



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>

The programme's mission is to empower passionate 17 to 30-year-olds with the means to bring about systemic social change, particularly in the areas of poverty reduction, environmental protection, gender equality and human rights. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org>

NEWS: PICTA Members.....

ePolNet Forum on ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth. The Forum on ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth, hosted by the ECA, concluded on 16 March with recommendations on developing policy, legal and regulatory frameworks, accelerating skills development, and ensuring the security of electronic transactions to enable countries ensure economic growth. The Forum gave an opportunity to member States to share experiences and give their input to initiatives being developed by ECA under the ePolNet framework. Future initiatives of ePol-Net were outlined, which include the creation of an e-business online community, where participants can exchange information on e-business initiatives. More: <http://www.uneca.org/e-trade/>

e-Payment a Challenge for Africa. Electronic means of payment, otherwise known as e-payment, though practiced in some countries such as South Africa, Tunisia and Egypt, is still a challenge in Africa. This is one of the main conclusions of the three-day forum on ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth. The Department of Mathematics and Computer Science of the Addis Ababa University, in collaboration with ECA, shared the results of a survey on existing status of e-payment looking at Ethiopia in particular. Challenges for e-payment in Africa included lack of adequate telecommunication infrastructure which exists in Africa. More: http://www.uneca.org/e-trade/news/news_2006031701_en.htm

Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) Launches the Youth Social Enterprise Initiative (YSEI). The GKP Executive Committee Chairman Walter Fust officially launched on 24 March 2006 a new youth programme designed to encourage young leaders to be a catalyst for positive change and to serve as role models in their societies. The YSEI is a unique programme designed to support projects by young people who use innovative solutions to address social problems, specifically those using information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D).

UNESCO opens online platform for planning multi-stakeholder implementation of WSIS Plan of Action. UNESCO has opened an online platform to facilitate initial contacts among stakeholders and to launch activities under the Action Lines of the Geneva Plan of Action that are in the area of competence of the Organization. This includes the following action lines: C3: Access to information and knowledge, C7: E-learning and E-science, C8: Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content, C9: Media, C10: Ethical dimensions of the Information Society. More: <http://www.unesco.org/webworld/newsletter>

Swazi MPs prepare for new role in the Information Society. In collaboration with the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, ECA facilitated a 4-day Member of Parliaments (MP) training workshop from 27 to 30 March 2006 in Mbabane, Swaziland. More than thirty (30) MPs and staff participated in the training workshop. More: <http://www.uneca.org/disd/news/03282006dnadisd.asp>

World Telecommunication Development Conference sets agenda to connect the world by 2015. The Doha Action Plan adopted by the World Telecommunication Development Conference sets out a road map to implement the global objectives of harnessing the power of ICTs to accelerate the pace of development. Work was conducted under the chairmanship of Dr Hessa Al-Jaber, Secretary-General of ictQatar whose deft handling of the debates led to the successful outcome of the conference on a broad front. "What makes this conference different from any other is the breadth of the measures adopted and pertinence of the decisions taken", said Dr Al-Jaber. "The conference agreed on a comprehensive package that will further improve access to the benefits of ICT" she said, adding "not only can we aspire to bridging the digital divide, but with the Doha Declaration and Action Plan, we now have the commitment and the tools to do so". More: http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2006/04.html

Media training workshop. A one-week regional media training of trainers workshop from 20 – 24 March 2006 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The trainees were from media training institutions representing 20 participants from Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The objective was to integrate ICT courses into journalism curricula. Also represented were leading media training organisations such as the East African Media Institute (EAMI), Nordic-SADC Journalism Foundation, the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) and the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA). The training was based on the AISI Media Training Module developed by ECA utilising ECA's decade-long experience in ICT4D activities, especially in the area of national ICT strategies and plans. The module highlights concepts on Information Society and the role of the media; how ICTs can help wealth creation; improve business productivity and rural growth and development. Participants also visited ICT for development projects in Addis Ababa to gain first hand experience in reporting on such issues as well as design different web sites as part of the course. More: <http://www.uneca.org/disd/news/03202006dnadisd.asp>

ICANN plans for testing non-English domain names. ICANN, The Internet's key oversight agency has outlined a plan for testing domain names entirely in non-English characters, bringing closer to reality a change highly sought by Asian and Arabic Internet users. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers announced a tentative timetable that calls for tests to begin in the second half of the year. The tests would help ensure that introducing non-English suffixes wouldn't wreck a global addressing system that millions of Internet users rely upon every day. More: <http://www.icann.org>

Ghana launches Scan-ICT Phase II. Scan-ICT Phase II has been launched at a national workshop held in Accra, Ghana in March. The event organized by the Ghana Statistics Service (GSS) and the International Institute for Information Technology (INIIT) in collaboration with ECA, aimed at adopting a working methodology for implementing Scan-ICT, identifying ICT indicators for Ghana, creating awareness on the need for measuring ICT4D at national, regional, and international level, sharing information and knowledge on ICT data collection exercise in the various socio-economic sectors, and putting in place the necessary institutional arrangements for the implementation of the project. Over sixty participants attended from government including the ministry of communications, academia, private sector, and international organizations such as UNCTAD. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/>

COMESA workshop on policy guidelines. The ICT strategy for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was presented at a workshop on the policy and regulatory guidelines held from 27th February to 28th February 2006 at the

Conference Centre of the National Telecommunication Corporation, Khartoum Sudan. The workshop outlined the efforts made at regional level in trying to harmonize policies and regulations in view of creating an enabling environment for the development of the ICT industry. In addition, the priority areas that include infrastructure, human resources development and capacity building, industry, regulation and legal environment, and e-strategies or e-applications, were highlighted, with an overview of the current situation in COMESA countries. Participants made comments on the strategy for inclusion in the revised document. More Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org).

ECA re-elected as the regional coordinator for GKP for 2006 – 2007. The GKP Secretariat has announced the re-election of ECA as its regional coordinator for 2006 – 2007. As elected regional coordinator (previously known as Regional Focal Point) from among the members, ECA coordinates the activities of the Africa region cluster within GKP. Membership of the GKP Regional Clusters is restricted to GKP members. However, non-members are encouraged to collaborate with the networks by contacting the respective focal points for further information. More: Eskedar Nega (enega@uneca.org).

UN Secretary-General approves the setting up of the UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development. The Global Alliance represents an opportunity for the UN system to come together around ICT to promote the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals in partnership with all other stakeholders from government, business and civil society. The Alliance also provides a common platform for the UN system and other key stakeholders to contribute to the follow up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) by the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. Its principal purpose is to mainstream and integrate ICT into the broader UN development agenda. More: <http://www.unicttaskforce.org/>

WSIS follow-up conference urges better use of government information. The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) follow-up conference concluded on 30th March 2006 with a resolution to promote access to and encourage more effective use of government information for democratic and economic development in Africa. The four-day conference, hosted by the ECA, also briefed participants on the upcoming Sub-Saharan Africa high-level colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning. The colloquium, with initial sponsorship from Botswana, Ethiopia and Ghana, will be organized by the ECA with the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Africa Section and UNESCO, and will feed into a larger global colloquium in 2008. Ms. Kay Raseroka of the University of Botswana introduced the colloquium, noting that "information

literacy is our ticket to being part of a globalized world and information society". The conference agreed on a clear action framework to implement the recommendations of WSIS relating to libraries, archives and other information services at the local, national and pan-African levels. This will complement efforts already underway by the ECA Library through the African Virtual Library and Information Network (AVLIN). More: <http://www.uneca.org/disd>

of men and women. He said this at a seminar organised by Women of Uganda Network recently. Angela Nakafeero, a gender consultant with Development Alternative Consult, called for the review of the policy to recognise communication as a right and public good. More: *New Vision* (<http://www.newvision.co.ug/>)

OTHER NEWS..... OTHER NEWS.....

Tanzania's COSTECH runs pilot project with villages. A pilot computerisation project is to be undertaken in selected villages, the aim being to improve local governance through better documentation of social services and agriculture. The Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (Costech) is teaming up with other partners in development for the project. Selected for the pilot research are Lungu-Lugoba village in Bagamoyo District, Coastal Region and Dakawa in Mvomero District, and Morogoro Region. More: *The East African* (<http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/>)

Zambia: effective electronic payment systems require improved technology. Electronic payment systems of any kind need very good telecommunications network and computer systems, Bank of Zambia (BOZ) banking currency and payment systems director Morris Mulomba has said. In an interview after a consultative meeting involving BoZ, Bankers Association of Zambia and Kabwe businesses Mulomba said to be effective, electronic payments systems require an improvement in the technological world. He said BoZ were intending to implement IVL on certain payment systems streaming from Direct Debit and Credit Clearing service (DDACC), Real Time Gross Settlements (RTGS) and Cheques. More *The Post* (<http://www.postzambia.com/>)

Uganda gets first online market place. Ugandans no longer have to worry about getting time to go shopping. It is now possible to buy and sell over the Internet 24 hours, 7 days a week. Akatale.Com, a website that, offers buyers and sellers the opportunity to link up and trade online, is now available online: www.akatale.com. "Akatale" means "Local Market" in various local languages and there is no restriction to what kind of items can be sold on Akatale.Com. Akatale.Com was simple, easy and tailored to meet the needs of developing countries such as Uganda. More: *The Monitor* (<http://www.monitor.co.ug/>)

Uganda: Gender Activists Rap ICT Policy. Gender activists have criticised the national policy on ICT for overlooking the gender perspective. Aramanzan Madanda, a lecturer in the department of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University, said the policy was gender insensitive, as it did not express concerns

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

26 – 28 April 2006, Ghana Media Training Workshop, Busy Internet, Accra-Ghana. The theme of the workshop is "training Ghanaians Journalists for the Information Society". This workshop seeks to address two key challenges: a) the ability to use new media technology to improve the quality of journalism in Ghana, and 2) the ability of journalists to understand and report on ICT policy issues in Ghana. The objectives include providing knowledge sharing platform for the media to understand key issues in the Information Society, understanding and reviewing New Media and its impact in the newsroom, providing an opportunity for the media players to develop new practical skills in using specific ICTs tools in the newsroom, and equipping Ghanaian journalists to challenge ICT policy implementation process in Ghana. Contact: PenByte International Institute of ICT Journalism (info@penplusbytes.net).

26 – 28 April 2006, Workshop on ICT regulation and public and community-based access for francophone Central African countries, Douala, Cameroon. Under the auspices of ePolNet, in partnership with Industry Canada, la francophonie, and the Government of France, ECA is organising a workshop to facilitate a multi stakeholder dialogue to strengthen access related public National Information and Communication plans and strategies. 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).

4 – 6 May 2006, ICT Africa Investment Summit 2006, Kigali, Rwanda. The theme is "Strategies for sustainable development of ICT infrastructure in Africa", and the Summit will take place at the Intercontinental Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda. The Summit is an annual forum where African stakeholders in the ICT sector gather together to address issues that are critical to securing increased investments in the broadcasting, IT and telecommunications infrastructure – and service delivery – in Africa. The Summit also highlights the investment opportunities in the sector and identifies options for accelerated development of the ICT infrastructure in Africa. For further information contact: titi@cyberschuul.com

7 - 12 May 2006, AfNOG workshop on Network Technology, Nairobi, Kenya. The African Network Operators' Group (AfNOG) workshop on Networking Technology will be held in conjunction with the 7th AfNOG meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in May 2006. The workshop aims to offer advanced training to people who are in the process of developing and enhancing an Internet-connected network with regional and international connectivity. The target audience includes senior and mid-level technical staff of commercial Internet service providers (ISPs), academic networks, government networks, or NGO networks. This workshop builds on the experience of previous AfNOG workshops held annually from 2000 to 2005 in six different African countries, and also the Internet Society's INET workshops, held annually from 1993 to 2000 at eight locations around the world. The workshop's instructors are an international team with many years of experience operating large networks and teaching about network operations. More: <http://www.afnog.org/afnog2006/workshop/>.

8 – 9 May 2006, GKP International Forum on Cross-Sector Partnerships “Creating Prosperity through Innovation: ICT at work in development”, Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Forum will engage invited leaders from business, civil society and government to both share innovations with ICT for development (ICT4D) and build new innovative partnership-based initiatives using ICT to create prosperity. The programme will consist of keynote addresses from leading experts in ICT4D, plus a series of breakout sessions. Topics to be addressed in the sessions will include case studies of innovation using ICT4D; new technology applications in developing countries; opportunities to meet partners and build new solutions; new financing strategies; and experiences of successful cross-sector partnerships in the South Asia region and beyond. The GKP Annual Meeting 2006, for GKP Members only, will be held on 10 May 2006 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org/am/>

16 – 17 May 2006, 10th West Africa Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Conference and Workshop, Accra, Ghana. In order to build on the capacity of both private and public sector in developing strategies for knowledge management using ICTs, AITEC Ghana in partnership with the Ministry of Communications, Ghana is organizing the 10th West Africa ICT Conference and Workshop. The theme of AITEC 2006 is “Using ICT as a Tool for Information & Knowledge Management”. AITEC 2006 offers delegates a unique education, skills learning, coaching and networking opportunity for all participants. AITEC 2006 Conference will be addressed by experts drawn from key sectors of the ICT industry with the appropriate practical insight addressing a wide range of topics, issues and case studies. More: <http://www.aitec-africa.com>

19 – 20 May 2006, African Internet Forum, Nairobi, Kenya. The African Internet Forum provides an annual platform for ISPs, telecom operators, Internet users,

developers, regulators, policy-makers and development agencies to share knowledge on the strategic and business issues related to the Internet's development in Africa. More: <http://new.aitecafrica.com/>

24 – 26 May 2006, eLearning Africa 2006 (eLA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The 1st International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training focusing on the theme “Empowering Africa Through eLearning” will take place at the UN Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. “eLearning Africa”, a conference to be held annually in Africa, intends to become the African eLearning capacity building event and – at the same time – a forum for all stakeholders engaged in the planning and implementation of technology supported learning and training on the African continent. Organized by German-based ICWE and Hoffmann & Reif Consultants, the event is supported by the Ethiopian Ministry of Capacity Building, Ministry of Education, ECA, SchoolNet Africa, and the European Commission. More: <http://www.elearning-africa.com>

ANNOUNCEMENTS/RESOURCES

Connecting the unconnected by 2015...

Connect the World is a global multi-stakeholder effort established within the context of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to encourage new projects and partnerships to bridge the digital divide. By showcasing development efforts now underway and by identifying areas where needs are the most pressing, Connect the World will create a critical mass that will generate the momentum needed to “connect the unconnected by 2015.” More: <http://www.itu.int/partners/index.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 atentime@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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