



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 ...

CODI IV on information as economic resource in Africa. The fourth meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI IV) will take place from 23 to 28 April 2005, including pre-meeting workshops, seminars and tutorials. Under the theme of "Information as an Economic Resource", the meeting will discuss and recommend strategies to ECA and member States for harnessing information for economic growth. Delegates are drawn from national statistics offices, national libraries, archives and documentation centres, information and communications technology agencies, national mapping agencies and other geoinformation management organizations. Pre-meeting workshops include:

- e-Economy (ECA/e-PolNet/UNCTAD, 23 April)
- Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting: Creating and Managing Digital Content (24 April)
- Open Source (ECA/OIF/FOSFA, 24 April)
- Ad hoc Experts' Group Meeting on Situs Addressing in Africa (23-24 April)

The draft programme and additional information can be found at the CODI web page: www.uneca.org/codi

Africa @ WSIS Prepcom2. The second meeting of the preparatory committee (PrepCom-2 of the Tunis phase) took place in Geneva, Switzerland from 17 to 25 February 2005. Some issues are yet to be resolved, such as Internet Governance for which the report of the Working Group will be released in July. Also issues related to implementation and follow up mechanisms are still pending and will be tackled during Prepcom3. However the Digital Solidarity Fund has been officially accepted. Africa was represented by 13 Ministers, several Permanent Secretaries and all the Ambassadors accredited in Geneva. In addition each country had an average of 4

delegates during Prepcom2. Prepcom3 will be held from 19 to 30 September 2005. The African position was presented through the Minister of Communication of Ghana, who is President of the WSIS African group. More: Makane Faye (mfaye@uneca.org).

UMA e-Commerce workshop. A workshop on the use of ICT as a tool to boost trade exchanges within the Union du Maghreb Arabe (UMA) was held from 1 to 3 March 2005 in Tangiers, Morocco. Participants were ICT and commerce experts, as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society from UMA member States (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia) and International organizations. Jointly organized by UMA, ECA and ICTDAR (UNDP), the seminar addressed key issues: ICT and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the use of on-line applications for trading of goods and services in the UMA region, e-commerce and opportunities of ICT usages. The seminar adopted recommendations to devise strategies on how to mainstream ICT in economic and development policies, and to develop e-commerce applications in the sub-region. For more information, contact Mohammed Timoulali, Regional Advisor, ECA, mtimoulali@uneca.org

WSIS Thematic Meeting on ICT Statistics. The International Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development organized a WSIS Thematic Meeting on "Measuring the information Society" in Geneva, 7-9 February 2005. The meeting brought together representatives from countries involved in the statistical measurement of the Information Society. The meeting achieved the following:

- Agreement on a preliminary common list of ICT core indicators (basic access and usage by households and individuals, businesses) to be collected by all countries and harmonized at the international level, which will constitute the basis for a database on ICT statistics.
- Identification of the needs of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in developing countries with regard to technical assistance in the compilation of ICT indicators.
- Mechanisms discussed on the quantification of the relevance and

contribution of ICT indicators towards improving development and achieving the MDGs, and ongoing work concerning the creation and maintenance of an international database on ICT indicators.

ECA presented its SCAN-ICT experience in six countries. More: Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org)

Revamped iConnect. The iConnect website has been revamped based on a new strategy. This will be a series of locally written, qualitative articles on the impact and use of ICTs for development. The articles will have a strong focus on facts on the ground with a developing world's perspective, content, and written by local people. Dissemination will take place via three regional organisations (in Africa, Asia and Latin America) with a development and knowledge-sharing objective. ECA is the African regional arm of this exercise and will soon re-launch iConnect Africa in line with the new strategy. iConnect is an initiative of the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) and serves as a source of information on the application of knowledge and ICTs in sustainable development. More: <http://www.iconnect-online.org/>

NICI Update: Swaziland. As a follow-up to a request from the Government of Swaziland for a NICI, ECA undertook its second advisory mission to the country from 14 to 18 March 2005. The main objective was to validate the progress made in the process of developing a national e-strategy. A lot of progress has been made with regard to policy formulation with the drafting of a NICI outline document. Data collection on socio-economic factors and identified pillars were also in progress. Public awareness briefings, like awareness campaigns for policy makers are currently underway. More: Sizo Mhlanga (smhlanga@uneca.org)

EAC regional e-government framework in progress. ECA is supporting the East African Community (EAC) to develop a regional e-government framework for its partner States (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) with support from Industry Canada (through ePol-NET) and Government of Finland. ECA supported EAC to organise the East African regional e-government strategy workshop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 17 to 19 November 2004 to draw up an action plan. Based on the consensus reached at the workshop, EAC convened the first meeting of the regional e-government Interim Working Group (IWG) in Arusha, Tanzania from 24 to 25 February, 2005 to finalise the detailed work plan

including the development of the regional e-government framework. The partner States are expected to organize focus groups meetings with stakeholders from Government ministries and agencies, private sector, civil society and academia to provide country specific input to the proposed framework. Further, a regional e-government observatory will be established for the implementation of various e-government strategies, initiatives and projects in East Africa. More: Makane Faye (mfaye@uneca.org)

GDN's Knowledge Sharing for Development: Africa Regional Program. As part of its program of supporting the generation and communication of research from developing countries, the Global Development Network (GDN) organized a workshop in Cairo, Egypt from 27 to 28 February 2005 to enhance the knowledge sharing and research dissemination capacity of research institutes and networks in Africa. The workshop brought together people from across the continent who are responsible for communicating the wealth of research knowledge currently being produced in Africa - these included librarians, administrators, information officers, knowledge managers and researchers. More: <http://www.bellanet.org>

Consultative workshop held on Ethiopia's new broadband initiative. A consultative workshop on Ethiopia's ICT development was held on 29 March 29, 2005 with the objective of introducing the general public to ETC's expansion of the ICT infrastructure to provide multiplicity of services, such as data, voice and video. Plans for the new upcoming broadband initiative are already underway to revolutionize Ethiopia's entry into the Information Society. More: http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/032905disd_dna.htm

OTHER NEWS

Commission for Africa report launched. On March 11, 2005 the Commission for Africa released its final report entitled "Our Common Interest", urging increased aid to the continent, but stressing the need for African governments to do their bit too. The report provides 80 clear recommendations for Africa's future. These will be taken forward to the G8 Summit in July 2005. The report, which was launched simultaneously in London and Addis Ababa, is an attempt to come out with sustainable and far-reaching solutions to tackle Africa's grinding poverty and governance issues, and put the continent back on the road to recovery. Launched in February 2004 by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the Commission aimed to examine Africa and how the international

community could contribute to its development. In Chapter 7, under Infrastructure (section 7.3.2), the report states, "Africa needs an additional US\$20 billion a year investment in infrastructure. This should support African regional, national, urban and rural infrastructure priorities – ranging from rural roads and slum upgrading to ICT and the infrastructure needed to support greater integration of Africa's regions and to enable Africa to break into world markets." More: <http://www.uneca.org/commreport.pdf>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

6 – 8 April 2005, "THE AFRICAN BROADBAND REVOLUTION 2005" Overcoming Technical and Financial Barriers to Broadband Deployment in Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa. The event is organized by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization (CTO), and aims to present opportunities for wholesale and retail broadband in Africa, by bringing together key stakeholders with a view to stimulating the uptake of true broadband in Africa. More: <http://www.cto.int/abr05/index.php?page=home>

12 – 14 April 2005, EU-Africa ICT Sector Partner Promotion Meeting, Dakar, Senegal. West Africa 2005 will bring together the main stakeholders of the West African ICT sector from the private and public sector, including individual ICT professionals, representatives of small, medium and large enterprises, regulatory bodies, donor and development agencies, West African Ministers of information and communication, members of the scientific community, educational institutions, telecom operators and various ICT associations. A total of 500 visitors are expected to attend the meeting, making it the largest of its kind. More: <http://www.optic.sn/RencontreAng/default.html>

13 – 14 April 2005, Eighth Meeting of the UN ICT Task Force "Global Forum on Harnessing the Potential of ICTs for Education", Dublin, Ireland. The Global Forum will explore how ICTs can provide a practical and enabling solution for improving the quality and quantity of education, by bringing together participants from the fields of education, ICTs and development. The Forum will be co-hosted by the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI). Launched by Mrs. Nane Annan at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in December 2003, GeSCI works at local, national and international levels, convening and supporting groups as they deliver effective ICT-in-education

strategies. More: <http://www.unicttaskforce.org/eighthmeeting/>

17 – 22 April 2005, AfNOG 2005 Workshop on Network Technology, Maputo, Mozambique. In conjunction with the Sixth meeting of African Network Operators Group (AfNOG), a Network Technology workshop is planned prior to the meeting. The workshop will offer advanced training to operators of existing African Internet Service Providers (ISPs) who are participants in the process of developing and enhancing a national Internet with regional and international connectivity. More: www.afnog.org and www.afrinic.net

26 - 27 April 2005, AfriNIC Second public policy meeting, Maputo, Mozambique. Prior to the meeting itself, AfriNIC is organizing one day LIR training on the 23rd of April (French and English session). For registration and more info: www.afrinic.net/meetings/afrinic-2/index.htm Contact e-mail: meeting@afrinic.net Phone: +230 466 66 16.

4 – 5 May 2005, International Forum on Advancing ICT Solutions for Development through Cross-Sector Partnerships With a Special Focus on the Middle East and North Africa, Cairo, Egypt. The Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) will be organising an International Forum on cross-sector partnerships for the advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) solutions for development. This event is co-organised by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (Egypt-MCIT) and the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (AmCham), and co-sponsored by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation (Sida). The Forum will build on existing experiences, and lead the way to effective new partnership-based initiatives. A special focus will be on experiences from the Middle East and North Africa. About 200 professionals and leaders from business, civil society, government and research institutions are expected to attend the Forum. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org>

7 – 10 May 2005, The Pan Arab Conference on WSIS- Phase II; An Arab Dialogue, Cairo, Egypt. The event starts on 7th May with pre-conference activities such as INET regional meeting, IPv6 Forum, and Arabic Domain Names meeting (closed). The main event is from 8 to 10 May 2005, and it will focus on Internet Governance, funding mechanisms, ICT indicators, e-content, Arab Working Group meeting (closed),

and African Ministerial meeting (closed). The conference will be held in cooperation with the League of Arab States, in coordination with the International Telecommunications Union and WSIS Secretariat. The event is organized and hosted by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology-Egypt. More details regarding the agenda, speakers, venue, accommodation and other logistics is available on the event website: <http://www.wsis-egypt.gov.eg>

11 – 12 May 2005, The 3rd International Workshop on Open Access, Maputo, Mozambique. The workshop is a collaboration between the UN ICT Task Force, The KTH IT-University of Stockholm, the Eduardo Mondlane University, Sida and IDRC and is one of the deliverables of the United Nations ICT Task Force Working Group on Low Cost Access and Connectivity. The main theme of the workshop will be on Open Access solutions, a Pan African Fibre Backbone, financing models and regulatory environment for Open Access technologies. The scope is how to provide open access which includes identifying the users, the relevant technologies, and the regulatory framework and how to support entrepreneurship that is necessary to build sustainable networks. The workshop will address open access technologies in the context of developing regions, in particular sub-Saharan Africa. More: <http://www.openaccess.uem.mz/>

RESOURCES

ICT4D – Connecting people for a better world - A new book from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP). This book aims to make the outstanding wealth of knowledge compiled during the ICT4D Platform of WSIS-I available to a wider audience. It is also intended to stimulate interest and awareness beyond the core ICT circles, and especially to reach those development organisations, which are still skeptical about ICT4D because of its perceived technological focus. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org/ict4d/>

African Voices on Development and Social Justice: Editorials from Pambazuka News 2004. Edited by Firoze Manji & Patrick Burnett. "This is a wide ranging informative compilation of essays which offer the very best advocacy for Africa - by Africans." – Glenys Kinnock MEP. The collection constitutes a valuable record of the views of both African civil society activists and academics on key developments and events in the region during 2004, touching on issues of conflict, development, debt cancellation, women's

rights and the role of the international financial institutions in Africa. More: www.pambazuka.org

e-Readiness Assessment: Is duplication building a knowledge base or wasting resources? CIPESA International ICT Policy Commentary Series, Volume 1, Commentary 2. 14 March 2005. This commentary is part of the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA), a programme by bridges.org. This is one of a series intended to spark thinking and dialogue on important issues in the field. These short informative pieces give an overview of an international ICT policy issue relevant to African stakeholders, and stir discussion by presenting strong views and provocative questions. Readers are encouraged to respond to the points raised, via email or in the "comments" box under each commentary on the CIPESA website. More: www.cipesa.org/AfricansCareAboutICTPolicy

Network Readiness Index 2004-2005 Report. (World Economic Forum Global Technology Report). A total of 104 countries were ranked, including 23 African countries. 15 of the 23 African improved their rankings and 8 regressed in ranking. Most improved was Morocco (up by 10 points); close behind were Tunisia, Kenya and Ghana, each up by 9 points. Most regressed was Tanzania (12 points down), followed by Nigeria (7 points down). More: http://africa.rights.apc.org/index.shtml?apc=21860ne_1&x=31261

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AfrISPA IXP Survey. AfrISPA has an African Internet Exchange Task Force (AFIX-TF) to promote the development of new IXPs. The project is funded by DFID's CATIA programme. AfrISPA intends to have 8-12 new IXPs up and running in Africa by May 2006. The first workshop is planned to take place in April 2005 and 6-10 workshops will be organized over the next 14 months. AfrISPA will provide and fund trainers and equipment, so long as local contacts can ensure a minimum number of participants and provide a venue. A survey is underway to help AfrISPA plan where and when to host this series of workshops. More: <http://www.afrispa.org>

GKP publication and stocktaking on ICT4D initiatives for the WSIS and the MDGs. The Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) intends to make a contribution to both the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS - Tunis Phase) and the Millennium+5 Summit in 2005, which will review the world's progress on the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs). This contribution will be made via ONE publication on "ICTs, MDGs and the Information Society" and will serve as an advocacy tool on the positive role of ICTs in development based on the experiences and initiatives of GKP members. The publication will thus serve to highlight the work of GKP members to global policy makers and ICT4D practitioners. GKP launched a stocktaking exercise, which entails gathering, aggregating, and analyzing information based on members' experiences and initiatives in ICT4D. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org>

Finalists of the APC HAFKIN PRIZE 2004/5: Recognising community connectivity projects for economic development in Africa. In May, APC will announce the winner of the \$7,500 Hafkin Prize. This year's APC 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 winner will be selected from the outstanding technology initiatives below. The Hafkin Prize finalists in 2004-5 are BorgouNET/Benin; Bukuku ICT Project/Uganda; Development and Promotion of ICTs in Kenya and Neighbouring Countries; Global Education Partnership - East Africa/Kenya; OKN Mobile Kenya; and Thinkquest Uganda. More: <http://www.apc.org/english/hafkin>

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:

*Aida Opoku-Mensah
Officer-in-Charge
Development Information Services
Division, Economic Commission for Africa
P. O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511167
Fax: 251-1-510512
E-mail: aopoku-mensah@uneca.org*