



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

4th ATAC-AISI members to meet. The first meeting of the newly appointed members of the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) for the AISI will take place from 9 to 10 December 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. ATAC members advise ECA and its implementing partners on programmes, projects and areas of emphasis for the AISI, as well as playing an advocacy role, identifying best ICT practices, and assisting ECA mobilize resources for its work programme. The members are leading African ICT experts and professionals representing the Diaspora, private sector, civil society, as well as sector specialists on education, health, infrastructure, e-commerce and governance. Membership of ATAC is renewed every two years, and this is the fourth such committee since its creation in 1997. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/atac.htm>

The Fifth Forum on Telecommunication Regulation in Africa. The Bureau of Development Technology of the International Telecommunication Union (BDT-ITU), the ITU Regional office for Africa and Uganda Communication Commission organized the fifth forum on telecommunication regulation in Africa devoted to licensing in the era of convergence in Kampala, Uganda from 3 to 5 of November 2004. The conference brought together 100 participants from government representatives, regulators, operators, ITU consultants, world's leading experts in licensing and spectrum management. The Forum examined the need for aligning the political, legal, policy and regulatory and administrative framework related to ICTs at national, sub-regional and regional levels to accommodate convergence challenges. More: Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org).

NICI policy workshop in the Gambia. A national NICI workshop started in Banjul, Gambia on 29th of November 2004. The workshop was attended by participants drawn from all stakeholders. It was

organized by the Department of State for Communication, Information & Technology (DOSCIT) with technical and financial assistance from ECA through the European Commission. Opening the workshop, H.E. Manlifi Jarju, the Secretary of State for Local Government and Lands who was representing the Secretary of State for Information, Communication and Technology, said that the Government of the Gambia is committed to improve access to ICTs and promoting their use for stimulating economic growth, increasing efficiency and reducing poverty. He further noted that DOSCIT is forging ahead in the ICT sub-sector. In addition to the current policy formulation process, ECA is supporting the e-government project that is now being coordinated by DOSCIT. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/gambianiciws.htm>

Ethiopian MPs graduate. Forty Ethiopian Members of Parliament graduated from a 3-month ECA and Government of Japan-sponsored intensive training on ICTs with specific reference to e-strategies for development. They are the second batch of graduates following the successful completion of the programme for over 100 MPs in August 2003. The training contributes to capacity building of African stakeholders as one of the key objectives of the outreach programme of the African Information Society Initiative (AISII). Held at ECA's Information Technology Center for Africa (ITCA), the training comprised of a series of lectures and workshops on ICT policy and hands-on approaches to using ICTs. At the graduation ceremony, the Deputy Speaker of Ethiopia's National House of Peoples' Representatives said, "Ethiopian MPs should not be left behind in the digital revolution". He added, "it's good that many MPs are acquiring ICT skills as this will motivate initiatives such as e-consultations in the near future". More: <http://www.uneca.org/itca>

e-Government training for ECA staff. A 5-day workshop on e-Government was conducted from 25 to 30 November 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The training programme focused on new trends in e-Gov applications and strategies in promoting good governance in Africa. The training was delivered by the Institute for Public-Private Partnership (IP3), a leading training and education firm based in Washington, DC in the fields of e-Gov, ICT, and public-private partnerships. For

further information, contact Atsuko Okuda (aokuda@uneca.org)

The East Africa Regional e-Government Strategy Workshop. The East Africa Community (EAC), the Advancing IT Knowledge in Africa-Tanzania (AITEC-Tanzania) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), with support from the Governments of Finland and Canada, jointly organized a sub-regional workshop on e-government strategy held at the International Conference Center in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 17 to 19 November 2004. The workshop brought together about sixty participants from Governments, civil society, private sector and e-government planning executives from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Canada. It addressed challenges and opportunities of e-Government at regional and international levels. The event concluded with the following:

- EAC member States agreed to develop a harmonized and co-coordinated regional e-government strategy for East Africa by the end of 2005.
- EAC member States and other participants recognized the need to promote harmonization and coordination of ICT policy and strategy, to create a framework for sharing, promoting collaboration on cross-border political and data flow issues to avoid duplication, error, and aggregate resources for the benefit of the sub-region.
- Establishment of an e-government Working Group (EAWG) including representatives from the three East African member States, ECA and EAC to serve as a peer review mechanism to develop an e-government observatory and applications to support delivery of services in the three countries.

For more information, contact Aida Opoku-Mensah (aopoku-mensah@uneca.org)

Second Regional Preparatory Conference to the WSIS for the Arab region. The Second Regional Preparatory Conference for WSIS, organized by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Damascus, Syria from 22 to 23 November 2004. The theme of the conference was "Partnership for building the Arab Information Society", and was preceded by a Partners' Forum on proposed programs and projects under the Arab Regional Plan of Action. ECA made a presentation on preparation for second regional preparatory conference scheduled to take place in Accra, Ghana from 28 January to 4 February 2005. ECA

called for a harmonized Arab-African position for the Summit in Tunis, particularly on pending issues such as financing mechanisms and Internet Governance. The conference resulted in a Regional Plan of Action for building the Information Society, which feeds into the WSIS process. For further info please contact Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org).

CTO study reveals opportunities for VOIP in Africa. A major report on Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and its potential for Africa was released by the CTO on 15th November, following a 9-month study on the adoption of the technology in the continent. The first copies of the report were made available to some 100 representatives of the development community and the private sector during a formal presentation on the day of the release in London. "VoIP stands out in many ways, as a means to help provide access to telephony to those who are yet to experience it, and also significantly reduces the usage cost for those who make limited use of their phone" said Nick Cabrera, Director of Business Development at the CTO. More: <http://www.cto.int>

Digital Solidarity Fund inaugurated. The Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) was officially inaugurated in Geneva on 17 November 2004 in the presence of Heads of State and representatives of Civil Society and the private sector. The DSF was initiated by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal at the Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on the Information Society, held in Lyon, France, in December 2003. At the Geneva phase of WSIS, the Cities of Geneva and Lyon, as well as the Province of Turin joined the initiative. The Fund is an independent initiative aiming to reduce the global digital divide and to promote access of all citizens to the knowledge society. More: <http://www.unicttaskforce.org/news/digitalsolidarity.html>

7th UN ICT Task Force meeting and Global Forum. The UN ICT Task Force organized a Global Forum on Promoting Enabling Environment for Digital Development in Berlin from 19 to 20 November 2004. The Forum was composed of three breakout sessions and a plenary. The breakout sessions dealt with Policy and Regulatory Issues, New Models for Financing ICT and Promoting Private Sector investment and Entrepreneurship. The Forum was well attended by stakeholders from all the continents. It was preceded on 18 November by the Task Force's Working Group on National and Regional e-Strategies, and the Meeting of the Working Party on ICT Indicators on MDG Mapping. In addition, the Seventh meeting of the Task Force was held

on 20 November as a closed session. The major decisions of the Task Force were the appointment of a new Bureau chaired by Mr. Ocampo, UN Under Secretary-General and the establishment from 2006 of the Global Alliance on ICT4D as the successor of the UN ICT Task Force. Members of the Bureau are expected to provide guidelines for the creation of the new body. The next meeting of the Task Force will be held on 14 and 15 April 2005 in Ireland. More: <http://www.unicttaskforce.org>

Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePol-NET) Partners Meeting. The ePol-NET partners' meeting was convened on 19 November 2004 in Berlin, Germany. The objectives of the meeting were to provide update on ePol-NET activities and web resources, to exchange information on partners' activities and to discuss coordination issues and involvement in future events. The meeting was attended by various partners including, France, Industry Canada, Ireland, UK, APC, CTO and ECA. The following e-Pol-NET achievements were underlined: development of a sectoral health strategy for Uganda, organizing an e-government regional workshop for the East African Community (EAC), undertaking advisory missions on ICT Policy development for Lesotho and Swaziland, organizing an ICT training course for Tanzanian Parliamentarians and a Network on ICT4D for African Parliamentarians, establishment of an ePol-NET and ePol-NET Africa on-line resources and participation in several exhibitions including Telecom Africa 2004 in April in Cairo and ADF IV in October in Addis Ababa. After discussing support provided by ePol-NET and the estimated needs of the African continent, the meeting recommended ways and means of making available to partners the overwhelming requests for ePol-NET support from African countries and organizations. More: Makane Faye (mfaye@uneca.org)

Working Group on Internet Governance. The first meeting of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) was held at the United Nations in Geneva on 23 and 25 November 2004. Consultations open to Governments, civil society organizations and private sector entities were held on 24 November. The members of WGIG were nominated by the United Nations Secretary-General. The African members include Faryel Beji, (President and CEO, Tunisian Internet Agency), Dev Erriah (Chairman, ICT Authority of Mauritius), Baher Esmat (Telecom Planning Manager, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of Egypt), Olivier Nana Nzépa (Coordinator, Africa Civil Society, Cameroun), Joseph Sarr (President, NTIC Commission, Senegal), Lyndall Shope-Mafole

(Chairperson, Presidential National Commission on Information Society and Development, South Africa), and Waudo Siganga (Chairman, Computer Society of Kenya. More: <http://www.wgig.org>

I-Network and IICD pronounce winners of the Open Knowledge Network - Small Grants Fund in Uganda. In Uganda the Open Knowledge Network aims to stimulate the appreciation, production, dissemination and use of content. In order to identify promising initiatives in Uganda, I-network with the support of IICD, started a call for proposals. More than 120 proposals were submitted and finally 5 projects were selected to be supported under the OKN-SGF. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2004-11-08.0516877728>

The Yam Pukri youth forum on the Internet is broadening the horizons of young people throughout Burkina Faso. Yam Pukri, an organization dedicated to familiarizing young people in Burkina Faso with computers and the Internet, together with the Swiss NGO Terre des Hommes, recently launched a youth forum on the Internet. The purpose of the forum is to enable young people living in different countries and contexts to communicate, to share their experiences, and to enhance their knowledge of others and the world at large. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2004-11-22.4175124199>

OTHER NEWS

New Fund for African Community Radio. African community radio may get a boost from the formation of an international task force to investigate setting up an international fund to underwrite resources for the sector, a meeting in Marrakesh, Morocco decided on 21 November 2004. The initiative parallels global initiatives to set up a "Digital Solidarity Fund" that flowed out of last year's WSIS, where community radio voices struggled for recognition and have now decided to go it alone to raise donor resources to support their activities, particularly for buying broadcast equipment. The initiative to create a global fund will "need to find ways to articulate with the Digital Solidarity Fund which is focused on telecoms infrastructure", said Steve Buckley, president of world community radio network, AMARC that arranged the Morocco meeting. More: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200411230020.html>

Ghana establish Fund for Communications Development (GNA - GhanaWeb) – In early November Ghana initiated its programme to

extend communications facilities to the rural communities following the launch of the Ghana Investment Fund for Communication Development (GIFTEL). The programme aims at accelerating the development of the rural communities where such facilities were generally limited. More: http://africa.rights.apc.org/index.shtml?apc=ne_1&x=28007

East Africa to focus on appropriate IT to extend banking services to the unbanked. The fourth annual Finance-IT East Africa conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya over 23 - 24 November had as its theme "appropriate and sustainable IT to extend banking services to the unbanked". Over twenty experts spoke on strategies and technologies to empower banks, microfinance institutions and other financial organizations to make banking services more accessible to the majority of African citizens who still have no access to banking services. More: <http://www.balancingact.org>

Global VSAT Forum announces London Conference to focus on New Communication Technologies for Africa. The Global VSAT Forum has created an event called NEWCOM Africa as a platform to educate African telecommunication operators, users, regulators and policy-makers on the exciting new technologies available to accelerate telecommunications development across the continent. With the theme, New Communication Technologies & Strategies to bridge Africa's Digital Divide: SATELLITE - WI-FI - VOIP - GSM - BROADBAND, the event will aim to identify effective regulation, technology, investment & business partnerships for rapid roll-out of telecom services. The event will include a specialized exhibition and will be held at Chelsea Village, London, over 15-17 March 2005. More: <http://www.gvf.org/>

ICT Africa set for Nairobi in May as the continent's largest computing & telecommunications event. Global Fairs of Germany has announced 17 - 20 May as the dates for ICT Africa – a new exhibition and conference to serve the ICT industry from across Africa, with strong international support. AITEC has been appointed as the conference partner for the event. More: <http://www.aitecafrica.com>

Kenya: Government lack of support hampers growth of ICT industry. A visiting official of the World Information Technologies Association (WISTA) has said lack of government support is hampering the growth of the ICT sector in the country. He was speaking at a press conference in Nairobi, Kenya when he launched the Digital

Planet-2004, a biannual reference publication outlining the state of the global ICT industry. More: http://africa.rights.apc.org/index.shtml?apc=ne_1&x=27769

ICT Policy workshop identify critical issue to address universal access. At a workshop on ICT policy held in Uganda, key stakeholders identified critical ICT policy issues that require advocacy in relation to universal access. Some of the issues addressed in Uganda are the kinds of challenges the participants are likely to face in the field at home. More: http://africa.rights.apc.org/index.shtml?apc=ne_1&x=27919

RESOURCES

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

Report on Media Coverage on ICT Policy in DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and Senegal. This research report reflects studies conducted to assess and evaluate the nature of ICT policy coverage in policy-influential media in Kenya, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Senegal. Issues raised in this research report include questions of language and appropriate content, knowledge valuations, and some of the assumptions within the global ICT discourse that impact on media understandings of and interactions with ICTs. More: <http://www.catia.ws/>

How to set up a successful computer refurbishment centre in Africa: A Planning and Management Guide". This is the result of a study undertaken by bridges.org in early 2004, which examined the methods and strategies of the computer refurbishment industry, focusing on Africa. This guide describes the steps involved in opening a computer refurbishment centre in Africa and managing it into productivity. More: <http://www.bridges.org>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1 – 5 December 2004, ICANN Meeting, Cape Town, South Africa. The third round of ICANN

meetings in 2004 will be held 1 - 5 December 2004 in Cape Town, South Africa. The meetings are free to attend, and open to any interested person. ICANN encourages broad participation in its bottom-up consensus-development process. You can take part in these meetings by attending in person, by taking part in the webcast and remote participation opportunities, and/or by joining one of the various ICANN-related mailing lists. More: <http://www.icanncapetown.co.za/>

6 – 7 December 2004, iConnect Africa kick-off workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The International Institute for Development (IICD) and the Economic Commission for Africa are jointly organising a three days planning workshop to discuss and develop strategic plan for the implementation of the iConnect Africa project. Participants are drawn from the six IICD I-Network countries including Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. For Further info, please contact Nathan Ducastel (nducastel@iicd.org)

14 – 15 December 2004, The African VoIP Forum: “The development and business imperatives of IP telephony”, Norfolk Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya. The first African Forum on Internet telephony is a unique opportunity for telecommunication operators, ISPs and corporate users to learn more about this exciting new development in communications - “Voice over Internet Protocol” or VoIP. By transmitting phone calls over the worldwide Internet infrastructure, costs are dramatically reduced. The Communications Commission of Kenya has recently opened up the market by legalizing VoIP. More: <http://www.aitecafrica.com/events/2004/VOIP-Forum/index.htm>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AITEC Africa and Multimedia Publications of South Africa to launch new ICT magazine for Africa. AITEC Africa and Multimedia Publications are planning to launch a new pan-African magazine focused on computing, telecommunications and the Internet across English-speaking Africa. The first edition of the new magazine, called Computing and Communications Africa (CC Africa) is planned for release in early 2005. More: <http://www.aitecafrica.com/>

AITEC to publish African ICT Directories. AITEC is publishing a series of ICT Directories, covering East, West, Central and Southern Africa.

The first, covering East Africa, will be published in January 2005: More: <http://www.aitecafrica.com/>

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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