



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.....

Strengthening gender machineries through ICTs. The fourth sub-regional workshop on ICTs for francophone representatives of fourteen National Machineries for the advancement of women took place from 23 to 27 May 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The workshop was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the United Nations Information Communication Technologies (UN ICT) Task Force Secretariat and the ECA. National machineries are government units set up to support gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the development frameworks of member States as outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The workshop identified common strategies for institutional capacity building for promoting gender equality through the effective use of ICTs, and develop an online network of national machineries. The workshop included training on the use of ICTs for knowledge management and information sharing. Countries represented were: Algeria, Burundi, Cape Verde, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and Tunisia. More: Eskedar Nega (enega@uneca.org).

Ethiopian academics go practical in the Information Age. A half-day workshop was held by the Mathematics and Computer Science Department of Addis Ababa University (AAU) and ECA on 31 May 2005 at the UN Conference Centre to unpack the implications of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) for Ethiopia's development and to address local software development in Ethiopia. The University has been spearheading a web-based Content Management System (CMS) prototyped on an OSS platform for use by Amharic-speaking stakeholders in public and other institutions in Ethiopia. The Amharic Open CMS prototype was developed in the context of ECA's VarsityNet programme supported by the Ford Foundation, which aims to

build the research and development (R&D) capacity of African academia on IT applications through the use of OSS. Discussions also focused on the role of the Ethiopian Free and Open Source Software Network (EFOSSNet) initiative supported by Catalysing Access to ICT in Africa (CATIA) and ECA, which was formed early this year to promote a FOSS policy in Ethiopia and promote the participation of Ethiopian IT professionals (especially the Youth) in FOSS development and initiatives. More: Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org).

The Twentieth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of the ECA Sub Regional Office for North Africa. The meeting was represented by Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. In its presentation of the interim report on the status of information for the development activities in North Africa, the Secretariat acknowledged that the last three years have witnessed remarkably rapid advances in ICT in the sub-region. Some participants presented their own national experiences in ICT4D. The Tunisian delegation described the state of preparations for the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) and encouraged all the participants to take part. Participants requested the ECA Office to give more impetus to sub-regional cooperation in the ICT sector. Suggestions were made that this cooperation should deal with the regulations governing e-commerce (the security of exchanges) and the security of information networks in the sub-region. Finally, the Committee put particular emphasis on the development of content in Arabic, on software industrialization and on taking into account the potential of free software in the sub-region. More: Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org).

IICD launches online open source Monitoring and Evaluation tool. Together with developers from Drostan and Data-Assist, IICD launched an open source tool for internet-based surveys specifically designed for IICDs target group. The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) has put itself up to this challenging task to support their unique Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2005-05-09.8711099501>

ICT Parliamentary Committees for Niger and Gambia. ECA is organizing two workshops for parliamentarians to take place in Niamey, Niger from 1 to 2 June 2005 and Banjul, Gambia from 6 to 8 June, 2005. Specific objectives of the workshops are:

- Increase awareness on ICT policies and strategies (NICI) and the World Summit on the Information Society processes
- Increase awareness on the role of parliamentarians in the formulation and implementation of e-strategies, by ensuring adequate budget and supporting legislation required for the Information Society
- Create ICT Committees within the Parliament to sustain MPs involvement in the process.

The support to parliamentarians was also articulated as one of the recommendations endorsed at the third and fourth meetings of the Committee on Development Information (CODI III) <http://www.uneca.org/codi/>. More: Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org).

Media, Youth, Women Associations awareness raising on the Information Society in Gambia and Swaziland. To sustain the participatory approach of all stakeholders in the formulation and development of e-strategies, there's a need of creating permanent stakeholders' institutional framework conducive for their better involvement in the formulation, mainly the implementation and the evaluation processes. Specific objectives of the workshops are:

- Increase Stakeholders awareness on e-government, NICI, WSIS, scan-ICT, Gender equity
- Increase Stakeholders' awareness on their role in formulation, implementation of national policy and sectoral policies
- Implement institutional framework to sustain and ensure impacts of stakeholders' participations and engagement through the launching of network and formulation of strategic Plan of Action.

More: Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org).

Workshop on multilingualism for cultural diversity and participation of all in cyberspace. The workshop, held from 6 to 7 May 2005 in Bamako, Mali, was a joint activity organized by UNESCO, the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (AIF), the African Academy of

Language (ACALAN), the ECA, and in cooperation with the Government of Mali. The workshop discussed concrete actions in the area of linguistic diversity that governmental and non-governmental players can implement, both on the policy and application levels, to achieve a multilingual cyberspace. Over one hundred and thirty participants from twenty-five countries all over the world attended the workshops. More: Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org).

Can technology help reduce poverty? 2005 APC Hafkin prizewinner trains Kenyan youth for business opportunities. For young people living in poverty in coastal Kenya, surfing the Internet and learning how to use computers make most sense when these skills mean better economic opportunities and work-readiness. In recognition of this, the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) announced on May 26 that the winner of the APC Africa Hafkin Communications Prize for 2004-5 is the "Global Education Partnership - Wundanyi" in Kenya. Global Education Partnership - Wundanyi (GEP) is a not-for-profit organisation located in the Taita Taveta District of Kenya. It has created a 12-week comprehensive training programme that focuses on "entrepreneurship and work-readiness skills" for local youth from 15 to 24 years. "A clear lesson is that entrepreneurs are difficult -if not impossible- to create but they can be identified and supported," GEP's East Africa Regional Coordinator Tammy Palmer told APC. More: <http://www.apc.org/english/hafkin/2004/>

SchoolNet Toolkit & Software Comparison Study. *The African SchoolNet Toolkit* produced by SchoolNet Africa in partnership with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has just been released. Aimed at African schoolnet practitioners, policymakers, school managers and teachers, the toolkit documents experiences in school networking from a number of African countries and recommends frameworks, tools, lessons and good practices to inform and improve our day to day practice. The Toolkit will now serve as a basis for a training course for African schoolnet practitioners and policymakers, which is currently being developed by SchoolNet Africa and COL, thereby making the toolkit a living document. The toolkit is available at <http://www.schoolnet africa.net/1500.0.html>

The Software Comparison Study conducted by bridges.org in partnership with SchoolNet Africa, IDRC and the Open Society Initiative has just been published. The report is a comprehensive study of FOSS and proprietary software in public computer labs in Namibia, South Africa and

Uganda. It reflects the practical realities found in 121 computer labs. It is the first study of its kind and scope. The report is licensed under a creative commons license and can be freely shared. The report is available at <http://www.schoolnet africa.net/1502.0.html> SNA will be hosting a discussion among its schoolnet practitioners on the findings of the study.

EAC concludes Second Regional E-Gov meeting. Interim Working Group meeting, which was held on the 9th and 10th May 2005. The meeting reviewed and made recommendations on the draft report on the regional e-Gov framework for East Africa, and finalised preparations of the forthcoming second regional e-Gov stakeholders consultative meeting planned to be held in June 2005. More: Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org).

GKP Forum. The Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) organized an International Forum on cross-sector partnerships for the advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) solutions for development, 4 - 5 May 2005 in Cairo, Egypt. Top leaders from business, civil society and government shared their experiences, interests, opportunities and challenges in applying ICTs for development and in building new partnership-based initiatives for implementing and scaling the socio-economic development impacts of these technologies in the Middle East and around the world. PICTA members participated in the Forum include SDC, Sida, UNESCO, ECA and UNDP. The Forum was 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). GKP Excom and GKP Annual meetings were also organized as side events to the Forum. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org>

OTHER NEWS

Ghana telecom looks to e-commerce and renewable energy to kick-start rural communications. A model communication centre developed for rural and peri-urban communities, called eCARE is seen by Ghana Telecom as a way of revolutionising communication in rural areas. eCARE is an acronym for e-commerce and renewable energy. The project seeks to increase access to ICT powered by renewable energy in rural and peri-urban areas of Ghana. eCARE is a community phone project by Ghana Telecom

since February 2005. More: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200505231010.html>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

7 June 2005, Dgroups Online Networking Workshop, Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Dgroups (www.dgroups.org) is a partnership and platform designed to support online collaboration between international development practitioners. The partnership currently includes Bellanet, DFID, Hivos, ICA, IICD, OneWorld, UNAIDS and WorldBank; and is supported by member organizations including CIDA, CTA, Danida, FAO, IDRC, INASP, SNV, Sida, SDC, and ECA. Dgroups has had a strong history of supporting online collaboration since it was first established in February 2002, and it continues to grow with interest from other organizations. The use of Dgroups as an effective tool for supporting online interactions is exemplified by the increasing number of groups (with over 1200 groups currently established), and the growing number of Dgroups users (over 35,000 users to date). The partnership would like to invite members of the development community to the workshop. The interactive workshop will include an introduction to the Dgroups partnership, a short technical demo of the Dgroups platform, storytelling session: Online Networking Experiences, table discussions, how can the partnership support online networking?, and how other groups can join/support Dgroups efforts. If you are interested in attending the event, please RSVP to Mark Faul at mfaul@bellanet.org or +1 613 236 6163 ex 2388

14 - 17 June 2005, Fourth Meeting of WGIG, Geneva, Switzerland. WGIG will hold its fourth meeting in Geneva on 15-17 June 2005, preceded by consultations open to all stakeholders. The consultations will be held on 14 June in Room B of the Montbrillant Building of the International Telecommunications Union. The questionnaire on Internet Governance arrangements will provide a structure for the consultations. More: <http://www.wgig.org/>

20 - 22 June 2005, African and Arab Regional Conference about "Electronic Transaction Security, Digital Signature and PKI", Tunis, Tunisia. The conference is organized by the National Digital Certification Agency under the aegis of the Tunisian Ministry of Communication Technologies, in collaboration with the ECA and the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (INTIF), and it will take place at the Mariott Renaissance Hotel in Gammarth, Tunis.

This conference will allow participants and experts from the region, to familiarise themselves to digital signature and PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) technology, to learn more about digital signature deployment and to discuss the strategy and actions to foster PKI deployment in the region. This Conference is also held in preparation for the World Summit for the Information Society WSIS Tunis 2005 (<http://www.wsis.org>). More: <http://www.certification.tn/Conference/PKITunisia2005/programme.htm>

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/wsis/preparatory2/thematic.html>

28 - 29 June 2005, Second regional e-Government stakeholders consultative meeting, Nairobi, Kenya.

The forthcoming second regional e-Government stakeholders consultative meeting planned to be held in June 2005 would offer a wider forum to discuss issues related to regional e-government strategy after the Dar es Salaam Workshop. The Dar es Salaam workshop as the first preliminary stakeholder consultation, which drew participants from diverse areas of the society including academia, public and private sector, and members of Parliament. The June 2005 stakeholders consultative meeting would be part of stakeholders' involvement in the development of the regional e-government strategy and implementation of its Plan of Action. The forum would also be used to communicate the progress made by the IWG to the stakeholders. More: Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org).

28 - 30 June 2005, e-Nigeria 2005, ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja, Nigeria.

Nigeria's annual one stop ICT international conference will be on the theme "ICT deployment for sustainable development in Nigerian rural areas". The sub-themes include Nigerian grassroots in the global information society; Nigerian rural economy in achieving the MDGs; issues in exploring ICT for transforming Nigerian rural economy; SMEs in ICT deployment; and necessary financial, technical and other ICT resources for socio-economic development in Nigeria. More: Vincent Olatunji (volatunji@nitda.gov.ng).

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/iped_sym_05/

30 June - 2 July 2005, Scan-ICT Phase II kick-off workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In order to launch the second phase of SCAN-ICT programme, ECA and the Government of Finland, are organizing a workshop that will be held from 30 June to 2 July 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Using the set of core indicators, which were adopted by the second African Regional Preparatory Conference for the WSIS, held in Ghana in February 2005, the workshop aims at:

- learning from experiences/lessons/results of Scan-ICT phase I program
- discussing the methodologies, core indicators, and frameworks for the second phase of the SCAN-ICT project under the coordination of National Statistical Offices (NSOs)
- finalizing the guidelines for implementation
- defining the way forward for Scan-ICT phase II

More: Tuomo Raitanen (traitanen@uneca.org).

1 - 3 July 2005, Africa Civil Society Forum, WTDC '06 Africa Regional preparatory meeting, Nigeria.

The Forum objectives/outputs include capacity building/training, issue African civil society statements on the implementation of the WSIS Action Plan, and present Africa sub-Regional WSIS perspectives from the civil society. More: Thierry Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org).

5 - 6 September 2005, CTO FORUM 2005, Yaounde, Cameroon.

The CTO will be holding its third annual international ICT Forum from 5th to 6th September 2005 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The Forum is open to all stakeholders and is aimed at bringing together opinion formers, business leaders and the wider international community to discuss and to find solutions to the challenge of accelerating access to basic communication services to all. Held this year under the theme "ICT Business and Development: The Challenge of Access", the event is organised with the support of the Cameroon Government. The

Commonwealth ICT Ministerial meeting will also be held during the Forum. More: <http://www.cto.int/forum2005>

19 - 30 September 2005, Third Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Tunis Phase of WSIS, Geneva, Switzerland. The third meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS PrepCom-3), will be held in Geneva, Palais des Nations, from 19-30 September 2005. PrepCom-3 will be a critical step in the preparatory process for the Tunis Summit, which will take place in Tunis from 16-18 November 2005. PrepCom-3 will consist of two full weeks of negotiations on all issues related to the output of the Tunis Summit. This meeting will have to forge consensus on the final document(s), which is/are to be adopted by Heads of States and Governments at the Tunis Summit. More: <http://www.itu.int/wsisis>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IPDC - UNESCO Prize for Rural Communication. UNESCO is inviting nominations for the IPDC-UNESCO Prize for Rural Communication, to be awarded for the tenth time during the twenty-fifth session of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), which will be held at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris (France) from 21 to 23 March 2006. The IPDC-UNESCO Prize for Rural Communication was established by the UNESCO Executive Board at its 120th session, in pursuance of a decision of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Council of the IPDC. It is intended to recognize a meritorious and innovative activity in improving communication in rural communities, mainly in the developing countries. The IPDC-UNESCO Prize, consisting of a sum of US \$20,000.00 is awarded every two years. More: <http://www.unesco.org/webworld>

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*