



*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 Knowledge Sharing Communities planning session.** The two-day planning meeting took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 24 to 25 May 2004 to explore partnership opportunities for PICTA's programme on building Knowledge Sharing Communities. ECA, Bellanet, and the Association for Progressive Communication (APC) participated in the meeting. The main goal of the planning meeting was to create the initial conditions for the formation of a Consortium of existing practitioners with expertise in facilitation and related capacity development and to promote collaborative processes in strengthening African capacities around knowledge sharing and community building. In the planning session, the partners defined the vision and formulated key strategies for building collaborative processes in knowledge sharing. A Dgroup - Strengthening African Voices through Collaborative Processes - was set up to follow-up the discussions and develop a plan of action for the Consortium that will be presented to relevant funding agencies for support. For further information, please contact Aida Opoku-Mensah ([aopoku-mensah@uneca.org](mailto:aopoku-mensah@uneca.org)) or Riff Fullan ([rfullan@bellanet.org](mailto:rfullan@bellanet.org))

**ICT4D Training for Tanzanian MPs.** In an effort to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnership in building the African Information Society, ECA is organizing a series of activities aimed at sensitising and building the capacity of African parliamentarians. Among these is a capacity-building workshop for Tanzanian parliamentarians held on the 27 & 28 May 2004. The aim of the workshop was to raise the awareness of Tanzanian MPs and discuss an ICT Network for Parliamentarians, which will be created in the framework of the AISI. MPs from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda also participated at the workshop. For further information, contact Thierry Amoussougbo ([tamoussougbo@uneca.org](mailto:tamoussougbo@uneca.org)).

**International e-Gender Forum.** The Forum took place from 19 to 21 May 2004 in Tunis, Tunisia. Organized by the Tunisian Mothers Association, the Forum identified key ICT issues for women, families and people with disabilities to ensure that their perspectives are articulated in the WSIS process. In several workshops, issues around peace, human rights, e-commerce, e-development, digital culture and women in the Media were debated. More: <http://www.atm.org.tn/eng/index.htm>

**CTO calls for new partnerships on the celebration of the World Telecommunication Day.** The CTO has released a statement on 14 May 2004 calling for new partnerships within the international community to achieve sustainable development through the use of ICTs. The statement indicated that "...CTO invites its current members and partners to explore new areas of collaboration and reinforce their commitment to public-private partnerships, working closely to fulfill the pledge of this year's theme 'ICTs: Leading the way to sustainable development'". More: <http://www.cto.int/index.php?dir=06&sd=11&id=106>

**ICT4D Training for Forty Ethiopian MPs.** Forty Ethiopian MPs from the various standing committees of the House of People's Representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia attended the opening session of an ECA-sponsored intensive ICT4D training. The training began on 12 May and will run for 4 months. In her opening remarks, Ms Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director of the Development Information Services Division (DISD) told participants that parliamentarians have a role to play in sensitising other policy makers on the direct link between development and information and knowledge. More on this story:

[http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_resources/news/ict4d\\_training\\_for\\_forty\\_ethiopian MPs.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/ict4d_training_for_forty_ethiopian MPs.htm)

**ABSA recommends the need for information society statistics.** The first annual meeting of the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA) took place from 10 to 11 May 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. ABSA is comprised of 15 experts drawn from national statistical offices, sub-regional

organizations, statistical training institutes and agencies using statistical data. It serves as an advisory body to ECA on statistical developments in Africa and gives direction to its statistics work programme. The meeting was also attended by several observer agencies including the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the African Regional Economic Communities, Paris 21 and some bilateral European funding agencies. Following the discussion of the presentation made on information society statistics, ABSA made the recommendation that ECA should work with the National Statistical Systems (NSSs) to begin collecting statistics on ICTs for development using a harmonised framework. In addition, the five UN Regional Commissions, including ECA, are working together to address the issue of developing information society indicators and benchmarks in their respective regions. For further information, contact Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org))

**ECA's perspectives on the Digital Solidarity Agenda.** The director of the Development Information Services Division (DISD) of the ECA, Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, was a speaker at the recent ITU Africa Telecom meeting that took place in Cairo, Egypt from 3 - 6 May 2004. During a session entitled "The Digital Solidarity Agenda: ECA's Perspectives", Ms. Bounemra provided a concise appraisal of ECA's vision and activities with respect to creating knowledge societies in Africa. She noted increased high-level political will by various stakeholders and a growing awareness and commitment to mainstream ICT into programmes that are aimed at achieving developmental challenges addressed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). More: [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_resources/news/eca\\_s\\_perspective\\_dsa.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/eca_s_perspective_dsa.htm)

**IDRC ICT4D in Africa team meet in Cairo.** IDRC's Acacia and Connectivity Africa staff met for a team meeting in Cairo on 4 May 2004, during ITU's Africa Telecom. The main issues discussed at the workshop included reviewing projects planned for next year and working on evaluation plans for both programs. For further information, contact Laurent Elder ([lelder@idrc.org.sn](mailto:lelder@idrc.org.sn)).

**World Dialogue on Regulation (WDR) for Network Economies Expert Forum.** Members of the World Dialogue on Regulation met from 2 - 4 May 2004 to discuss research issues on the topic "stimulating investment in network development: roles for regulators". Participants included numerous heads of African regulators and researchers, mostly from the Research ICT Africa network. The workshop reviewed presentations of

research that had been undertaken and made plans for next year's activities. More: [www.regulateonline.org](http://www.regulateonline.org)

**Africa and the Knowledge Society.** ECA's Deputy Executive Secretary, Ms. Lalla Ben Barka was a key speaker at a High-Level Panel on ICT and the knowledge-based economy, organized on the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on 27 April 2004 in Shanghai, China. In her speech, she noted that Africa's current economic performance is raising hopes for a possible turnaround, compared to the stagnation of previous decades. Nevertheless, this progress is still fragile and may not be sustained if the gap between the information-rich and the information-poor nations is not attended to, and if the foundation of a sustainable Information Society is not consolidated. More: [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_resources/news/africa\\_and\\_the\\_knowledge\\_society.htm](http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/africa_and_the_knowledge_society.htm)

**e-Burkina Forum.** A national Forum on Burkina Faso's e-strategy took place in the capital, Ouagadougou, from 22 to 24 April 2004. The Forum was attended by more than 700 participants representing stakeholders from the various regions of the country and was officially opened by the Prime Minister. ECA, IDRC, ITU and UNDP participated at the Forum. ECA made a presentation entitled "NICI plans in Africa, challenges and perspectives" in the context of the WSIS process. The Forum adopted a series of recommendations prepared by the six Working Groups. For further info, contact Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org)).

**Information for development in West and Southern Africa.** ECA's Development Information Services Division (DISD) made a presentation on the status of information for development activities in the subregions at the seventh meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of ECA Office for West Africa (18 - 21 April) in Abuja, Nigeria, and the tenth meeting of the ICE of ECA Office for Southern Africa (2 - 5 May) in Lusaka, Zambia. The presentation assessed the progress made in national ICT policies plans and strategies in the sub-region, focusing on the role of ECA. It also highlighted lessons learned from the e-strategies development process. The meetings underlined the importance of improved collaboration between ECA, ECOWAS, COMESA, SADC and other partners in ICT related activities. For further info, contact Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org)).

**ECA collaboration with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in information for development.** In the context of regional e-strategies (RICs) based on the AISI framework, ECA, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Union du Maghreb Arabe (UMA) are in the process of strengthening their collaboration in ICT4D activities in the sub-regions. Recent discussions with ECOWAS focused on a proposal to organise a workshop on e-commerce and implementing the ICT4D component of the MOU signed between ECA and ECOWAS. With COMESA, collaboration will centre on formulating a sub regional e-strategy and hosting a high-level conference. ECA will cooperate with SADC on e-strategies, ICT indicators and WSIS preparation, while the cooperation with UMA will focus on the use of ICT for facilitating trade in the region. For further information, contact Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org)).

**Winners of the 2004 ICT R&D Small Grants Programme.** Connectivity Africa and Acacia, the two regional ICT4D programmes of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), have announced the winners of the 2004 ICT R&D Small Grants Programme to support research and innovation in ICTs for Africa's development. The grants of up to CAD \$30,000 each for six winners were awarded as part of the 2004 ICT R&D Small Grants Programme, out of a total of almost 50 applications. The winning proposals include a plan to develop a prototype low-cost, solar powered computer in rural Nigeria, a study of how ICTs are changing the work of African journalists, and a project to assess the impact of ICT skills on employment prospects for youth in rural areas of Kenya and Tanzania. More: <http://www.connectivityafrica.ca>

**UgaBYTES Initiative announces the completion of the inaugural Uganda National ICT for Development Directory (2004).** The National ICT for Development Directory was conceived by UgaBYTES Initiative as a strategy for bolstering the ICT sub-sector. The directory is meant to facilitate information-sharing and overall scaling up of the impact of ICT to development in Uganda. The directory captures resource persons, ICT coordinators, projects and initiatives in ICT sub-sector in Uganda. An updated version of the directory will be produced every year starting in 2005. The online version is available at: <http://www.ugabytes.org/directories.html>  
Comments or questions about the Directory may

be sent to [secretariate@ugabytes.org](mailto:secretariate@ugabytes.org) or [info@ugabytes.org](mailto:info@ugabytes.org)

**Africa Satellite Regulatory Report to be Unveiled.** New satellite-based Internet delivery systems now make it possible to obtain bandwidth ten times more affordably than was formerly available, to almost anywhere in Africa, according to a report unveiled at ITU Telecom Africa in Cairo in May. Entitled "Catalysing Access to ICTs in AfricaVia Satellite", the IDRC-funded report shows that a growing number of African administrations have demonstrated a willingness to address a restrictive regulatory environment that makes it time consuming and expensive to deploy satellite services. "For the report, a survey was conducted of the regulations currently applied to satellite communications services throughout Africa," said David Hartshorn, Secretary General of the Global VSAT Forum (GVF), the non-profit association of the international satellite communications sector. "While local regulations and policies are often acting as a deterrent to satellite service provision, the survey shows that Administrations have begun implementing reforms - and they are getting good results." Data from the survey can be found on the Global VSAT Forum (GVF) website (<http://www.gvf.org/>) and case studies on the Link centre website (<http://link.wits.ac.za/>). Copies of the report will be available through CATIA (<http://www.catia.ws/>) and IDRC (<http://www.idrc.ca>).

**ICT policy advocacy: well-informed, lively and inclusive policy debates across Africa, and shaping the local policy environment.** This component of CATIA's programme will be supporting informed advocacy groups (and individuals) from the private sector, consumer groups and civil society, and the media in Senegal, DRC, Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia and Mozambique. It is currently improving and expanding the ICT Policy for Civil Society Course, which was developed by the APC (<http://www.apc.org/english/capacity/policy/index.shtml>). A revised version of these materials will be available through both the APC website and ITrain Online in July when the first workshop takes place in Kenya to train national animators to take forward advocacy campaigns in their countries. Highway Africa is currently conducting a media analysis of ICT-policy related coverage in the six priority countries for this component. This analysis should be completed and on the CATIA website (<http://www.catia.ws>) by July 2005.

**A Thriving African-based Open Knowledge Network (OKN), Catalysing the Creation and Exchange of Local Content.** OKN is working to establish a network at local, regional and global

levels to facilitate ICT-based content creation and exchange in various media and in local languages. This network will offer value-added services to local access points coordinated and supported through regional hubs. In East Africa ALIN and AfriAfya are continuing to implement the two pilot hubs and 8 access points in Kenya. OKN is organizing a regional workshop in Kenya in April to look at expanding the project within the region. In West Africa, ENDA is running a pilot in Senegal and will be working with 11 access points in the areas of traditional medicine, women's micro-credit and arts and crafts. OKN will also be linking with UNESCO and others on their CMC projects in Mali and Senegal. In Southern Africa, SAFIRE in Zimbabwe has been selected to run a pilot and CIEUM and the LINK centre will be running a project in Mozambique later in the year. A separate project is being planned in South Africa, which will link content providers and access points. The project will be working with the Creative Commons institute and bridges.org on developing Creative Commons licenses for Africa. The first OKN newsletter has been produced and is available in English, French and Portuguese. For copies please email: [okn-africa@oneworld.net](mailto:okn-africa@oneworld.net)

**Med-e-Tel exhibition and conference.** ITU in partnership with, WHO, the European Commission (Information Society Directorate General) and ESA (European Space Agency) organized Med-e-Tel exhibition and conference. This was held in Luxemburg, 21st –23rd April 2004 with the aim of demonstrating practical applications in the field of Telemedicine (teleconsultation, distance learning, database information and exchange and research) and eHealth (medical information and database management systems and processes) and to broaden the vision on the developments worldwide in the field of health care. ITU has developed a number of projects to promote e-health/telemedicine services and solutions in developing countries. In order to demonstrate the potential benefits of telemedicine and eHealth, implementations of pilot projects have been going on in the selected developing countries. More: [www.medetel.lu](http://www.medetel.lu)

#### **FORTHCOMING PICTA EVENTS**

**7 – 9 June 2004, Local Governance and ICT workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.** The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada and ECA are organizing a workshop dedicated to local governance and ICT. It will review innovative ICT research and

development as well as initiatives in support of local governance with a view to assisting local administrations in enhancing transparency, accountability and efficiency and providing improved public services. The meeting is expected to identify further research needs to facilitate ICT introduction and usage at the local level and produce a concrete plan of action, including formulation of pilot projects, to assist member States in preparation for the WSIS 2005. For further information, contact Atsuko Okuda ([aokuda@uneca.org](mailto:aokuda@uneca.org))

**19 – 24 July 2004, Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa (CATIA) - English Regional Workshop, Nairobi, Kenya.** The CATIA programme aims to enable poor people in Africa to gain maximum benefit from the opportunities offered by ICTs and to act as a strong catalyst for reform. The workshop will support a package of strategic activities to improve affordable access to the full range of ICTs, from Internet to community radio. More: <http://www.catia.ws>

#### **OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**9 – 11 June 2004, WSIS African Academia Research Network brainstorming workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.** The Network was launched by ECA with support from Ford Foundation during WSIS Geneva 2003. The brainstorming workshop will bring network members to discuss their roles in the information society, the WSIS Action Plan and its implications for African academia. Other issues include identifying areas for research, modalities for creation of sub-regional networks, and how to fit the research agenda into the WSIS Action Plan. For further information, contact Aida Opoku-Mensah. ([aopoku-mensah@uneca.org](mailto:aopoku-mensah@uneca.org))

**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. Those who wish to submit articles for academic purposes may inquire about procedures or submit them to the AYF Secretariat at: [info@ayf.de](mailto: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](http://www.ddn-africa.org)

**23 – 24 June 2004, Women In Technology & Leadership Conference, Birchwood Executive Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa.** The conference topics include: he says, she says; Venus and Mars in the workplace; technology and culture for effective leadership; games mother never taught you: strategies for success in the workplace; technology for women in business (TWIB) overview; and women in science engineering and technology. Contact info: Malusi Tyabazeka ([tyabazekamt@sabc.co.za](mailto:tyabazekamt@sabc.co.za))

**24 - 26 June 2004, Preparatory Meeting for the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, Hammamet, Tunisia.** The Preparatory meeting will review those issues of the Information Society, which should form the focus of the Tunis phase of WSIS and agree on the structure of the process for the second phase. More: <http://www.itu.int/wsis>

**29 June - 1 July 2004, ICT Africa Investment Summit 2004, Johannesburg, South Africa.** The Forum will discuss the key issues that drive investment growth in the sector - financing strategies, policy and regulatory frameworks, technologies, applications and capacity building. The exhibition will show case presentations from leading industry players. The event will provide opportunities to present bankable projects, and networking and business development in the ICT sector in Africa. More: [www.kemilinks.com/](http://www.kemilinks.com/)

**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.cbclink.org/cbclink/vents/ICT04/>

**21 – 23 July 2004, ICTs and the library; experiences, opportunities and challenges for libraries in Africa workshop, Johannesburg, South Africa.** A three-day workshop (by invitation only) for Carnegie Corporation of New York grantees in Africa. The theme of the workshop is "Sustainable use of ICTs in African libraries". The objectives of the workshop include sharing experiences of the use of ICTs in CCNY-supported libraries; providing an overview of the issues involved in the adoption, implementation and sustainable use of ICTs within libraries; exposing participants to new ICT developments in libraries; identifying best practice for key challenges still to be faced in the effective use and implementation of ICTs in libraries in Africa; and identifying which areas of ICT use in libraries are priorities for further support. Contact: Martin Belcher ([mbelcher@inasp.info](mailto:mbelcher@inasp.info))

**31 August - 2 September 2005, the second World Information Technology Forum (WITFOR), Gaborone, Botswana.** The purpose of the WITFOR Conferences is to help implement information development strategies and projects in developing countries. The conference is a partnership between the hosting government and Federation for Information Processing (IFIP). The outcome of the second conference will be the Gaborone Protocol addressing the following themes: Building the Infrastructure, Economic Opportunity, Empowerment and Participation, Health, Education, Environment, Agriculture, Social and Ethical Aspects, which will be submitted to the UNESCO General Conference 2005 for adoption. More: <http://www.witfor.org/>

**16 – 18 September 2004, Highway Africa Conference 2004, Grahamstown, South Africa.** The eighth Highway Africa Conference, "Media making the Information Society", in September 2004 will have a strong alignment to the unfolding processes of the World Summit on the Information Summit (WSIS). The overarching theme of the Highway Africa Conference 2004 is technology. The conference will seek to address the interface of technology with society, development, policy, access, content and the media. The conference

concentrates on new media issues relevant for journalists, encompassing the policy, economics, development and technology questions around Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). More:

[https://www.comminit.com/africa/events\\_cal/2004/181-event.html](https://www.comminit.com/africa/events_cal/2004/181-event.html)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **AISI Media Awards 2004: Application Deadline Extended**

The deadline for application to the AISI Media Awards 2004 has been extended to 31 July 2004. The AISI Media Awards were introduced in 2003 to encourage more informed coverage of the information society and ICT for development issues in Africa as part of ECA's Information Society Outreach and Communication Programme. The Awards are aimed at individual journalists and media institutions based in Africa that are "promoting journalism which contributes to a better understanding of the information society in Africa. The winners will be announced in September 2004. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/mediaaward.htm>

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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 [atemtime@uneca.org](mailto: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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