



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: CODI IV News.....

CODI IV recommendations. The fourth meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI IV) took place from 23 to 28 April 2005, including pre-meeting workshops and seminars. Under the theme of "Information as an Economic Resource", the meeting discussed and recommended strategies to ECA and member States for harnessing information for economic growth. Over 400 participants attended the meeting, drawn from national statistics offices, national libraries, archives and documentation centers, information and communications technology agencies, national mapping agencies and other geoinformation management organizations. More:
<http://www.uneca.org/codi/codi4/>

ECA calls for rapid transition to 'information economy'. African governments should commit more strongly to policies that support a sustainable transition to an information and knowledge economy. That was the message from the ECA at the opening of "CODI IV". Speaking at the opening session, ECA's deputy executive secretary Josephine Ouedraogo said that information as a driver in economic development has expanded dramatically during the past decade in line with the shift in parts of the world from an "industrial society" to an "information society". For her part, ECA's Aida Opoku-Mensah, Officer-in-Charge in the Development Information Services Division (DISD) urged participants to investigate, deliberate and document the advantages and returns of the emerging information and knowledge economy as an economic resource during the coming days. More:
<http://www.uneca.org/codi/codi4/>

Participation in e-economy will increase Africa's competitiveness, says Amoako. The participation of countries in the information economy should be accompanied by strategies for competitiveness in trade, commerce and investments, especially for small- and medium-

size enterprises, manufacturers, traders, investors, importers, exporters, bankers, and capital investors, said the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), KY Amoako addressing the closing plenary of CODI IV. In his closing remarks, Amoako endorsed CODI's conviction that the information and knowledge sectors are now the cornerstones of the emerging e-economy. He said that ECA was working on endowing chairs in Information Economics in African Universities given the emergence of the information economy. More:
<http://www.uneca.org/codi/codi4/>

Pre-CODI Workshops:

ePol-Net Africa Workshop - Towards an e-economy in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges. ECA, CePRC and Industry Canada organized a pre-CODI IV workshop on Saturday, 23 April 2005 focusing on e-economy. The workshop reviewed progress made and the challenges ahead in implementing e-commerce programmes in Africa. The workshop centred on four major sub-themes: enabling environment, e-economics, stakeholders, and the role of statistics as a policy instrument with implications for economic growth, MDGs and poverty reduction; effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks; infrastructure and human resources development; and inter, intra-regional and international cooperation. The presentations dealt with the significance of e-economics and e-commerce for the continent's development. More: Aida Opoku-Mensah (ECA) aopoku-mensah@uneca.org; Raymond Lepage (Industry Canada) Lepage.Raymond@ic.gc.ca; Wendy Ace (CePRC) wendy.ace@cspc-efpc.gc.ca.

Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) as an Economic Resource. ECA and Organization Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in collaboration with Free and Open Source Software Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA) organized the pre-CODI IV workshop on 24 April 2005. The workshop discussed FOSS for harnessing information as an economic resource, and reviewed some case studies on FOSS applications in governments and universities. Participants were also informed about major African events on FOSS such as the African Conference on Open Source Software (RALL)

2005 and IDLELO 2. Issues of security of FOSS in environments where information is a key resource, and the need for capacity building of African FOSS experts so as to have impact on the information economy were also discussed. In addition, the use of FOSS in public administration and businesses, and the inclusion of local language interface in FOSS were also highlighted. The workshop made some concrete recommendations on the economic values and benefits of FOSS development in Africa, which were incorporated into the CODI IV deliberations and recommendations. More: Makane Faye (ECA) mfaye@uneca.org; Pierre OUEDRAOGO (OIF) ouedraog@francophonie.org; Bildad Kagai (FOSSFA) bill@circuitspackets.com.

OTHER NEWS

CATIA Updates - Policy Debates across Africa.

National consultative fora were held in Senegal, DRC, Ethiopia and Mozambique. A successful multi-stakeholder French regional workshop took place in Kinshasa in February to support the development of national ICT policy advocacy plans. Additional support from the IDRC enabled participants from Morocco, Niger, and Cameroon to also participate in this workshop. In Ethiopia, a FOSS network has been established. In Kenya, a group of civil society and private sector organisations are working together in a Kenya ICT Network (KICTANET) to engage with the government on the Draft Kenya ICT policy. In Nigeria, there has been engagement on policy process for community radio. More: <http://www.catia.ws>

African operators identify broadband connectivity as key to ICT expansion.

Participants attending a high-level conference on broadband access and connectivity have concluded a three-day conference with a call on infrastructure suppliers, owners and operators to reduce bandwidth costs in order to increase access to knowledge on the continent. The successful completion of The African Broadband Revolution conference, an event organised by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) in Sandton, South Africa, heralded the continuation of the CTO's global programme of international events, which are promoting access to cutting-edge ICT knowledge across continents. More: contact Marcel Belingue at m.belingue@cto.int or telephone: +44 20 7839 5174.

Third meeting of Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) focus on Internet use, Spam, other key public policy issues. WGIG,

which met at the United Nations Office in Geneva 18 to 20 April 2005, made headway on assessing the adequacy of present governance arrangements and started looking at possible recommendations for future action. Discussions focused on key public policy issues related to the use of the Internet, such as Spam, network security and cyber crime, as well as on issues related to the administration of Internet names and addresses and the root-server system. Participants agreed that the topic of Spam, while not yet officially on the international agenda, had to be discussed as a matter of priority. Various proposals were put forward, ranging from drafting model legislation to more informal models of collaboration. More:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/pi1647.doc.htm>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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 workshop will address open access technologies in the context of developing regions, in particular sub-Saharan Africa. More: <http://www.openaccess.uem.mz/>

11 - 13 May 2005, World Conference on Harnessing the Potential of ICT for Capacity Building, Paris, France. UNESCO and the Club of Rome are co-organizing a three-day "World Conference on Harnessing the Potential of ICT for Capacity Building" from 11 to 13 May at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. The event is one of UNESCO's thematic meetings in preparation for the second meeting of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, Tunisia, 16-18 November 2005). The Conference will discuss the use of ICTs, including satellites, for capacity-building, and its key strategic role for achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and for building knowledge societies. It gives particular attention to the special needs of marginalized groups in areas that are not reached by the traditional education systems but could be given access to new forms of education delivery through satellite technologies. More: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17638&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

16 - 18 May 2005, Symposium on ICTs for development, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. Students, researchers, professors and leaders of community projects, representatives from government agencies and the private sector will gather in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from May 16 until May 18, 2005 for a symposium on the theme of linking research on ICTs to development. Further details: <http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?id=28009>

23 - 24 June 2005, WSIS Thematic Meeting on Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Bridging the Digital Divide, Seoul, Republic of Korea. This meeting examines how governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations can work together to help to bridge the digital divide. Separate sessions will examine the need for a multi-stakeholder approach, country case studies of successful partnerships, measuring the digital divide, technologies for helping to bridge the gap and other ways of overcoming barriers. More: <http://www.itu.int/wsisp/2005/preparatory2/thematic.html>

30 June - 1 July 2005, International Symposium on Intellectual Property (IP) Education and Research, Geneva, Switzerland. The Symposium is intended to provide a forum in which discussion on IP education and IP research could be further developed and advanced. It will be held at the headquarters of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). More: http://www.wipo.int/academy/en/meetings/ipedm_05/

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcing new initiative from APC: "Community Wireless". The APC's "Community Wireless Connectivity" project is looking to connect communities who don't yet have Internet access in Africa by supporting them with skills to build their own wireless networks. The project covers the development of training materials and workshops that will be localised for different environmental, regulatory, language and climatic conditions. With four regional workshops in Africa in 2005, APC will be training up to 100 possible future trainers and producing materials in English, French and Arabic. More: <http://www.apc.org/english/news/index.shtml?x=32071> or contact Anna Feldman (anna@gn.apc.org) for more information.

Winners announced for second round of GenARDIS Small Grants Fund - more than 310 nominations received. The GenARDIS small grants fund was initiated in 2002 by CTA, IICD and IDRC, to support work on gender-related issues in ICTs for ACP agricultural and rural development. In 2004, Hivos joined the team of sponsoring organisations in time for the second round of the programme. The fund supporters are pleased to announce that the selection of Round 2 GenARDIS grant winners has been completed. As in Round 1, the response was overwhelming, with more than 310 submissions received in a period of 2 months. This provides a clear indication that there still is a real need for support in the field of

Gender and Agriculture in the Information Society.
More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2005-04-28.1289346429>

Uganda ICT Journalism Awards. I-Network and IICD reward insightful print/web, broadcasting and photo reportages of ICT issues. I-Network Uganda and IICD have organised the Uganda ICT Journalism Awards to reward insightful reportage of ICTs, which shows a clear grasp of ICT issues by writers and manages to succinctly link ICTs to human development. For each draw, a single prize will be offered in each of the following categories: Print/Web, Broadcasting (TV/radio), and Photo. The winner in each category shall get a prize equivalent of US\$200 that will be offered in cash or in kind and that may vary from draw to draw. There will be three draws every year, covering the periods January-April, May- August, and September-December. Entries should be received by April 15, August 15 and December 15 for the respective draws. The winners will be announced by May 10, September 10 and January 10. More: <http://www.i-network.or.ug/> OR <http://www.iicd.org/>

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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