



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

From Geneva to Tunis – the need for continuity. An informal meeting on the second phase of the WSIS, held in Tunis from 2 to 3 March 2004 and convened by the Government of Tunisia in cooperation with ITU, recommended the need for continuity between the two phases and the full involvement of all stakeholders. The meeting held preliminary discussions on implementation of the Geneva Plan of Action, expected results of the second phase of WSIS, and the process leading up to Tunis. Representatives from governments, civil society, private sector, international organizations, and the United Nations Regional Commissions participated at the meeting. A summary of the discussions was read by the Tunisian Secretary of State for ICTs, who noted that the conclusions were non-official and that they would be forwarded to official organs of WSIS for debate. For further information, please contact Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane (kbounemra@uneca.org)

CTO CEO visits ECA. Dr Ekwow Spio-Garbrah, the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO), visited ECA in March 2004 to discuss strengthening collaboration between the two institutions and formulating joint ICT4D programmes in Africa. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed to reflect this cooperation. For further information, please contact Aida Opoku-Mensah (aopoku-mensah@uneca.org).

The Nairobi Accord – outcome of the CTO Conference on implementing the WSIS Action Plan. Delegates and participants of the CTO conference on implementing the WSIS Action Plan have resolved to encourage stakeholders involved in the WSIS process to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the WSIS Action Plan, especially as they relate to the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This was contained in a resolution termed, "The Nairobi Accord" approved by consensus by the delegates and the participants at the end of the conference

held in Nairobi, Kenya. Organised by the CTO and AITEC, the conference aimed at providing countries in the region as well as the international community, with the opportunity to understand and share the challenges faced in the execution of the WSIS Action Plan agreed on in December 2003 in Geneva. The conference was attended by ministers, heads of regulatory bodies, senior executives of development agencies, major corporations, local diplomatic representatives, and other stakeholder organizations. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/nairobiaccord.htm>

Research on refurbished PCs for African schools calls for an integrated strategy and management system in Africa. SchoolNet Africa has released a research report entitled: "Treat Refurbs and Africa with Respect; Towards a Framework on Refurbished Computers for African Schools" that investigates the African schooling experience in the use of dumped, second-hand, and refurbished computers. The study marks the first examination of experiences with second-hand and refurbished computers among Schoolnet organizations in Africa. It concludes that an integrated strategy and effective management systems are required to ensure that future projects to source and use second-hand and refurbished PCs for education purposes in African schools are more consistent, scaleable, and effective. It notes that agencies like SchoolNet Africa need to play a leading role in this regard. SchoolNet Africa will use the research findings to kick-start a campaign for 1 Million PCs for African Schools. The campaign also includes an intensive capacity-building programme for technical co-ordinators and prospective PC refurbishment centre managers from 20 African countries commencing 3 May 2004. For more information contact Shafika Isaacs at s.isaacs@schoolnet africa.org or Cassie Janisch at cjanisch@absamail.co.za English version of the executive summary of this report is available at: www.schoolnet africa.net/fileadmin/resources/Refurbished_computers_ExecSum.pdf

Information Society Statistics – Top on UN Agenda. A UN Coordination meeting on information society statistics that took place on March 5, 2004 in New York provided an opportunity to various UN agencies to exchange information on "The state of advancement of measuring Information Society in national statistics

systems” and to agree on common procedures. The meeting was attended by experts from DESA, UN Regional Commissions, the OECD, ITU and others. For more info, please contact Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org)

Microsoft launches Local Language Program.

As part of its long-term commitment to collaborate with local governments to provide them with the tools and technologies needed to realize the societal and economic benefits of the growing IT industry, Microsoft Corp announced an initiative on Local Language Programs on 16 March 2004. The Program is a global initiative that fosters the development and proliferation of regional language groups, enabling them to preserve and promote their language and culture while benefiting from continuing IT advancements. Through this initiative, people around the world will be able to work with PCs -- some for the first time -- in their native languages. Individuals will be able to build skills, find new opportunities and realize overall IT progress.

More:

<http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/press/2004/mar04/03-16LLPPR.asp>

ECA and IDRC to Collaborate on Connectivity

Africa. ECA and IDRC held a meeting on 16 February 2004 in Addis Ababa to discuss key collaborative activities and mechanisms for working on Connectivity Africa. Soon to follow will be a joint work-plan of activities and the identification of an Advisory Board for Connectivity Africa (CA) and Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa (CATIA).

e-Brain Forum of Zambia "ICTs in Local

Government” Workshop Report. The e-Brain Forum of Zambia hosted a conference for selected local authorities to disseminate findings of a survey on the Electronic Distance Training on Sustainability in African Local Governments (EDITOSIA) in Lusaka, Zambia, from 23 to 24 January, 2004. The report is an analysis of the current use of ICTs, accessibility, application and conditions in African local governments with specific reference to Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia. It also forecasts accessibility and applications of ICTs in the same region. The theme of the workshop was “ICTs for Sustainability: Can Local Councils Build Capacity for Change”. More: www.ebrain.org.zm

ICTs and small enterprise - A motor of economic development in Africa. ICT and entrepreneurship expert Russell Southwood in this brief explains some of the ways in which ICTs and small businesses can combine to form a motor of economic development in Africa. Employing 20%

of the African workforce, small and medium-sized enterprises are a real economic engine. ICTs can be a smart investment for African entrepreneurs, enabling them to boost productivity, tap into international markets, and offer better service to their customers. This brief gives some examples on how ICTs and SMEs can work together. More: <http://www.iicd.org/publications>

Computers help Ethiopian high schools harness online power.

UNDP and Ethiopia's ICT for Development Authority have delivered the first batch of 1,500 computers to the Ministry of Education as part of efforts to bring ICTs to more than 160 high schools around the country. UNDP has provided US\$ 3.5 million for the initiative and is seeking support from donors for an equal amount to enable all high schools to go online. Partners include the Ministry of Capacity Building and the Ministry of Education. UNDP is also helping the Authority formulate and implement a national ICT policy. Digital technology can strengthen management and planning, connect federal, regional and local governments, improve data analysis and facilitate information sharing. These efforts will help government at all levels improve services, support efforts to reduce poverty and promote progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For further information, contact Sirak G. Yohannes (sirak.g.yohannes@undp.org)

Obasanjo Urges States To Set Up Technology Agencies.

To buttress the importance of Information Technology (IT) in transparency, accountability and good governance in the country, President Olusegun Obasanjo has advised all tiers of government to emulate the federal government by establishing their own IT development agencies. The president who stated this at the National Stakeholders conference on e-Government held last week in Abuja stressed that in addition to setting up the agencies equivalent to the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) owned by the federal government, the states and local governments should develop all encompassing programmes involving the State Assemblies, local government councils, judiciary and the citizens. Source: BusinessDay.

More:

<http://www.businessdayonline.com/index.php?fArticleId=1871>

New OSISA ICT Handbook on Cyber Law and

Civil Society. The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), in partnership with law firm Cheadle, Thompson, Haysom, have recently released a book entitled “Cyber Law for Civil Society- A Resource Guide”. The handbook is a useful resource guide in understanding the basics

of the Information society and the various global and regional institutions, policies and processes that govern the Information society. It is filled with many case studies and supplemented by useful links and web referrals. For a copy, please visit www.osisa.org or send an email request to Nomthandazo Shoba on nomthandazos@osiafrica.org

ECA and UMA discuss Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Trade and Regional Integration Division (TRID) of the ECA, in collaboration with the Maghreb Arab Union (UMA) and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, organized an Experts Group Meeting in Rabat, Morocco on 1st and 2nd March this year. The meeting discussed the impact and consequences of the failure of the Cancun WTO Ministerial Conference on Maghreb countries; shared country experiences of multilateral trade negotiations; and discussed harmonization of trade policies in order to form a common negotiating position for Maghreb countries. The meeting addressed the role of ICTs in facilitating trade in the region, particularly with regard to e-commerce activities. The ECA presentation on e-commerce in UMA sub region described the e-commerce situation in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, and proposed a framework for ECA-UMA cooperation in e-commerce and ICT4D in general. A recommendation was adopted for the promotion of the Sector of Services and Technology Transfer within UMA. More: <http://www.maghrebarabe.org>. The report and recommendations of the meeting are available at: http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/trade_and_regional_integration/default.htm

Acacia and Connectivity Africa approved one of their flagship projects: the FMFI (First Mile, First Inch) project. This important project will build a network of practitioners and community of innovators able to find least cost, open source solutions for community projects. As such, it will build capacity amongst senior technical staff through creating opportunities to test innovations and create opportunities amongst community members to access converged forms of voice and data communication. The project's title (First Mile First Inch) reflects the innovative approach of the project. "Last Mile" has traditionally been defined as that which is required to connect a person or institution to the local telephone company, a problem traditionally solved by the telephone company. "First Mile" represents a more bottom-up analysis of the problem and potential solutions. The rapid development in recent years of wireless technologies and open source telephony applications show dramatic potential for this

approach. The "First Inch" component of the project, on the other hand, addresses the fact that it is often not enough to place technology in the hands of users but that technology must be adapted to the local environment. Solutions need to be deployed taking into full account conditions such as local language, literacy, physical access issues, individual vs. community access, etc. More: <http://www.connectivityafrica.org>

Ensuring e-mails don't have to travel half way around the world to get to your next-door neighbour. Connectivity Africa is continuing its support for the development of an African Regional Internet Peering point, with partners like AFrispa, Balancing Act and CATIA. An African regional peering point would allow African ISPs to peer into it and not have to use more costly and time-consuming peering points in the US or Europe, as is currently the case. This phase of the work will focus on informing and lobbying African regulators and decision makers on the issue and developing background documents to support the lobbying process. More: <http://www.connectivityafrica.org>

Workshop to discuss developing technical training materials on essential connectivity issues. IDRC's Connectivity Africa program, OSI and APC will support a workshop in April to develop technical training materials on essential connectivity issues such as Wifi, Voip, Open source, shared bandwidth purchasing, etc. Following the workshop, material developed will be used for a training road show in Africa for community access practitioners. More: <http://www.connectivityafrica.org>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

14 - 16 April 2004, SADC Regional Consultation on National e-Government Readiness, Gaborone Botswana. This is a collaboration between the Centre of Specialisation in Public Administration and Management (CESPAM) and the Commonwealth Network of IT for Development (COMNET-IT), who together are engaged in a partnership for the development of materials and training for e-Government. The event will address e-Government in its broadest sense and provide insights into the status, trends and achievements within SADC countries, and lessons learnt. It will also provide templates for the assessment of e-Government readiness and progress, capacity-building and support requirements, both nationally as well as regionally. The Government of Germany through GTZ, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Botswana are sponsoring the workshop. More: www.cespam.net

19 – 21 April 2004, WSIS African Academia Research Network Brainstorming workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Funded by the Ford Foundation, the project, WSIS Academia Research Network, aims at strengthening networks among researchers and creating an enabling environment to examine critical aspects of the emerging African Information Society. In order to conceptualize the network and thematic focus, ECA is planning to invite prominent researchers and scholars and organize a brainstorming workshop so as to produce a blue print for the establishment of the network. The outcomes of the research undertaken through the network will be considered as one of Africa's contributions to the second phase of WSIS, which is scheduled in November 2005 in Tunisia. For further information, please contact Aida Opoku-Mensah (aopoku-mensah@uneca.org)

22 – 24 April 2004, Workshop on e-Strategy Burkina, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. This is a validation workshop for the e-Burkina strategy. It is organised by Délégation Générale à l'informatique. More : Makane Faye (mfaye@uneca.org).

3 – 5 May 2004, Tenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Southern Africa (ICE), Lusaka, Zambia. ECA-SA is organizing the Tenth ICE Meeting to be held at the Mulungushi Conference Centre in Lusaka, Zambia from 3 to 5 May 2004. The theme of the meeting is *"Private Sector Development in Southern Africa"*. The meeting is expected to critically assess progress achieved by the ECA Southern Africa Office (ECA-SA) in implementing its work programme as determined by priorities for 2003/04. It will also consider in the sub-region Private Sector Development; Sustainable Development; The Implementation of the System of National Accounts; and the Status of Information for Development activities. The meeting will make recommendations on the future orientation of the work programme of the Southern African ECA sub regional office. Contact: The Director, ECA Office in Southern Africa, P.O. Box 30647, Lusaka, Zambia, Tel (260 1) 228502/5, Fax: (260 1) 236 949, E-mail: srdcsa.uneca@un.org

3 – 8 May 2004, ITU Telecom Africa 2004, Cairo, Egypt. Conscious of the opportunities that new and affordable telecommunication technologies have brought about, the Forum at ITU TELECOM AFRICA 2004 will focus on the following themes: a) Creating successful business models, b) Policy challenges, c) Appropriate technologies, d) Using ICTs to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals, and e) Africa and the world. More: <http://www.itu.int/AFRICA2004/index.html>

4 May 2004, Followup to the WSIS in the African Region. The ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT), in conjunction with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Egypt, intends to organise a senior level symposium, within the framework of Africa TELECOM 2004 that will take place from 3 to 8 May 2004 in Cairo, Egypt. This symposium will focus on the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted during the Geneva phase of the WSIS. For more info, please contact Asenath Mpatwa (asenath.mpatwa@itu.int)

11 – 12 May, Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) EXCOMM Meeting, San Jose, Costa Rica. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org>

13 – 14 May, Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) Annual Meeting, San Jose, Costa Rica. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org>

19 – 21 May 2004, World Congress on IT 2004 (WCIT 2004), Athens, Greece. Organized by Federation of Hellenic Information Technology and Communications Enterprises (SEPE), the theme of the congress is "The Future Is Now". The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT), is a biennial meeting attracting leading ICT professionals, top corporate executives, distinguished academic professors and researchers, government ministers and policy makers from all over the world, whose interaction and decisions shape the future of the ICT world. More: <http://www.worldcongress2004.org>

24 – 26 May 2004, e-Nigeria: Implementing the WSIS Process: The case of Nigeria, Shehu Musa Yar'adua Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria. The conference aims at drawing up strategies for the implementation of the WSIS process in Nigeria; exploring the framework for the development and use of ICTs as the driving force of Nigerian economy; identifying necessary ICT human resources and infrastructure required for the deployment of e-strategies; offering solutions to the challenges of ICT within the framework of the Nigerian economy; examining the existing strategies for national development and examine strategies of re-designing them in line with the latest technologies and applications in the global economic structure. More: www.enigeria.org

1 – 3 June 2004, AITEC WEST AFRICA. AITEC 2004 – business-to-business networking and intensive knowledge-sharing platform. The Eighth Annual West African Information and Communications Technologies Conference and Exhibition (AITEC 2004) is scheduled to be held at the Accra International Conference Centre (AICC), from 1 – 3 June 2004 under the auspices of Ministry of Communications and Technology,

Ghana. The theme of AITEC 2004 is "Building Public-Private Partnership and Creating Opportunities Through ICTs". The conference will focus on the need for private and the public sector to work in synergy to maximize the whole spectrum of opportunities available in the ICT space around the sub region and beyond. For further details of AITEC 2004, contact: AITEC GHANA, Tel: +233-21-7012137 ghana@aitecafrica.com

18 – 19 June 2004, "NEPAD and Issues Affecting the Youth: South-North Relations and the Digital Divide", Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder, Germany. The African Youth Foundation (AYF) will hold its 3rd International Conference under the theme: "NEPAD and Issues Affecting the Youth: South-North Relations and the Digital Divide". The aim of the conference is to provide an insight on the pros and cons of the achievements of the NEPAD objectives and also, how the European Union-Africa partnership can address and meet the challenges of the importance of ICTs in youth education, as a development priority for both the African and Western communities. People who wish to submit articles for academic purposes may inquire about procedures or submit them to the AYF Secretariat at: info@ayf.de Papers from all areas of education are welcome. Selected papers will be published in a special volume of the Conference Proceedings. More: <http://www.ayf.de/Int-Conf-04.pdf>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for papers: CIRN Conference on Sustainability and Community Technology: What Does this Mean for Community Informatics? The Community Informatics Research Network Inc. (CIRN) calls for papers to its 2004 Inaugural Conference and Colloquium with the above general theme, and it will take place from 29 September to 3 October 2004 in Prato, Italy. The event is meant to provide an opportunity for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to present findings and reflect in a convivial atmosphere on key issues of concern for the future of enabling communities with Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It will also be the founding organisational conference of CIRN. Further details of the conference will be available at: www.ciresearch.net/prato2004

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 atemtime@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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