

I am pleased to note that the meeting is organized as an Open Space. This innovative approach that we are also now using in a number of our activities create a dynamic and creative process and allow participants to share their interests and create new ideas, partnerships and synergies.

I also found it to be very wise to organize other related events, such as the "Network Facilitation Training Workshop" and the "first meeting for the Harambee Focus Networks", as a follow-up to the GKP-PICTA meeting. It will indeed help in maximizing participation and effective contribution of members of both networks.

The theme that you have chosen to consider during these two days: "**Making Infrastructure and Access Efforts in Africa More Effective**" is a crucial one to our continent. There is no solid foundation for an inclusive information society without an affordable and accessible infrastructure. This also entails that a number of issues such as policy, regulatory environment, technological options, financing, public-private partnerships have to be dealt with while talking about Infrastructure and Access. I am confident that this kind of gathering will

push forward the agenda of Access in Africa and that all of us, here, will continue to be committed in playing our part to bring mass usage and access to our schools and villages.

Dear Friends,

For us, PICTA is a club of like-minded people, a group of highly committed partners working towards a common goal of promoting ICTs for Africa's development. Together, we've achieved a lot. To name a few of these recent achievements:

- With our friends from **Connectivity Africa**, we are collaborating in a number of areas, such as promoting innovation in the use of ICTs, as well as revitalizing Partnerships and networks;
- As you all know, one concrete PICTA activity that came out from last PICTA 2003 meeting is the "Harambee: Reinforcing African Voices through Collaborative Processes" initiative created by APC, Bellanet Africa and UNECA. The project intends to build on existing research and experiences in designing and implementing collaborative processes and technologies and will assist networks and communities increase their respective capacities to support their existing partner networks and communities.
- Our current collaboration with the **Government of Finland** has enabled us to:
  - launch the second phase of SCAN ICT in measuring the Information Society in nine countries: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Swaziland and Tunisia.
  - Initiate the NICI process in countries such as: DRC, The Gambia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Swaziland.
  - Create regional e-Government frameworks through the harmonization of policies and strategy frameworks in EAC and COMESA member states.
- In delivering the goals of NEPAD on ICT for development, ECA is working with the Regional Economic Communities and ECOWAS is here attending this PICTA meeting whilst holding bilateral discussions with ECA on an Information Society program which addresses among other things: Infrastructure and Access.
- Fostering improved use of ICTs at local government level and assisting local communities obtain improved access to information was also at the heart of a publication, supported by IDRC, that guided discussions during the fourth African Development Forum (ADF4) on Governance for a progressing Africa and.
- Our AISI outreach activities have also been reinforced thanks to our collaboration with **IICD** and the production of materials such as iConnect Africa and the support that we are giving to African journalists through the AISI media awards, also supported by OSIWA, IDRC, SDC, GKP and GTZ.

Dear all,

I wouldn't want to take too much of your time in listing all what we have been able to achieve with your support.

Let me just finish by extending my sincere gratitude to Connectivity Africa and Bellanet who have supported the organization of this meeting. We are very much pleased that we will be able to continue our fructuous collaboration by welcoming one of your staff to join our Commission

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our partner GKP for jointly organizing this year's meeting. More than any other area, ICT for development require networking and knowledge sharing. ECA as a regional node to GKP has indeed been able to complement at the regional level the efficient work you are doing in fostering advocacy and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Dear Friends,

As I said earlier, together, we've achieved a lot. However, the greater challenge remains ahead of us in ensuring the meaningful contribution of ICTs to our development goals, and the implementation of the WSIS Action Plans.

All along, our aim has been to ensure that at global fora such as the WSIS, Africa's voices are adequately addressed and effective partnership built for the implementation of action plans.

We at ECA have committed ourselves to staying on top of the ICT4D agenda in Africa. We need to plan on the way forward after Tunis. Your advice, support and collaboration is always very crucial in these endeavours. Ad I hope PICTA members can commit to post-Tunis.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you fruitful deliberations.