



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 ...

African stakeholders prepare for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society. The Second Africa Regional Preparatory Conference on WSIS (Accra 2005), whose theme is "Access – Africa's key to an inclusive Information Society" will take place from 28 January to 4 February 2005 in Accra, Ghana. Approximately 1000 participants from private sector, civil society, media, government and international institutions involved in ICT for development will in their various deliberations at plenary and parallel sessions aim to contribute on an Action Plan on Africa and the Knowledge Economy (APAKE). In addition, recommendations on e-strategies and e-applications, access and content, human resource development and global partnerships for advancing Africa's digital inclusion will be made, including concrete proposals for facilitating investments on ICTs.

The outputs from Accra will constitute Africa's contributions to various WSIS meetings scheduled in Geneva in February 2005, such as the thematic meeting on indicators, the working group meeting on Internet governance and Prepcom 2. The results of the Accra meeting will also form the basis for Africa's negotiations towards WSIS Tunis scheduled for autumn of 2005.

Online discussions are in full swing to provide inputs from all stakeholders on the various issues to be addressed by the Conference. More:
<http://www.uneca.org/aisi/accra2005>

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

The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the United Nations and ECA are organizing a sub-regional workshop, "Strengthening the Capacity of National Machineries through the Effective Use of ICT", from 10 to 14 January 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for English-speaking Western and Eastern African countries. The five-day workshop

is the third in a series which aims to build institutional capacity of national machineries to support advocacy for gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the development framework of member States through ICTs. During the workshop, technical training will be conducted on using mailing lists and websites to strengthen networking among themselves. The participants will also strategize on how to strengthen participation in ICT policy formulation and implementation processes. The first workshop was organized in Namibia in April 2004 for national machineries in Southern African countries, while the second targeted at French-speaking Western African member States in May 2004 in Senegal. More: Atsuko Okuda (aokuda@uneca.org)

Seminar on ICT and developing Trade exchanges between Maghreb countries.

ECA is organizing this event from 1-3 March 2005 in Tangiers, Morocco, in cooperation with UMA (Union du maghreb Arabe) and the UNDP Regional Programme on ICT for Development in Arab Region. The seminar will bring together participants from government, private sector, banks, civil society and academia to discuss the status of ICT for development in the Sub-region, and ways to develop e-commerce through commonly agreed actions and projects. More: Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org)

UN focuses attention on Internet governance.

The UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced in November that the UN would be establishing a Working Group on Internet Governance. It has been created in response to a request for the organization to open dialogue on Internet Governance among all stakeholders, which would then make recommendations to the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in autumn 2005. The Working Group will attempt to produce a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of governments, international organizations and other forums, as well as the businesses and civil society from both developing and developed countries. Membership of the Working Group is very diverse and has been charged with producing a report to the Secretary-General by July 2005. More: <http://www.wgig.org>

Intel and UNESCO to develop teaching curriculum. Intel Corporation and UNESCO have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines an agreement to collaborate on a model curriculum and syllabus to improve the use of ICT in classrooms worldwide. The multi-stakeholder initiative will develop a syllabus, which sets the standards of ICT knowledge and skills and set standards for improving the quality of ICT teacher training programmes. The syllabus could then be used to design training content that would be delivered to teachers in a multitude of ways, by different providers. Both organizations will also collaborate on the development of a mechanism by which course providers, educational policy-makers and teachers can refer to the syllabus to ascertain that course content and training programmes meet the required standard. More: <http://www.unesco.org>

Spreading the impact of community radio stations across Zambia. "The emergence of ICT addresses challenges that have continued to hinder development in rural communities." This article is written by Machova Musanshi, member of the Zambian 'Media and ICT Network for Development' (MIND) and commissioned by IICD. MIND is the first ICT network in Africa, of journalists and other media practitioners, designed to share information, ideas and create articles on ICTs as well as other activities. The network also strives to work in partnership with other ICT stakeholders as much as possible, locally and internationally. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2004-12-14.1069141762>

Ghana's youth begin journey toward WSIS Accra 2005. As part of activities lined toward World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) African Regional Conference in Accra from 2 – 4 February 2005 tagged "WSIS Accra 2005", an ICT Campaign for young people was launched in Kumasi on Wednesday, December 15 2004. The event is the first in a series of a ten-month Campaign dubbed National Youth Information Society Campaign (NYISC). The Campaign, whose theme is "Developing the Youth to Meet the Challenges of the Information Society", aims at bringing together young people from every corner of the country to get informed and empowered through deliberating on issues on Ghana's road to building a sustainable Information Society. The Campaign will sensitize the youth on the essence of ICTs and offer practical training on using ICTs for their personal development. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/accra2005/stakeholders.htm>

Low-Cost Broadband and Internet Access Essential to Information Society - Global Symposium for Regulators Releases Best Practice 'Connectivity' Guidelines. Telecommunication regulators participating in the 5th annual ITU Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) have identified the best practices needed to facilitate access so that the social and economic benefits of the information society can benefit all the world's citizens. They expressed a shared goal to create national regulatory frameworks that are flexible and that enable competition between multiple private sector service providers who may want to utilize a variety of technology platforms and delivery options. The ICT sector is undergoing a radical transformation from one based on "plain old telephone service" (POTS) to one that provides voice, data and multimedia applications. At the same time, countries around the world are in the process of updating their licensing and regulatory frameworks to address this convergence and to better promote affordable Internet and broadband access. More: http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2004/26.html

OTHER NEWS

High impact through high tech in Mali. Population Services International - Mali and the country's premier cell phone company, Ikatel S.A., have launched a one-year health communication campaign, "La santé au bout du fil" (Health On Line) that will combat HIV/AIDS, an emerging threat, and malaria, the number one cause of mortality. The campaign, one of the first NGO-private sector partnerships in the country, makes use of cellular technology to improve health in this vast country of 13.4 million that extends from the savanna in the south to the Sahara Desert in the north. More: <http://www.psi.org/news/1104e.html>

ICT and trade agreements. Free trade agreements have increasingly broadened their scope of regulation concerning telecommunications, under the pretext that these are services just like any other. This has hindered access to communication and information as a fundamental human right as the private sector gains power through liberalization. Decisions that affect the global media system are now being taken behind closed doors, without consulting the civil society but with the support of giant media moguls that encourage corporate property of information, showing total disregard for cultural diversity issues. More: <http://www.crisinfo.org/content/view/full/590/>

ICT far from Gender Neutral. Women's organizations are dealing with so many priority issues, it's hard to see ICT as anything more than a tool to facilitate their work. For this reason 16 members of the APC Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP) came together in early November in Cape Town, South Africa, to map out key gender and ICT issues for the APC WNSP's upcoming Gender and ICT Policy website. More: <http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=28764>

Swahili Free and Open Source Software Launched. December 4 saw the launch of The Open Swahili Localization Project, also known as Kilinux and the first ever release of free office suite software in Swahili, called "Jambo OpenOffice." Jambo OpenOffice is the Swahili version of OpenOffice.org, a leading international effort to provide a free and open source office suite. More: <http://www.kilinux.org/>

Government of Ghana launches tourism web site. The Government of Ghana is developing a website to market the country as a tourist destination. With assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Ghana tourism website will be launched within the next few months at www.ghanatourism.gh More: <http://www.balancingact-africa.com>

Information on land data soon on computer in Kenya. The Kenyan Lands Minister, Amos Kimunya said in a seminar at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology that all information on land will be available on computer. More: http://i4donline.net/news1.asp?fol_name=e-governance&file_name=egov188

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10 – 14 January 2005; Strengthening the Capacity of National Machineries through the Effective Use of ICT. The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the United Nations and ECA are organizing the workshop, "Strengthening the Capacity of National Machineries through the Effective Use of ICT", from 10 to 14 January 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. More: Atsuko Okuda (aokuda@uneca.org).

28 January – 04 February 2005; WSIS Second Africa Regional Preparatory Conference (Accra2005), Accra, Ghana. Accra2005, whose theme is "Access – Africa's key to an inclusive Information Society" will prepare for Africa's

participation in the second phase of the WSIS to ensure a strategic and interdependent digital partnership that will promote economic growth and human development of the continent. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/accra2005>

17 – 25 February 2005; Second meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom-2 of the Tunis phase), Geneva, Switzerland. PrepCom-2 will be held at the Palais des Nations, "Salle de l'Assemblée", 3rd floor, building A, Place des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10. In order to gain access to Palais des Nations all participants must pick up their badges at the registration desk located at the ITU Montbrillant building. More: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/preparatory2/pc2/index.html>

RESOURCES

Gender and ICTs. "New technologies in the information and communications arena, especially the Internet, have been seen as ushering in a new age. There is a mainstream view that such technologies have only technical rather than social implications. The dramatic positive changes brought in by these information and communication technologies (ICTs), however, have not touched all of humanity. Existing power relations in society determine the enjoyment of benefits from ICTs; hence these technologies are not gender neutral. The important questions are: who benefits from ICTs? Who is dictating the course of ICTs? Is it possible to harness ICTs to serve larger goals of equality and justice? Central to these is the issue of gender and women's equal right to access, use and shape ICTs." From the introduction of an overview report on Gender and ICTs by Bridges.org. More: <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/cep-icts-or.pdf>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcing the APC Hafkin Prize for 2004/5: Recognizing community connectivity projects for economic development in Africa. The theme for this year's Hafkin Prize recognises community initiatives that use the Internet and other digital communication networks to access markets, skills and opportunities to derive real economic benefits. The Prize: USD\$7,500.00 will be shared amongst up to three winning initiatives. The deadline for nominations is February 14, 2005. More: <http://www.apc.org/english/hafkin> or write to hafkin-prize@apc.org.

Round 2 of GenARDIS. The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA), the International Development Research

Centre (IDRC), the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) and the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Hivos) are inviting applications for the second round of the GenARDIS programme. GenARDIS is a small grants fund to address gender issues in information and communication technologies for agricultural and rural development in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP countries). This is a competitive call for applications for 10 non-renewable grants of up to 5,000 Euros. The deadline for receipt of applications is 25 February 2005. An expert panel will judge the submissions. Announcement of the successful applicants is expected to be made on 11 April 2005. Successful applicants will be expected to write a comprehensive report on their project results, experiences and use of the funds and contribute to a workshop to be held in late 2005. All submissions must be received before the deadline (25 February 2005). Submissions via e-mail are preferred. E-mail applications should be sent to GenARDIS. More:

<http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2004-12-15.6702063511>

Global Competition Launched for the Second Development Gateway Award - \$100,000 award to recognize Information Technology's role in development. The Development Gateway Foundation is seeking nominations for the second Development Gateway Award. The \$100,000 award will recognize outstanding achievement in using information and communication technologies (ICT) to improve people's lives in developing countries. More: www.developmentgateway.org/award

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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