



*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.....**

**Launching the African ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth Initiative.** ECA is organizing a Forum on ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth under the auspices of the Africa Node of the Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePol-NET) and in partnership with Industry Canada and the Canadian ePolicy Resource Centre (CePRC) from 14-16 March 2006 at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The forum aims to promote and build confidence in e-business development, and sensitize stakeholders to emerging e-business opportunities and their impact on national strategies in Africa. It will uniquely combine learning, expertise sharing (South-South and North-South), interactive dialogue, networking and business matching to launch the African ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth Initiative. More: <http://www.uneca.org/e-trade/>

**World experts discuss the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum in Geneva.** Initial consultations on the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) were held in Geneva from 16-17 February 2006. 300 participants representing government, civil society, private sector and international organizations met to discuss the IGF's scope of work, themes and priorities, as well as aspects relating to its structure and functioning. Unfortunately, Africa's participation at the consultations was limited, with only a few countries and civil society organizations attending. Hence, in order to bridge the gap caused by the absence of African delegates, and upon the request from Ghana, which serves as Chair of the African Ministerial Committee on Information and Communication Technology (ICT), ECA held online consultations with key African stakeholders in order to prepare a contribution and make a statement on behalf of the continent. More: [http://www.uneca.org/disd/news/022106disd\\_dna.asp](http://www.uneca.org/disd/news/022106disd_dna.asp)

**ECOWAS experts adopt a draft Information Society Declaration.** Representatives of the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) met in Lome, Togo from 31st January to 2 February 2006 to review progress made in ICT Policy development and implementation in the West African sub-region taking

into account the various regional and global ICT frameworks such as the AISI, NEPAD and the World Summit on the Information Society. The objective of the meeting was to define a harmonized ICT Policy framework for ECOWAS taking into account the National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) process being implemented in member States. This framework would address the challenges of building the information society at the ECOWAS level, including harmonizing national ICT policies and plans, developing an enabling environment, building a regional infrastructure/backbone, developing local content and financing mechanisms and for the Information Society. The ICT Forum was attended by ECOWAS regional integration focal points and NICI experts. The Forum adopted a Draft Declaration on the Information Society to be submitted to ECOWAS Heads of State. The Declaration took into consideration the NEPAD Short Term Action Plan on Infrastructure, the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) and the NICI development process under the framework of the AISI. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/ECOWASmeeting.htm>

**Togo launches the NICI process.** Approximately 98 participants from the Office of the President, Cabinet of the Prime Minister, various government ministries and departments, the private sector, parliamentarians, academia, NGOs and international organizations attended the launch of the National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) process in Togo on 3 February 2006. The workshop, which was coordinated by the Ministry of Communications and Civic Training, evolved around the following issues: stakes and opportunities of the Information Society; the NICI process; engendering the NICI process; and, Togo and the Information Society, among others. A National NICI Committee, comprising the main Government bodies and other stakeholders was set up to oversee the development of the plan. More: Makane Faye ([mfaye@uneca.org](mailto:mfaye@uneca.org)).

**Workshop: "Dialogue between telecoms and media regulation stakeholders in Africa in times of convergence".** Panos Institute West Africa, in partnership with the HAAC (Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication) of Benin, the ACRAN (African Communication Regulatory Authorities Network), the West African Telecommunications Regulators Association (WATRA), brought together from February 2nd to 4th, about fifty media and telecoms professionals coming from public institutions (regulators), the private sector, civil society and international and regional institutions.

The aim of this workshop was to debate on issues and new challenges as result of convergence for media regulators and stakeholders. The questions debated were: convergence and regulation; legal and legislative frameworks; institutional frameworks and collaborations; social and economic issues for the region; and lessons from the experiences in Africa and at the international level. Participants adopted the Cotonou Appeal on the Regulation of Convergence at the end of the workshop. More: Mohammed Timoulali ([mtimoulali@uneca.org](mailto:mtimoulali@uneca.org)).

**OKN active in six African countries.** Open Knowledge Network (OKN) is now active in six African countries: Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe. In Kenya, Zimbabwe, Senegal and Mali the project is expanding beyond the initial organisations to form national networks working with many other partners. The new software, Open Enrich, has been released and will also be used by UNESCO's Community Multimedia Centre network, increasing the pool of shared content. A study tour to India focusing on content creation and revenue generation carried out in late February 2006. More: <http://www.catia.ws>

**"Asia, Africa and Latin America can learn from each other", says Jac Stienen.** Jac Stienen, the Managing Director of IICD, shares his views and experiences on the changes IICD has undergone over the years, about its work in the South and on the learning's from IICD's work, in an interview with Manish Kumar of OneWorld South Asia. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2006-02-01.6413537617>

**Tanzanian government ready to adopt ICTs in health services.** The government is ready to adopt ICTs in the provision of health services, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Hilda Gondwe, has said. The PS made the announcement in the Coast Region, as she officiated at a national roundtable workshop on the application of ICTs in the country's health sector on February 1, 2006. The workshop was organized by Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC) and financed by the Catholic Organization for Relief and Development (CORDAID) and International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD). The forum brought participants from different fields - project implementers of different health projects, representatives of faith-based organizations providing health services, university professors, ICT experts and officials from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). More: <http://www.ippmedia.com/ipp/guardian/2006/02/03/59218.html>

**ITU discusses the future of the Internet.** As ICTs continues to revolutionise human activity around the world, the International Telecommunications Union, ITU, has put together a workshop on Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) to bring a spotlight on what is now referred to as "Internet of Things". The 'Internet of

Things' enables ubiquitous network connectivity, anytime and anywhere. With the use of key technologies such as radio tags and wireless sensor networks, real-time communications and the free exchange of information between users and the intelligent objects around them firmly leave the domain of science fiction. More: <http://www.digitalopportunity.org/article/view/127713/1/>

**e-Security; an emerging concern for Africa's digital revolution.** "As African governments begin to implement e-government and e-commerce initiatives, the new terrain will be a haven for malicious hackers, who want bragging rights for bringing these sites down," cautioned Michael Bitz, a consultant who facilitated discussions among ECA staff at a workshop on the Economics of E-security, held from 6-8 February 2006. More: <http://www.uneca.org/apps1/newsfromdivisions/News.asp?cmd=view&articleid=366>

**IDLELO2: Achieving Millennium Development Goals through community software?.** The second Idlelo conference took place at Safari Park Hotel, from the 23rd to 25th of February 2006. The Conference jointly organized by the Kenya Government, ECA, the Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA), and the International Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH (Inwent), brought together more than two hundred participants drawn from, government, international organizations, FOSS practitioners, industry players all over Africa and the Diaspora. Strategies on the possible use of FOSS applications for accelerating the eight MDGs and stimulating local FOSS industry in Africa, were identified. FOSSFA constitution was ratified and a new council elected four years. The secretariat was handed over to the South Africa-based CSIR Meraka Open Source Centre. Other partners involved in the Conference include, the Commonwealth of Learning, HIVOS, Google, Open Society Initiative of West Africa -OSIWA, Ubuntu and Circuits and Packets. More: <http://www.fossfa.net/idlelo2/index.html>

**Internet Governance - The Way Forward: From Tunis via Malta to Athens.** The conference was officially opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, Dr. Michael Frendo, and the President of DiploFoundation, Professor Dietrich Kappeler. Conference participants proposed different models for the process of establishing the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Some advocated discussing structure and procedure first, while others favoured a substance-driven process. A possible compromise could consist of combining the two, that is, to develop procedures out of the substantive discussions on ways to deal with a particular issue. This approach recognises that procedures may need adaptation to specific topics. Conference discussions were divided into five panels, each looking at different aspects of the future Internet Governance Forum. In addition, DiploTeam members and researchers presented Diplo's Internet Governance Capacity Building Programme and the results of research on a number of

topics, including the protection of public interest with regards to the Internet. Some of the main points, which emerged from each panel's deliberations are available at the conference website. More: <http://www.diplomacy.edu/Conferences/IG/default.asp>

#### OTHER NEWS..... OTHER NEWS.....

**Launch of the Project Information Network in Mandé, Mali.** The primary goal of this project is to solve the information and communication problems of farmers in the Mandé region, south of Bamako in Mali. The almost total lack of infrastructure in this region makes it very difficult for the implementing organisation Fabema to reach its constituent members and to inform them about activities, awareness workshops and market prices. Through a combination of telephone-Internet technology and an audio-based radio communication system (RAC), this project will establish a pilot network between the small town Bancoumana (where Fabema's headquarters are located) and Bamako (where the offices of 3AG are located) on the one hand, and four villages on the other hand. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2006-02-01.2928404849>

**Cameroon: Baseline scope before ICT strategy.** (Cameroon Tribune) - The new general manager of the National Agency for Information and Communication Technology in Cameroon says a baseline scope of who's who in the country's ICT sector is necessary. Once that's done, a comprehensive, development-oriented national ICT strategy will be put in place. More: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200602170563.html>

**Launch of "Golden Book".** The official launch of the "Golden Book" took place on 24 February 2006, during the Consultation Meeting of WSIS Action Lines Facilitators/Moderators, convened by ITU, UNESCO and UNDP in Geneva. The Golden Book highlights some of the valuable work being done around the world to promote ICTs in projects, large and small, by governments, individuals or team effort, for the benefit of all. It provides illustrative examples of new and innovative projects to build infrastructure, promote ICTs in education, health and governance, ensure fair access and enhance online security. More than 375 submissions were made to the Golden Book by governments, international organizations, NGOs, companies and individuals, describing their work towards promoting ICT activities. ITU estimates that the activities announced during the Tunis Phase to promote WSIS goals represent a total value of at least € 3.2 billion (US\$ 3.9 billion). More: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/goldenbook>

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**01 – 03 March 2006, IFISI World Forum, Marrakech, Morocco.** The "International Forum of ICT Strategies

and Investment" (IFISI) organized in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Formatiscom, will be held at the Marrakech Congress Center (Palais des Congrès) under the High Patronage of His Majesty, Mohammed VI, King of Morocco. As a continuum of phase two of the World Summit on the Information Society, in Tunisia, IFISI is intended to bring effective and concrete answers to the complicated issue of funding of national, local and corporate ICT projects. The primary goal of this forum is to afford countries and organizations to present business plans of their ICT investment projects and strategies to a varied audience of venture capitalists, private equity funds, and other capital providers. The Forum, with its emphasis on investment and ICT business will be articulated in session presentations and other parallel events. More: <http://www.virtualis-net.com/ifisi/index.html>

**7 – 15 March 2006, World Telecommunications Development Conference, Doha, Qatar.** ITU sanctioned "World Telecommunications Development Conference" is being hosted by the State of Qatar on March 7 - 15, 2006. The purpose of the Conference is to agree on development priorities in view of the high-level recognition of the Digital Divide between developing and developed nations created by the rapid but uneven expansion of ICTs. ICT-1-WORLD is the first ever exhibition to run in conjunction with a World Telecommunications Development Conference, therefore, it is unique in its appeal to delegates, media and business influencers. More: <http://www.ict-1-world.com/>

**7 – 9 March 2006, ICTs for Civil Society, Indaba Hotel, Fourways, Johannesburg, South Africa.** The Southern African NGO Network (SANGONeT), in conjunction with The Information Society Institute (Tisi) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, invites academic/scientific and action-research papers dealing with the theme, "The Information Society as a Response to Poverty and Inequality in Southern Africa", for presentation at the conference. The areas of interest include, but are not limited to, research on information and community informatics in the new and emerging information societies of Southern Africa. More: <http://www.sangonet.org.za/conference2006>

**8 – 11 March 2006, 5th FIG Regional Conference in Accra, Ghana.** The conference is organized by the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) and the Ghana Institution of Surveyors (GhIS) and co-hosted by the Ministry of Land, Forestry and Mines (MLFM) of Ghana. It is the first FIG Regional Conference to be held in West Africa. As has been the case with the previous FIG regional conferences the conference in Accra will be organized in co-operation with other international and regional organizations like the United Nations and its agencies (e.g. FAO, UN-Habitat and ECA, as well as other international geospatial societies and ISM). The focus of the 5th FIG Regional Conference will be on land administration and good

governance as conditions for sustainable development. More: <http://www.fig.net/accra/>

**9 March 2006, Consultation on WSIS Facilitation for Action Line C2: Information and Communication Infrastructure, Doha, Qatar.** In line with para 108 and Annex of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, ITU is organizing a Consultation on WSIS Action Line Facilitation for WSIS action line C2, i.e. information and communication infrastructure. The purpose of the meeting is for information exchange and to discuss the WSIS multi-stakeholder implementation process in the field of information and communication infrastructure. The meeting will take place in conjunction with WTDC-06 in Doha, Qatar, on 9 March 2006, in the Convention Center, Room Al Majlis, to benefit from the presence of many WSIS stakeholders present at WTDC-06. The meeting will run from 14.00 – 17.00 hours. The meeting is open to all WSIS stakeholders that are interested and involved in the implementation process in the field of information and communication infrastructure. The meeting will be held in English. More: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/c2/index.html>

**9 – 10 March 2006, National workshop on ICT and health, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.** The workshop is organized by the national telemedicine taskforce, the ministry of health, and the Ethiopian Telecom Corporation in collaboration with ECA. The event aims at creating awareness on the role of ICTs in health and discuss on the effective utilization of existing and planned ICT infrastructure for e-health activities in Ethiopia. More: Fasil Shiferaw ([et\\_fassil@ethionet.et](mailto:et_fassil@ethionet.et))

**15 – 17 March 2006, World Congress on Communication for Development, Rome, Italy.** The Communication Initiative [The CI] is one of three organisations - with The World Bank's Development Communication Division and FAO and the generous support of the Government of Italy - co-hosting and organising the World Congress on Communication for Development [WCCD]. This first WCCD will focus on demonstrating the value of communication for a variety of development initiatives and the need to increase investment in communication for development as an essential ingredient for meeting developmental challenges. The 3-day Congress will bring together communication professionals engaged in development initiatives, policymakers, development practitioners, donor and NGO representatives, community representatives, and academics from around the world to share experiences and best practices in this growing field for a common understanding of what works, what doesn't, why and how best to measure impact. More: <http://www.comminit.com>

**27 – 30 March 2006, WSIS Follow-up Conference on Access to Information and Knowledge for Development, United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.** The event is co-sponsored by the ECA and the Government Information and Official Publications Section (GIOPS) and the Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of

Expression (FAIFE) of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). The conference, will be delivered in two parts: 1) workshop on building African capacity to follow-up on, and implement the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society in the area of libraries and access to information and knowledge (March 27 – 28), and 2) the IFLA GIOPS/FAIFE Seminar on the Strategic Management and Use of Government Information in Africa (March 29-30). There will be wrap-up sessions for each event. The proceedings and any other outcomes will be published jointly by ECA, IFLA/GIOPS and IFLA/FAIFE. More: Petrina Amonoo ([pamonoo@uneca.org](mailto:pamonoo@uneca.org)).

**26 – 28 April 2006, Workshop on ICT regulation and public and community-based access for francophone Central African countries, Douala, Cameroon.** ECA is organising a workshop to facilitate a multi stakeholder dialogue to strengthen access related public National Information and Communication plans and strategies. The workshop is organized under the auspices of the African node of the Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePolNet) and in collaboration with Industry Canada, the Canadian ePolicy Resource Centre (CePRC), Government of France and Agence Internationale de la Francophonie. This workshop is the second in a series of three in Africa and close to 80 participants from Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe and Burundi are expected to attend. More: Eskedar Nega ([enega@uneca.org](mailto:enega@uneca.org)).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS/RESOURCES

**Development Deadline 2015.** Development Deadline 2015 is a weekly e-newsletter from Inter Press Service (IPS) providing readers with "independent news reporting on how the Millennium Development Goals are influencing policy decisions and making a difference on the ground." More: <http://www.comminit.com/e-zines/emagazines/enews-402.html>

\*\*\*\*\*

*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](mailto: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: 251-11-5443562  
Fax: 251-11-5510512  
E-mail: [aopoku-mensah@uneca.org](mailto:aopoku-mensah@uneca.org)