

*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: PICTA Members .....**

**PICTA Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting is scheduled for 10th -11th September 2004, in Mauritius after the ACT 2004 Summit (see <http://www.aitecafrica.com/act2004/index.htm>). An agenda will be disseminated shortly but in the mean time members should confirm their availability to attend to Ms Aida Opoku-Mensah ([aopoku-mensah@uneca.org](mailto:aopoku-mensah@uneca.org)).

**UNESCO, UNDP launch Community Multimedia Centres in Bahir Dar and Lalibella, Ethiopia.** UNESCO in collaboration with UNDP launched Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs) in Bahir Dar and Lalibella where more than 6,000 people are expected to use the centres. Representatives from the two organizations together with the Ministry of Information officials told journalists, that the centres will enable members of the community in the towns to become recognized actors of knowledge for development. More: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200406180460.html>

**ECA and ITU to hold regional meetings on information society indicators.** ECA and ITU are planning to jointly host two regional meetings on information society indicators. One of the meetings will be convened for Anglophone countries in November 2004 in Botswana and another one for Francophone in December 2004 in a Francophone country not yet identified. The objective will be to discuss a methodology, which will enable national statistical offices to collect, process and disseminate information society indicators. The meeting, which will be part of a series of meetings to be organized by the UN Regional Commissions in 5 continents, will feed into a thematic meeting on indicators to be organized by the UN Regional Commissions, ITU, UNCTAD, OECD, UNESCO, the UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank. For further information, contact Makane Faye ([mfaye@uneca.org](mailto:mfaye@uneca.org)).

**New Release: Africa Networking: Development Information and Governance.** ECA's Development Information Services Division has recently released a new book focusing on the relationship between good governance and development information in Africa. "*Africa Networking; Development Information and Governance*" builds on discussions held during the Third meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI-3) held last year in Addis Ababa on ways information systems can help support and promote better governance. The book presents analysis on decentralization of public administrative systems and transparent public financial management. It also deals with the role of the private sector, civil society and systems and policies on governance. The essays in the book draw on a range of expertise in statistics, ICTs, libraries and geo-information. To request a copy of the book, send an email to: [ecapubs@uneca.org](mailto:ecapubs@uneca.org) More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/new.htm>

**Academics Brainstorm on the Information Society.** A three-day brainstorming meeting of the Academia Research Network (ARN) on the Information Society organized by ECA and the Ford Foundation was held from 9 to 11 June 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event launched five thematic research networks, whereby researchers across Africa will work on the following topics:

- ◆ Capacity building for the information society in Africa;
- ◆ Creating the enabling environment;
- ◆ African languages and content development in the cyberspace;
- ◆ Measuring the impact of the African information society; and
- ◆ The industrialization of ICTs in Africa.

Launched in Geneva in December 2003 during the first phase of the WSIS, ARN provides a space for a select group of leading African academics and researchers to reflect on key research questions and activities in ICTs, policy and society. The networks will kick start their

activities in the coming months. For further info, contact Aida Opoku-Mensah ([aopoku-mensah@uneca.org](mailto:aopoku-mensah@uneca.org))

**iLaw Africa Meeting.** This event was organised by OSI, OSIWA and OSISA on June 22, 2004 in Accra, Ghana. The meeting discussed training mechanisms on advanced ICT laws and policies (iLaw Africa) for policy-makers, activists, academics, technologists, and business leaders. The preliminary date for this training is beginning of 2005. The discussion focused on questions such as: Who should be reached and at what level? Should the training programme have a geographic focus (in terms of content and audience)? What should the target audience/trainees be, and in what format should the issues be presented? More: Ben Akoh ([bakoh@osiwa.org](mailto:bakoh@osiwa.org)), Ashraf Patel ([ashrafp@osiafrica.org](mailto:ashrafp@osiafrica.org)) or Vera Franz ([vfranz@osieurope.org](mailto:vfranz@osieurope.org)).

**Local Governance and ICT Workshop.** The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada and ECA co-organized a workshop dedicated to local governance and ICT, which took place from 7 to 9 June 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As part of the implementation of the PICTA Plan of Action, the workshop reviewed 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 workshop identified research needs and areas of collaboration to facilitate ICT introduction and usage at the local level and produced a concrete plan of action to assist member States to prepare for the WSIS 2005. For further information, contact Atsuko Okuda ([aokuda@uneca.org](mailto:aokuda@uneca.org)).

**UNESCO and ITU support the Adaptive Technology Center for the Blind (ATCB) in Ethiopia.** On June 3, 2004 the ATCB in cooperation with UNESCO and ITU organised a press conference in the presence of the President of Ethiopia in order to publicise the activities being undertaken in a project called "ICT training for capacity building, empowerment and poverty reduction among the blind community in Ethiopia". ATCB was established in Ethiopia in May 2001 to promote and enhance the use of ICTs by visually impaired sections of the society. UNESCO's regional office in Addis Ababa is considering extending the project to other African countries, particularly Tanzania. For further information, contact Guenther Cyranek ([gcyranek@unesco.org](mailto:gcyranek@unesco.org))

**Mainstreaming Gender in National Gender Mechanisms.** A training workshop on reinforcing capacities of National Gender Mechanisms (NGM) through the use of ICTs was organised by the UN Division for Advancement of Women and the ministère de la famille, du développement social et de la solidarité nationale, in Dakar, Senegal from 24 to 28 May 2004. Thirty-nine representatives of NGMs from 11 countries participated in the workshop. A resource person from ECA facilitated various sessions of the workshop including practical Internet training, plans for national networking for gender activities, formulation and implementation of ICT policies and plans, and mainstreaming gender in e-strategies.

More: Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org))

**CTO and ECDL-F to develop global e-Citizen programmes.** The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) and the European Computer Driving License Foundation (ECDL-F) have signed an MoU to jointly promote global digital literacy initiatives utilising the ECDL-F's e-Citizen programme. The collaboration is part of the efforts by both organizations to develop partnerships to foster the use of ICT for achieving development goals. Both organisations offer knowledge-sharing programmes in IT and telecommunications to help bridge the digital divide. The e-Citizen programme is expected to encompass economic, social and political dimensions by extending the benefits of electronic communication to government (e.g. health, online tax payment, distance learning, participatory democracy, etc), businesses (e.g. online banking and finance, e-commerce, etc) and civil society. More:

<http://www.cto.int/index.php?dir=06&sd=11&id=107>

**IDRC, IICD and CTA to fund a review workshop of GENardis (Gender Agriculture and ICTs) Award Winners.** Genardis is an awards project that was jointly funded by CTA, IICD and IDRC that supported activities that focused on the relationship between gender, agriculture and ICTs in ACP countries. The workshop is scheduled to take place from 9 to 10 August 2004 in Arusha, Tanzania, directly after the AITEC International Conference on "Women and ICT: Challenges and Opportunities". For more information, please contact Laurent Elder ([lelder@idrc.org.sn](mailto:lelder@idrc.org.sn))

**IDRC-Acacia supports project at University of Cape Town Lung Institute.** IDRC's Acacia program is supporting a project with the University of Cape Town Lung Institute, which will test the use of PDAs, to support and evaluate the ARV

(Anti-retroviral) roll out therapy in the Free State province of South Africa. The project will support the development of a HIV/AIDS clinical research and evaluation data collection system; support Patient monitoring and clinician feedback; the undertaking of molecular epidemiology and bio-informatics; support epidemiological tracking; day-to-day management information; integration and data mining and the integration of this system into a WAN. For more information please contact Heloise Emdon ([hemdon@idrc.ca](mailto:hemdon@idrc.ca))

**IDRC-Connectivity Africa supports project on pre-paid GSM roaming in West Africa.** IDRC, through Connectivity Africa, will support the formation of a technical group on facilitating pre-paid GSM roaming in West Africa, which will be coordinated by ECOWAS. It is a well-known fact most Africans have pre-paid subscriptions to cellular telephony. However most of those subscriptions don't allow roaming across networks in different countries. This hinders regional integration and cross-border commerce. An initial workshop will take place in Lome, Togo in August to come up with a strategy to deal with this problem.

**APC members set up 10 new ICT policy portals.** Ten civil society organisations, which are members of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), have created national ICT policy portal websites in their countries in a joint initiative. The portals which are all uniquely adapted to address each country's particular situation use free software that allows content-sharing in different languages and between multiple information databases hosted in different parts of the world. More: [http://rights.apc.org/policy\\_sites\\_list.shtml](http://rights.apc.org/policy_sites_list.shtml)

**IICD websites moved to Open Source platform.** As of July 1, 2004, the International Institute for Communication and Development's (IICD) corporate website ([www.iicd.org](http://www.iicd.org)), the website of ICT Stories ([www.iicd.org/stories](http://www.iicd.org/stories)), and iConnect-Online ([www.iconnect-online.org](http://www.iconnect-online.org)) are now on a new Open Source content management system. Although the sites look the same, almost every page has moved to a new location on the Internet. The sites, developed by the Amsterdam-based IT company OSC, are customised versions of the Plone Content Management System ([www.plone.org](http://www.plone.org)). IICD intended to move the sites to a stable and flexible platform that will meet its needs for several years to come and was able to find an Open Source solution to offer multilingual sites in English, French, Spanish, to enable fast loading, with a plain text version available to low-bandwidth visitors, and carry RSS news feeds

from partners as well as being accessible to persons with disabilities. For more information: [webmaster@iicd.org](mailto:webmaster@iicd.org)

**How to embed Country Programme activities in a wider sector development context.** Held in alongside meetings of IICD's International Advisory Board (IAB) in June 2004, the organization explored issues associated with how to efficiently embed ICT-related projects and programmes in sector and national policies. Four project partners from IICD's focal countries presented and reviewed ways in which local IICD activities can be scaled up to a larger group of end-users at sector and national levels. Through an Open Space meeting, participants discussed issues they considered most important to the role of IICD in this embedding process. Amongst priority areas recognised were: development of embedding strategies, involving key actors in the process and defining performance criteria. For more information: Mr. Tjalling Vonk ([tvonk@iicd.org](mailto:tvonk@iicd.org))

#### OTHER NEWS ... OTHER NEWS ...

**Ghana to host African Regional WSIS (Second Phase) Preparatory Conference. Ghana 2-4 February 2005.** A proposal to hold the regional preparatory conference in Accra from 2-5 February 2005 was adopted by the African Ministerial meeting held in April 2004 in Dakar, Senegal. The decision was subsequently endorsed by ITU. The proposal will be submitted to the African Union (AU) for formal endorsement. The Government of Ghana has appointed a planning committee with members drawn from government, private sector, civil society organizations, academia, gender and youth. For further information, contact Aida Opoku-Mensah ([aopoku-mensah@uneca.org](mailto:aopoku-mensah@uneca.org)).

**PrepCom 1 of Second phase WSIS (Tunis 2005) makes decisions on the focus, output and preparatory process of the Tunis Phase.** The preparatory meeting decided that the Tunis Phase will focus on follow-up and implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action by stakeholders at national, regional and international levels. The Tunis phase will pay particular attention to the challenges facing the Least Developed Countries and the reports of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM). It was also decided that PrepCom-2 would take place in Geneva for 7 days starting 17 February 2005. More: <http://www.itu.int/ws/2005/docs2/pc1/doc5.doc>

**UN Regional Commissions express renewed commitment to the WSIS process.** In a statement read by ECA representing all the five UN Regional Commissions, at the PrepCom1 of the WSIS-2, the Regional Commissions said that they “are deeply committed to the WSIS and are assisting their member States on a permanent basis on the relevant issues required by the process”. The statement further noted that “based on the positive experience gained from the first phase, the Regional Commissions will continue, as mandated by the UN General Assembly, to bring regional perspectives to the global process”. For further information, contact Makane Faye ([mfaye@uneca.org](mailto:mfaye@uneca.org)).

**WSIS-2005 Fundraising Campaign picks up momentum.** In response to the ITU Secretary-General's open appeal to the international community for voluntary contributions, governments, international organizations and NGOs demonstrated their commitment to the success of the Summit by announcing new financial contributions to the WSIS 2005 Fund to support the core preparatory process of the Tunis phase. Governments that announced their contribution at the first PrepCom of the second phase include Japan (CHF 383'000), Norway (CHF 180'000), Spain (CHF 150'000), the Netherlands (CHF 75'000), Senegal (CHF 46'000), Azerbaijan (CHF 15,000), Namibia (CHF 12'500) and the Holy See (CHF 4'000). They were joined by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations including the World Meteorological Organization (15'000), the United Nations Federal Credit Union (CHF 1'250) and the International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (CHF 200). The ITU Secretary-General thanked donors for their support, and added “with these new contributions for the WSIS Fund, we have reached 25 per cent of our goal for the WSIS-2005 Fundraising Campaign. This is up from just 8 per cent of the campaign goal prior to the Hammamet meeting”. More: <http://www.itu.int/wsisis>

**Provisional governmental Bureau nominates candidate for the Presidency of the Preparatory Committee.** At a meeting held on 10 June 2004, the provisional governmental Bureau of the Tunis phase nominated Ambassador Janis Karklins from Latvia as candidate for the Presidency of the Preparatory Committee. The final decision on the Presidency of the Preparatory Committee of the Tunis phase will be taken at the first Plenary of PrepCom-1 in Hammamet. Information on the composition of the provisional Bureau is posted on the WSIS website at: <http://www.itu.int/wsisis>

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS ....

**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.cbclabelink.org/cbclabelink/events/ICT04/>

**7 – 9 July 2004, ITU WSIS Thematic Meeting on Countering Spam, Geneva, Switzerland.** Organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the meeting is open to member States of ITU and member States of the United Nations, international organizations, ITU Sector Members, and to WSIS accredited NGOs, civil society and business entities, as well as to media. Regularly updated information about the event, including a draft agenda, can be found at the ITU website (<http://www.itu.int>)

**18 – 23 July 2004, APC/CATIA Regional ICT Policy Advocacy Workshop, Nairobi, Kenya.** The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and Catalysing Access to ICTs in Africa (CATIA) are organising this regional workshop to be held at Landmark Hotel (Nairobi, Kenya). The workshop will focus on building expertise in ICT policy issues and advocacy techniques, while creating opportunities for participants to map out their own ICT policy contexts and relate them to local needs and priorities. As well as enabling them to interrogate some of the complexities of ICT policy processes at regional and global levels. More: [www.apc.org](http://www.apc.org) OR [www.catia.ws](http://www.catia.ws)

**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))

**5 – 7 August 2004, Women and ICT: Challenges and Opportunities, Arusha, Tanzania.** Organised by AITEC, the overall objective of the conference is to develop a roadmap for the caucus that will enable effective participation by women in WSIS-Tunis 2005. More: <http://www.aitecafrica.com/events/2004/WomenICT/womens-ict.htm>

**23 – 27 August 2004, Kabissa “Time to get Online” Training-of-Trainers Workshop, Accra, Ghana.** Kabissa has launched the next phase of its “Time to Get Online” project, training African civil society organizations on how to integrate the Internet into their work. Kabissa invites West African civil society organizations interested in conducting their own “Time to Get Online” workshop to apply for the upcoming Training-of-Trainers program in Accra. <http://www.timetogetonline.org/workshops.php>

**31 August - 2 September, 2005: Second World Information Technology Forum (WITFOR), Gaborone, Botswana.** The purpose of the WITFOR Conferences is to help implement information for development strategies and projects in developing countries. The conference is a partnership between the host 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)

**9 – 11 November 2005, Second World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society – WSLAIS, Bilbao, Spain.** The main mission of the 2nd World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society will be to shape the position of the Local Authorities into a Plan of Action, which will be presented during the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 16-18 November 2005). For two and a half days, some 2,000 local government representatives from all around the world will discuss different sectors and aspects of the Information Society in plenary and parallel sessions and also in thematic workshops, while a concurrent exhibition will display information concerning local, regional and international initiatives and projects. More: <http://www.it4all-bilbao.org/>

## 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>

**UNESCO’s WSIS Action Directory Launched:** UNESCO’s WSIS Action Directory, an online platform providing access to information on UNESCO’s contribution to the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society in December 2003 has been launched. The address is: <http://www.unesco.org/wsisdirectory>

**Registrations open for Highway Africa 2004:** Registrations have now opened for Highway Africa 2004 conference. Highway Africa is the largest annual gathering of African media professionals on the continent. It is the only event of its kind in Africa, with over 340 delegates attending from 22 countries attending last year.

For more information on the conference, registration and award nominations please visit [www.highwayafrica.org.za](http://www.highwayafrica.org.za) or contact Luthando Kitit ([L.Kitit@ru.ac.za](mailto:L.Kitit@ru.ac.za)).

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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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