

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 will take place from 10th to 11th September 2004 in Mauritius. Participating members include Bellanet, CATIA, IDRC, IICD, Industry Canada, ICANN, OSIWA and UNDP. Among other things, the agenda will focus on joint projects and preparations for the African Regional Conference for WSIS-2 to be held in Accra, Ghana in early February 2005. For further info, contact Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org)

GKP EXCOMM Retreat. The Executive Committee of GKP, made up of APC, ECA, IDRC, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (India), Omar Dengo Foundation (Costa Rica), SDC, UNESCO and Young Asia TV, recently held a retreat strategy meeting in Geneva to examine ways of repositioning GKP in the coming years and how the network can better serve its members. Discussions were based on themes and issues raised during the GKP Annual meeting held in San Jose, Costa Rica in May this year, as part of formulating GKP's Strategy 2010. For more: Ms Rinalia Abdul Rahim (rinalia@gkpsecretariat.org.my)

ITU, ECA and UNESCO Telemedicine pilot in Ethiopia. A two-week telemedicine training programme for over 20 Ethiopian medical doctors drawn from 10 hospitals in Addis Ababa and regional towns was recently conducted at the Information Technology Center for Africa (ITCA) of the ECA. The training was undertaken as part of a telemedicine pilot project in Ethiopia in which ITU, ECA and UNESCO are collaborating with Ethiopia's Ministry of Health, the Ethiopian Telecom Corporation (ETC), and the Addis Ababa University's Faculty of Medicine. Apart from providing training facilities, ECA established a Dgroup to facilitate exchange of information and experiences among participants. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/new.htm>

Amharic Touch screen kiosk launched. A multimedia touch screen kiosk in Amharic developed for the land administration department of the Nefas Silk Lafto Subcity of the Addis Ababa Municipality has been handed over by ECA to the Subcity Administration. The kiosk was developed by ITCA/ECA to showcase the value of ICTs in local administration. The General Manager of the Subcity and the head of the Land administration department tested the system which will provide voice-powered information on the type of services available at the authority, including documentation and other materials that clients are required to fill, the service charge for the various services, and the location of the office (room number) for a particular service. The official handing over of the kiosk was on 25th August 2004 at the head office of the Subcity Administration in the presence of local officials, end-users, representatives of the ECA and the media. At the ceremony, officials and users expressed their appreciation to ECA and said that the kiosk would be a great tool in enhancing their daily work. More: <http://www.uneca.org/itca>

Seychelles resumes collaboration with CTO as full member country Latest Headlines. The government of the Seychelles, a Commonwealth country, has recently notified the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) of its decision to re-join the organisation as a full member country, with effect from this year. The 81,000 population islands, with a fixed and mobile telephone subscription rate in excess of 80% of the population, has one of the highest telecommunications penetration rates of the Sub-Saharan African region. Prior to this temporary withdrawal, the Seychelles was an active member country of the CTO for many years. "We are pleased at the Seychelles' decision to resume its relationship with the CTO and are confident that many opportunities for assistance and collaboration will follow very soon," said Dr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah, CEO of the CTO. More: <http://www.cto.int/index.php?dir=06&sd=11&id=124>

ICT Policy Briefing in Zambia. This is a publication providing concise and up-to-date analyses of important issues on ICTs and policy interventions in Zambia. It is supported by the International Institute for Communication and

Development (IICD), published by Panos Southern Africa in collaboration with the Zambian Information exchange and Networking (IN) partners. IN partner organisations include the Computer Society of Zambia, e- Brain Forum, OneWorld Africa and the MIND provide content for Policy Briefing. More: www.iicd.org e-Mail: simon@panos.org.zm

Award for I-Network Uganda. The Uganda Communications Commission gave out awards in recognition of the contribution by individuals or organisations to the development of the communication sector. The Uganda Information Network (I-Network) received an award in the category 'ICT Advocacy'. The Information Network is an association of individuals or organizations rallied around the theme ICT for Development. It started as a club of organizations and professionals associated with the activities of the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) in Uganda. The I-Network encourages the free flow and unhindered exchange of knowledge and information among main stakeholders to foster development in Uganda through ICT, hence the creation of a "knowledge and information-sharing community". I-Network builds on already existing initiatives in collaboration with the initiators, other than duplicating them and acts as a platform to stimulate other activities in the Private sector, Government and Non Governmental Organizations. More: <http://www.i-network.or.ug>, <http://www.iicd.org>

Wireless Points the Way in Africa. Steve Song, Team Leader of Acacia and Connectivity Africa programs at IDRC and Laurent Elder Program Officer with the two initiatives, quoted in an article entitled "Wireless Points the Way in Africa", reproduced by the Environmental News Network. Elder said "...there is good reason to bump high technology closer to the top. Doing so is an effective way of addressing many of the more essential needs". Talking about ICT4D programme of IDRC, Song said "what we're pushing towards is empowering a generation of Africans who will be able to string up connectivity in the middle of nowhere". For the full story: <http://www.enn.com/direct/display-release.asp?objid=D1D1366D00000FD7C60350A454F635>

ICANN issued a new domain name transfer policy. ICANN issued a new transfer policy intended to help domain name holders (registrants) transfer domain names from one registrar to another. An At-Large liaison served on the Transfer Assistance Group to coordinate implementation of the new transfer procedures,

which will take effect 12 November 2004. This is the result of a consensus policy developed by the Transfer Task Force, accepted by the GNSO Council, and adopted by the ICANN Board in early 2003. The Task Force found problems with the "portability" of domain registrations, noting that customer choice was limited because there was not a consistent process ensuring that transfers were easy, fluid, transparent, and inexpensive. More:

<http://www.icann.org/announcements/advisory-12jul04.htm>

OTHER NEWS

Fantsuam Foundation, Nigeria: The challenge of getting online – Fantsuam brings satellite Internet to villages in rural Nigeria [Source: APCNews]. APC member in rural Nigeria, Fantsuam Foundation, has recorded yet another first in rural ICT programmes. Earlier this year, Fantsuam launched a VSAT facility, which provides the first rural-based Internet access in Kaduna State, if not in Nigeria. APCNews talked to Fantsuam's director, John Dada, about the impact the new Internet satellite connection is having on the community and the Foundation. <http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=22500>

RESOURCES

UPDATE - ePol Africa Resources; e-Commerce. As the regional node of the Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePol-NET) ECA has been developing resources for the ePolAfrica website for African countries on implementing strategies and policies on the Information Society. More resources on e-commerce policies from African as well as from industrialized countries are available at: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/nici/ecom.htm>

ENDA, Senegal: African citizens in the information society - a new publication from ENDA. This advocacy document produced by ENDA, presents the major issues faced by African countries in relation to their inclusion in the Information Society, as perceived by women. It's a tool for public, private and civil society stakeholders and decision-makers for integrating gender into ICT policies to contribute to a fair, plural and inclusive African information society.

The Commonwealth Government & Business Guide to Information and Communication Technology. The Commonwealth Government &

Business Guide to Information and Communication Technology is a unique resource of information about ICT in the Commonwealth designed specifically for use by Government Ministers, Regulators, Utility Heads and leaders of the Communications Industry. The CTO sees the 54 member states of the Commonwealth as a base not a boundary for sharing the communications knowledge and experience of its diverse members. It is therefore intended that this website will be a valuable reference tool for leaders in the communications sector throughout the world. More: <http://www.cto-ict.org/index.php>

ItrainOnline. ItrainOnline is a joint initiative of six organizations with exceptional expertise in computer and Internet training in the South: APC, Bellanet, FAO, IICD, INASP, OneWorld and UNESCO. ItrainOnline responds to the need for a single source on the web containing a selection of the best and most relevant computer and Internet training resources for development and social change. Materials and annotated links to high-quality resources in English, Spanish, French and other languages, on topics ranging from computer and Internet basics to highly technical areas and the ways that civil society and development organizations can increase their impact using these tools. To find out what's new you can subscribe to ITO-Announce, a monthly digest of recent additions to the ItrainOnline site. www.intrainonline.org

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

01 September 2004. OECD-DAC/SDC bilateral donors meeting, Geneva, Switzerland. This event will provide the venue for increasing knowledge and awareness about concrete lessons, priorities, and perspectives in enhancing aid effectiveness and efficiency through effective knowledge sharing, access to information and people-centered communication. Contact: Gerolf Weigel, Head of the ICT4D, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, e-mail: Gerolf.Weigel@deza.admin.ch

5 – 8 September 2004, Universities: Taking a Leading Role in ICT-enabled Human Development Conference, Makerere, Uganda. Academics, practitioners and experts from both developing and technologically advanced countries are invited to submit paper summaries/proposals for this conference. Emphasis should be put on the current or potential roles of universities and the challenges they face. Well-documented case studies that pass on important lessons or best practices are particularly encouraged. More:

http://www.civicus.org/new/event_info.asp?id=150
6 - 10 September 2004, SADC-Wide Workshop: Building Awareness of, and Support for Use of Free and Open Source Software Solutions (FOSS) in Women's Organisations, Johannesburg, South Africa. Women'sNet is hosting a SADC regional workshop to build awareness of the potential use of Free and Open Source Solutions (FOSS) in the non-profit sector, and women's organisations specifically. This event is organised by Women'sNet, with inputs from APC Women's Networking Support Programme, Meraka, and Ungana-Afrika. The event is sponsored by the Open Society Initiative - Southern Africa (OSISA) and the Information Programme of Open Society Institute (Hungary). For more information email natasha@womensnet.org.za

7 - 9 September 2004, ACT 2004 Summit, Mauritius. Theme is "Developing Partnerships to Mainstream Africa's ICT Industry." More: <http://www.aitecafrica.com/act2004/index.htm>

14 - 17 September 2004, e-Government for Leadership in Change Management, United Republic of Tanzania. The Centre of Specialisation in Public Administration and Management (CESPAM) in collaboration with the Commonwealth Network of Information Technology for Development (COMNET-IT) is organising an executive seminar with the theme "e-Government for Leadership in Change Management" in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. This event will be hosted by the Government of Tanzania and is the latest in a series of informative seminars and workshops in CESPAM's Executive Programme, a CESPAM/COMNET initiative to develop materials and training for e-Government. More: <http://www.comnet-it.org/index.html>

16 – 18 September 2004, Highway Africa Conference 2004, Grahamstown, South Africa. The eighth Highway Africa Conference, "Media making the Information Society", 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 ICTs. More: https://www.cominit.com/africa/events_cal/2004/181-event.html

20 – 21 September 2004, CTO Forum "ICT: Business and Development", Colombo, Sri Lanka. Following the success of its first international ICT forum held in September 2003 in Kampala, Uganda, the CTO is organising this year's forum in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 20th – 21st September. Themed "ICT: Business and Development", the event will be adjacent to the organisation's annual Council meeting, attended by delegations of over 30 member countries and representatives of its sector members, including fixed and mobile operators, ISPs and other services providers worldwide. More: <http://www.cto.int/forum/index.php>

29 September – 1 October 2004, The East Africa Regional e-Government Forum, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The East African Community (EAC), ECA, and Advancing IT Knowledge in Africa-Tanzania (AITEC-Tanzania) are jointly organizing the workshop. The Forum intends to examine, consolidate, share views and extend the existing consensus in East Africa regarding the strategic priorities for e-Government, demonstrating where East African countries currently stands in this fast-evolving and competitive field, identifying priorities that each country need to address and formulate a regional e-Government strategy and master plan, illustrating how at present and in the years ahead citizens and businesses can benefit from online service provision. For more information send an email to Mohamed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org)

29 September – 1 October 2004, Nurturing African ICT Innovation, Tunis, Tunisia. The technological city of Communication "Elgazala" in collaboration with the French Agency for Communication (XCOM) will organize the second 'Med-IT-2004' conference entitled "Mediterranean's business meeting on information technologies". The purpose is to create a framework for ICT entrepreneurs from North Africa and Europe to share experiences and promote partnerships. Alongside this event and based on an invitation from the Tunisian Government, ECA organise a side event to enable other African ICT actors to share and learn information and knowledge on the promotion and development of techno-parks and incubators for Africa's Information Society. The workshop will examine strategies for fostering entrepreneurship and private sector development through techno-parks and incubators for innovation in ICTs. The outcomes of this event will also feed into the forthcoming Africa WSIS Regional Preparatory Conference scheduled to take place in Accra from 2 to 5 February 2005. More: Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org).

30 September – 1 October 2004, Access to health information in developing countries: the role of information and communication technologies, eHealth 2004, West End Conference Center, London, UK. Several of the world's leading health organizations are planning a major review of access to information for healthcare providers in developing countries: Association for Health Information and Libraries in Africa, BMJ, Cochrane Collaboration, Exchange, Forum for African Medical Editors, Global Forum for Health Research, Interactive Health Network, INASP, International e-Health Association, Latin American and Caribbean Centre on Health Sciences Information (BIREME), Wellcome Trust, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, and others. This meeting is contributing a component to the Review around the theme of the role of information and communication technologies. Contact Info: Harry McConnell harry@ihn.info
Neil Pakenham-Walsh health@inasp.info

11 – 15 October 2004, Fourth African Development Forum (ADF4), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. ADF4 will take place from 11 to 15 October 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the theme "Governance for Progressing Africa", will present an opportunity for all participants to gain a deeper understanding of the dimensions of governance, address key challenges, coordinate initiatives, and develop plans. One of the objectives of ADF4 is to generate realistic strategies for good governance practices, mainly addressing the capacity building challenges, at the national, sub-regional and continental levels. A special ICT Focus Group will be organised that will deliberate and make recommendations on the roles that ICTs play in promoting good governance in Africa. More: <http://www.uneca.org/adf>

19 – 21 October 2004, International Symposium on ICT education and application in developing countries, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The newly established Graduate School of Telecommunications and Information Technology (GSTIT) of the Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC) is organising the symposium in collaboration with ECA. It will take place from 19 to 21 October 2004 at the UN Conference Center (UNCC), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event will review the curriculum and organisation of the School and discuss on issues such as telecommunication and development, ICT entrepreneurship in developing countries, the role of ICTs in poverty alleviation, and local content development. Contact info: Dr. Nega Alemayehu, Director, GSTIT, (nega.alemayehu@telecom.net.et).

23 – 28 October 2004, World Youth Peace Summit, Nairobi, Kenya. It is estimated that 2000 youth leaders from around the world will gather to discuss such issues as poverty, health, HIV/AIDS, violence, development, environmental degradation, and peace-building. There will be some focus on youth and ICTs. More: <http://www.wyps.org/aboutus.php>

19 – 20, November 2004, Seventh Meeting of the UN ICT Task Force, Berlin, Germany. The next meeting of the UN ICT Task Force will feature a Global Forum on "Enabling Environment for Digital Development". A detailed agenda will be available on the UN ICT TF website. More: <http://www.unicttaskforce.org/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Winners of the AISI Media Awards 2004 to be announced on 16th September 2004. Winners of the AISI Media Awards 2004 will be announced on 16th September 2004 during the 2004 Highway Africa Conference to be held from 16 – 18 September 2004 in Grahamstown, South Africa. 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 programme is currently supported by IDRC, IICD, OSIWA and GTZ. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/mediaaward.htm>

Call for participation. Open Research, together with the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, is developing an open source information portal to assist non-profit organisations throughout Africa to make informed and strategic use of free and open source software (FOSS). To assist in this decision-making process Open Research is working on a series of case studies on organisations that do already use FOSS. The intention is to highlight the challenges, benefits and obstacles that other organisations might face in adopting FOSS. To this end Open Research is calling for participation from all non-profit, governmental and educational initiatives that would be prepared for their experiences with FOSS to be written up and made available to the broader community. More: Tectonic - Africa's source for open source news, Web: <http://www.tectonic.co.za> E-mail: alastair@tectonic.co.za

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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