



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

African ICT Ministers meet in Dakar. A meeting of African ministers in charge of Information and Communication Technologies took place in Dakar, Senegal from 19 to 20 April 2004. Among the recommendations that resulted, it was agreed that an African Ministerial Committee on ICTs would be set up to ensure the formulation, follow up and harmonization of African initiatives, programs and projects on the information society. In addition, countries will now be required to commit themselves to sending contributions to the Digital Solidarity Fund. There was a call to support the formulation and implementation of e-strategies, especially the NICI Plans, strategies for the use of ICTs to facilitate progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. For further information, please contact Makane Faye (mfaye@uneca.org)

Cameroon holds stakeholder consultations for e-strategies ECA organised stakeholder consultations from 29 March to 1 April 2004 in Yaounde and Douala. The purpose was to formulate mechanisms and strategies for solidifying partnerships and networking that will support Cameroon's implementation of national e-strategies (NICIs). Brainstorming sessions among civil society, media, academia, women, youth, parliamentarians and private sector were held. For further information, please contact Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org)

Meeting of the UN ICT Working Group on ICT Indicators and MDG Mapping. The meeting noted that ICT indicators and MDG mapping needed to include national and regional experiences. The important role of the Task Force and its regional networks in monitoring progress on the implementation of the Geneva Action Plan and the implementation of the MDGs was underlined. It was decided that the final business plan of the Task Force dealing with "monitoring and benchmarking progress on WSIS

implementation" would take the recommendations of the Working Group into account. For further information, please contact Makane Faye (mfaye@uneca.org)

African Civil Society (ACS) network officially launched. A meeting of African Civil Society took place from 13 to 15 April 2004 in Tunis, whose main aim was to officially launch ACS and sub-regional networks and to deliberate on the way forward to Tunis 2005, Participants agreed on a strategy to promote the civil society special fund; reinforce mobilization of the civil society at the national and regional levels towards a viable, strong, and active Information Society; and design a realistic and coherent ACS agenda of activities to support the success of the second phase of the WSIS 2005 to be held in Tunis). For more information, please contact Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org)

WSIS 2005 – Tunis preparatory meeting announced. A preparatory meeting for the Tunis phase of the Summit will take place at Hammamet, Tunisia, from 24-26 June 2004. Pre-registration will start in May 2004 and more information regarding this meeting will be available soon on the WSIS website. Fellowships are available for Government representatives from LDCs who want to attend the meeting. For more information, please check the guidelines and the request form or contact the WSIS Executive Secretariat. The deadline to submit fellowship applications for the Preparatory Meeting is 12 May 2004. More: <http://www.itu.int/wsisis>

ITU launches global WSIS-2005 fundraising campaign. The Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, Mr. Yoshio Utsumi, launched a global fundraising campaign to support activities for the Tunis phase of the WSIS. Appealing to the international community, he called on all stakeholders to help make the WSIS-2005 Fundraising Campaign and the Summit in Tunis a success. The campaign got off to an interesting start with an announcement by the Government of Japan of a CHF 386 300 contribution to the WSIS Fund. In addition, the governments of Japan, Spain, Canada, Switzerland and the Republic of Korea as well as other stakeholders, including UNESCO, and KDDI Corporation and BHN Association of Japan, have

confirmed that they will provide professional staff to serve in the WSIS Executive Secretariat. More: http://www.itu.int/wsisis/newsroom/press_releases/wsisis/2004/5apr.html

Lyon to host UN Agency for Digital Solidarity.

The town of Lyon will host a UN Agency for Digital Solidarity linked to the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) that was decided in December 2003 in Geneva. A meeting that was held recently in Lyon adopted the statutes of the DSF. Present at the occasion, among others, were Mamadou Diop-Decroix, ICT and Regional Cooperation Minister of Senegal, Mercedes Bresso, Chairperson of the Turin Province, Christian Ferrazino, Geneva Mayor, and Gerard Collomb, Mayor-Senator of Lyon. The creation of the DSF will be formalized at the beginning of May in Paris during the Congress "cités et gouvernements locaux unis". President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal has repeatedly appealed for the creation of a Solidarity Fund allowing developing countries access to the new technologies. The town of Geneva has declared payment of 500.000 Suisse Francs (330.000 euros), Senegal 500.000 dollars (420.000 euros), and the town of Lyon has contributed 300.000 euros for financing the Fund. (Source: AFP)

Strengthening the Capacity of National Machineries through the Effective Use of ICTs.

This meeting-cum-training workshop that took place from 19 to 23 April 2004 in Windhoek, Namibia, was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations and attended by representatives of national gender machineries in Southern African countries. It aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of national machineries using ICT to advocate successful gender equality policies at the national level. Participants discussed challenges and opportunities provided by ICT and how to enhance the participation of national machineries in the ICT policy formulation and development processes. The division is planning a similar workshop in Dakar for Francophone countries at the end of May and for Central and Eastern African countries in October 2004. For more information, please contact Ms. Makiko Tagashira at tagashira@un.org

Ghana Presidency develops a website. A web portal (www.ghanacastle.gov.gh) has been created for the Presidency as a means for increased interaction between the presidency and the citizenry. The website will offer round-the-clock updates on the activities of the President as he conducts the affairs of state. Features of the website include biographical information on the

President and access to his latest speeches and memorable photographs, and important documents. The website is structured to ensure high level of interactivity by allowing suggestions, comments, and enquiries to be channeled to the presidency through the e-mail address: info@ghanacastle.gov.gh The President can also be emailed on jkufuor@ghanacastle.gov.gh

Tunisia reduces Internet tariffs for the youth.

On Tunisia's 48th Independence Day anniversary and Youth Day, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali decided a 50% reduction in the tariffs of Internet use in youth institutions, and the adoption of a symbolic tariff for youth institutions and clubs established in rural areas. This is a new presidential initiative, which sets an example in the field of digital solidarity, and constitutes a new step in the process of building the information society. More: <http://www.wsistunis2005.org>

Ethiopia's ICT capacity building programme.

The Ministry of Capacity Building and the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) embarked on a six week ICT training program (15 March to 17 April 2004), conducted in 14 sites located all over the country. The training program is part of WoredaNet and SchoolNet projects, which the Government of Ethiopia is implementing with the view to enhance its decentralized Woreda (district) administration and improve the delivery of education in secondary schools. Over 2300 trainees participated in the program and certificates were awarded on 18 April 2004 for the trainees at all training sites.

Telling the Open Source Story at IDRC. On March 15, 2004, Bellanet held a story-telling session on the experiences of using, advocating, and contributing to the Free/Libre & Open Source Software (FLOSS). The session offered a space for frank and open discussions on the merits and drawbacks of FLOSS. The storytellers shared their opinions, passions, through persuasive presentations and compelling arguments. The session focused on the relevance of FLOSS to international development efforts and considered the ability of FLOSS to encourage local capacity development, local empowerment, low-cost/free software alternatives, a source for local economic development, freedom of choice, and the philosophical principles underlying the movement: transparent collaboration, search and sharing of solutions that transcendence their immediate environment, free accessibility of knowledge, and community building. For further information, contact Mark Faul at: mfaul@bellanet.org

MTN villagePhone extends access in Uganda.

MTN villagePhone extends telecommunications access to rural villages across Uganda. In partnership with Uganda's leading micro finance institutions, MTN creates opportunities for poor rural individuals to become 'Village Phone Operators'. These businesses can be established in areas where electricity is unavailable and in areas where the MTN network can only be accessed with a booster antenna. MTN provides special airtime rates to the Village Phone Operators to enable them to provide affordable telecommunications services to people in their village. People living in rural areas are now able to make a call without traveling many kilometers to the nearest town as community Operators provides affordable communications services. MTN VillagePhone is an initiative of MTN Uganda and Grameen Foundation USA (who implemented a similar model in Bangladesh). The first Operators started business in Uganda in March 2003, and MTN villagePhone was formally launched on November 17, 2003. More:

<http://www.wougnet.org/Links/ictresources.html#MTNVP>

'e-Governance can cut government costs by 10%', says UIA's Kigozi.

Expenditure on local government affairs can be reduced by 10 percent if e-governance is promoted in all the 56 districts of Uganda, according to Dr. Maggie Kigozi, the executive director of Uganda Investment Authority. She defined e-governance as the computerised administration of government affairs between various administrative levels. Currently, there are only four districts in Uganda that have access to e-governance; Kayunga, Mbarara, Mbale and Lira. Speaking at a one-day workshop themed: Enabling E-governance in Uganda on April 6 at the International Conference Centre in Kampala, she said that e-governance is the most effective way of reducing costs in running public affairs from the lower levels of government to the central government. She asked the government to speed up the process of e-governance in every district and called on district leaders to embrace the system to cut cost and time. (SOURCE: All Africa)

Kenya Airways e-commerce site shows it can be done, but can Africa's banks keep up?

Until recently, e-commerce in Africa was something that happened in North Africa and South Africa but hardly anywhere else. A major breakthrough has been achieved by Kenya Airways whose e-commerce site is seeing impressive results. However, the continent's rather conservative banking sector is struggling to keep up. Russell Southwood interviews Kenya Airways' Joseph Nduva who is responsible for its e-commerce web

site. More: <http://www.balancingact-africa.com/news/current1.html>

Telecommunications bill introduced in Mozambique.

The Mozambican government presented a bill intending to fully liberalise the telecommunications market. In 1999 the telecommunications market in Mozambique was opened to the private sector and it was through this that a second mobile phone operator, the South African company Vodacom, set up a subsidiary to compete with M-Cel, the cell phone company that is currently 100 percent owned by the public telecoms company TDM. The proposed bill aims to introduce competition in the fixed phone network with the aim of gradually phasing out TDM's monopoly over the fixed phone service. The government intends to privatise TDM this year - a process that will involve finding a strategic partner to take a majority stake in TDM, and attract funding for expanding the network. More: <http://www.cto.int/index.php?dir=07&sd=11&id=1156>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3 – 5 May 2004, Tenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Southern Africa (ICE), Lusaka, Zambia. ECA's Southern Africa Subregional office (ECA-SA) will be hosting the Tenth ICE Meeting 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-SA in implementing its work programme as determined by priorities for 2003/04. It will also consider 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 ECA-SA 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. This Forum will focus on 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>

6 May 2004, The East African Satellite Communications Forum: Extracting maximum user value, Nairobi, Kenya. Hosted by AITEC in association with leading suppliers of satellite services, the workshop will equip users of satellite communication systems with the technical and market knowledge they need to gain maximum benefit from investment in their systems – as well as optimum service from their bandwidth suppliers. In addition, some of the issues that will be addressed include advanced & cost-effective methods of content delivery in Africa, and VSAT technologies to bridge the digital divide. More: www.aitecafrica.com

10 – 15 May 2004, Global ICT Summit "From Adversity to Success - The World's Best e-Content & e-Creativity Experience", Hong Kong. Rapid advances in ICT have continued to drive economic changes, restructure businesses, affect skill and employment models, and contribute significantly to growth and wealth creation. However, these developments are largely uneven; many people in the world have been deprived of access to and use of information. With a shared vision of overcoming the digital divide, ICT experts and professionals from over 20 countries are expected to gather to share best practices in e-content and e-creativity as well as to exchange ideas that will shape the future of global ICT development. Delegates will also be able to gain first-hand experience from Hong Kong's dynamic capabilities in the advancement of ICT and its unique role as a gateway to China. More: <http://www.esdlife.com/campaign/Global-ICT/>

11 – 12 May, Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) EXCOMM Meeting, San Jose, Costa Rica. The new GKP EXCOMM members will meet to discuss, among other things, the GKP 5-years strategy, GKP engagement in WSIS and members feedback on role of GKP for WSIS, GKP activities and events for 2004, promotion & communication tools, and membership issues. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org>

13 – 14 May, Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) Annual Meeting, San Jose, Costa Rica. The sessions will focus on GKP thematic papers including multi-stakeholder partnerships & ICT4D, financing ICT4D, Internet Governance, youth, poverty reduction, gender, media, indigenous knowledge local content and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). 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>

21 May 2004, Telecoms East Africa Investor Business Day: Investment opportunities with the end of Kenya's telecommunications monopoly, Nairobi, Kenya. Organised in association with ECO. More: www.aitecafrica.com

24 – 26 May 2004, e-Nigeria: Implementing the WSIS Process: The case of Nigeria, Shehu Musa Yar'adua Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria. The conference will drawup strategies for the implementation of the WSIS process in Nigeria; explore the framework for the development and use of ICTs as the driving force of Nigerian economy; identify necessary ICT human resources and infrastructure required for the deployment of e-strategies; offer solutions to the challenges of ICT within the framework of the Nigerian economy; deliberate on the existing strategies for national development and examine strategies for 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 on 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 into the pros and cons of the NEPAD objectives and also, how the European Union-Africa partnership can address and meet the challenges of ICTs in youth education, in 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>

23 – 26 June 2004, Third Annual Digital Bridge Africa – Global Partnership Conference on ICT and Development, Abuja, Nigeria. The conference is organised by Digital Partners, in collaboration with the Nigerian Computer Society and the National Information Technology and Development Agency. The goal of this invitation-only conference is to bring together prominent individuals from Nigeria, as well as leaders from across the rest of Africa and the world, to showcase successful social entrepreneurs and highlight current and potential partnerships between technology corporations, foundations, and non-profit and for-profit organizations using ICT for the advancement of the region. More: www.ddn-africa.org

7 – 9 July 2004, ICT Stakeholders' Forum: Special Focus on Least Developed Countries, Mauritius. The Commonwealth Business Council in conjunction with the International Telecommunications Union, the Government of Mauritius and the E-Africa Commission (NEPAD) will hold a three-day forum aimed at examining concrete projects, proposals and models to help integrate least developed countries into the global economy through the effective deployment of ICTs. The goal of the Forum is to challenge delegates to provide deployable ICT solutions for development and to encourage practitioners and high-level participants to brainstorm real world ICT driven solutions., More: <http://www.cbcbglobeink.org/cbcbglobeink/events/ICT04/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for Papers: ACT 2004, CyberCity, Mauritius 7 - 9 September 2004. AITEC is organising this event in partnership with the ACT ICT Alliance of Mauritius. Individuals and

organisations are invited to submit proposals for Conference and Workshop Presentations at ACT 2004. The theme for ACT 2004 is: "Building Partnerships to Mainstream Africa's ICT Sector". Presentations will be selected on the basis of their educational value. Commercial products or service promotion will not be permitted in the main conference programme. Companies can book presentations in the Enterprise Solutions Showcase for this purpose. Conference presenters are required to pay for their own travel and accommodation costs and to register as a delegate to the Summit if they attend the full Summit programme.

Key streams within the Summit:

- Business Process Outsourcing Forum
- Knowledge Sharing
- Open Source Forum, in association with the Free & Open Source Software Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA)
- The African eGovernment Forum, in association with the UN Economic Commission of Africa
- Skills and Professional Development
- Telecommunication Operators Forum
- GSM Applications for Development Forum

Proposals should include the title of the presentation, a brief outline and a brief biographical note on the presenter (which will be used in the conference brochure).

Deadline: 30 June 2004, Send Proposals to: Sean Moroney (sean@aitecafrica.com)

To book exhibition space at ACT 2004, contact: International: AITEC UK, Tel: +44-1480-495595

More: www.aitecafrica.com

Call for Papers, Participation: "Enhancing Human Resource Development through ICT"

The International Federation for Information Processing has sent out its first call for participation in the 8th International Conference on Social Implications of Computers in Developing Countries. "Enhancing Human Resource Development through ICT" is the umbrella theme of the conference, which has several sub-themes and topics for discussion. The IFIP is interested in receiving papers, research-in-progress reports, case studies and proposals for tutorials and panel discussions. The conference will be held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 25 to 28 May 2005. For more information go to: <http://is.lse.ac.uk/ifipwg94/pdfs/2005firstcall.pdf>

Ethiopia: INFOCOM 2004 Exhibition and Forum

INFOCOM 2004 is expected to bring together over 150 companies from across Ethiopia and abroad from 1 to 4 July 2004 at the Addis Ababa Exhibition Centre. The event is a response to the fast-moving changes currently taking place in the ICT market in Ethiopia, where many new developments show the real need for an event of this kind. INFOCOM 2004 Forum, that will accompany the Exhibition, will address a wide range of ICT issues including local content on the web, Internet, mobile technology, e-commerce and Open Source Software. During this event the winners of the Best Website Awards will be announced. More:

<http://www.ictfocus.net/Infocom/about.htm>

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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