



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

Connect Africa. *Connect Africa* will be launched at a Summit of leaders in Kigali, Rwanda, 29 - 30 October 2007, organised under the patronage of the President of Rwanda, H. E. Mr. Paul Kagame, as well as the Chairman of the African Union and President of Ghana, H. E. Mr. John Kufour. It is organised by the International Telecommunication Union, the African Union, the World Bank Group and the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in partnership with the African Development Bank, the African Telecommunication Union and the UN Economic Commission for Africa. This collaborative effort seeks to involve various stakeholders active in the region, including China, India, the European Commission, G8, OECD and Arab countries, major ICT companies, the United Nations Development Programme and other international organisations. Connect Africa is a global multi-stakeholder partnership to mobilise the human, financial and technical resources required to bridge major gaps in ICT infrastructure across the region, with the aim of supporting affordable connectivity and applications and services to stimulate economic growth, employment and development throughout Africa. More: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/africa/2007/>

GKP Announces the GK3 Programme. The GK3 Programme was announced and covers the impact of the converging forces of emerging people, markets and technologies through 5 plenary sessions, 44 panels and workshops, and 6 special crosscutting sessions. In addition, another 15 Highlights will be featured in the 3-day avant-garde experience that awaits participants at this GKP Event on the Future! More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org/>

AU Conference on Women and Science and Technology. The year 2007 was declared by the January 2007 Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Governments as a launching year of building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation. This decision calls for the development and mobilisation of all segments of Africa's population to contribute to the harnessing of

STI for the Continent's socio-economic development. As a follow-up, the Commission of the African Union, through its department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRSS) and in collaboration with the Government of South Africa, the NePAD Office of Science and Technology, with support from the Republic of Ireland and Gauteng Tourism in South-Africa, organised the first African Women in Science and Technology Conference from 29 - 31 August 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The workshop brought together more than hundred participants from the 53 African countries to discuss their role in science and technology for Africa's development and adopt strategy to enhance their active participation in STI issues. African Women in Science and Technology (AAWST) temporary steering committee was established and will work for the creation of AAWST. Recommendations for popularisation of science among women, women science education and women entrepreneurship were made and will be submitted to the African Ministerial Council of Science and Technology (AMCOST). More: Thierry H. Amoussougbo (tamoussougbo@uneca.org).

New partners join Web4Dev organisers. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) have joined UN-HABITAT's organising committee to ensure a successful Web4Dev, scheduled to take place from 28 – 30 November 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. The expansion of this committee reflects the rising level of interest in the conference, which expects around 500 participants from over 40 countries and will feature presentations and workshops by leading experts. More: <http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=546>

Nokia launches Amharic interface phones. Nokia has introduced five new phones with Amharic features at a ceremony held at Sheraton Addis on September 20, 2007. Amharic is the official language in Ethiopia. The new Nokia products - Nokia 1200, 1208, 1650, 2630 and 2760 - all have industry-leading features and applications such as flashlight, music-on-the-go via FM radio and MP3-grade ring tones with an integrated application that allows for a pre-set time limit to be determined for each call. The new products are specifically designed for the Ethiopian market and will be distributed by Glorious PLC. The new Nokia Amharic features will allow all Ethiopians to use features of the phones in Amharic

and in English as they desire. Since the new products have Amharic alphabets on their keypad, all those who speak other local languages that can use Amharic alphabets can use the text message and other features in their own language. More: Mr. Michael Maltusch (Michael.Maltusch@nokia.com).

Member States Adopt a Development Agenda for WIPO. The Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization, Dr. Kamil Idris, welcomed a decision by WIPO member states on Friday, September 28, 2007 to adopt a Development Agenda consisting of a series of recommendations to enhance the development dimension of the Organization's activities. The recommendations include a set of 45 agreed proposals covering six clusters of activities including Technical Assistance and Capacity Building; Norm-setting, Flexibilities, Public Policy and Public Knowledge; Technology Transfer, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Access to Knowledge; Assessments, Evaluation and Impact Studies; Institutional Matters including Mandate and Governance. Member states agreed to establish a Committee on Development and Intellectual Property to develop a work-program for implementation of the adopted recommendations. More: <http://www.wipo.org>

NEWS: ECA Activities ECA Activities

WITFOR 2007. The 2007 World Information Technology Forum (WITFOR 2007), on the theme "*ICT for Development and Prosperity*" was held from 23 – 25 August 2007 at the Addis Ababa UN Conference Center (UNCC). The conference was aimed at contributing to taking the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Plan of Action a step forward and helping developing countries achieve the MDGs. Under eight thematic commissions and plenary sessions, the conference investigated successful, sustainable ICT strategies in developing countries and examined different initiatives and projects on effective, context sensitive development and use of ICT applications. Among the areas of focus were: WSIS implementation, country experiences with ICT policy, human resource development and capacity building, leapfrogging rural communications, creating ICT-enabled knowledge networks around agriculture, low-cost telecommunication systems and information services for rural primary healthcare, business process outsourcing, e-infrastructure support for rural SMEs, Open Source models for creating value in emerging markets and telecentres. The conference was organised by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) in cooperation with the Federal Government of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian ICT Development Agency (EICTDA), the Ethiopian Information Technology Professional Association (EITPA) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). WITFOR 2007 was the third where the first

was held in Lithuania, in 2003 and the second held in Botswana, in 2005. Over 1000 resource persons, researchers and participants drawn from about 66 countries attended the conference. More: <http://www.witfor2007.org/>

Capacity building at ITCA on web technologies. A web technologies training to build the capacity of the staff of the Ethiopian Customs Authority was delivered to 12 participants from August 20 – September 7, 2007 at ECA's Information Technology Center for Africa (ITCA). The training was part of ECA's support to the Government of Ethiopia to effectively implement and maintain an UNCTAD-created Automated System for Customs Data, commonly known as ASYCUDA which handles manifests, customs declarations, accounting, and transit and suspense procedures and also generates trade data that can be used for statistical economic analysis. In addition, it provides Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) between traders and customs. A web based journalism training for the Ethiopian women media professionals was also conducted from August 27 – 31, 2007 at ITCA. The training was organised with the aim of raising the capacity of women journalists in the utilisation of common web based tools on their day-to-day activities. The training included discussions on Internet services and tools used for searching the Internet for different types of content (text, audio, picture and video), familiarise participants with advanced search techniques and features, an extensive hands-on training on web page development and blogging. The trainees were encouraged to develop a website that contains text, graphics, audio and video. Fifteen members of the Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA) benefited from this course. More: Girma Dessalegn (gdessalegn@uneca.org).

First Meeting of the African Intergovernmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators. Hosted by the Mozambique Ministry of Science and Technology, the first intergovernmental meeting on Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators was organised from 17 to 18 September 2007 in Maputo, Mozambique. The Meeting was organised by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NePAD) Office of Science and Technology (OST) and attended by representatives of Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Organisations such as ECA and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Development Bank (ADB), UNESCO, and OECD attended the meeting to share experiences. In line with this, ECA shared its experiences with the participants in the area of developing ICT4D indicators through its Scan-ICT programme. The meeting discussed issues such as:

(a) terms of reference for the Committee and Election of Bureau; (b) the role of indicators in science, technology and innovation policy making and implementation; (c) experiences in developing and using science, technology and innovation indicators; (d) proposed NEPAD guidelines for science, technology and innovation survey; and (e) criteria for identifying and selecting countries that will participate in the pilot phase of the survey; and the work-plan. The meeting made key decisions related to these issues in a form of a declaration. More: Alex Tindimubona (atindimubona@uneca.org).

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

Ghana holds first ICT Awards. The first ever Ghana Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Awards was held on 16 August 2007 in Accra, with a call on people in the industry to improve their innovative and creative capabilities for the nation's benefit. President John Agyekum Kufuor, who made the call in a speech read on his behalf at the ceremony, said there was room for improvement and further collaboration with government to provide better access to ICT to many Ghanaians. He urged stakeholders in the industry to initiate social responsibility programmes that would address the needs of the disadvantaged and physically challenged. President Kufuor noted that ICT provided the competitive edge for businesses and the socio-economic development of the country. He said in recognition of this, government continues to invest in world-class information technology systems to attain a leadership status in the West African sub-region. Dr. Benjamin Aggrey Ntim, Minister of Communication, said the awards which was championed by the Ministry of Communication in partnership with people in industry was designed as a catalyst for the Government and private sector to drive the programme of using ICT for accelerated development. Dr. Ntim said the objective was to evaluate and recognize standards of excellence in the quest for growth and development, encourage public and private institutions to use ICT for development and to ensure that ICT professionals were provided a benchmark for recognizing and validating outstanding contributions. He said the event, which saw 17 companies and institutions receiving awards would be an annual affair. The only lifetime achievement for ICT development award went to Professor Clement Dzidonu, who provided leadership for the development of Ghana's ICT for accelerated development policy. More: http://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/NewsArchive/news_details.asp?menu_id=1&id=VFZSUmQwOVVRVE09

South Africa: Free at last! The Chief Technology Officer of the South African State Information Technology Agency (Sita), announced the launch of the government-wide free and open source programme at the GovTech conference held early

September. While many welcomed the February announcement of government's intention to adopt and promote open source software, the subsequent months saw disillusionment within the open source community that very little had actually happened. Sita's Daniel Mashao addressed these worries, describing what had been happening behind the scenes and showing a systematic timetable of how this process will indeed be implemented. He outlined the government's policy. The five key points are: 1) Choose FOSS, 2) Migrate to FOSS, 3) Develop in FOSS, 4) Use FOSS/open content licensing, and 5) Promote FOSS in South Africa. Under the policy, when introducing new software, the SA government will implement open source solutions unless a proprietary option is demonstrated to be "significantly superior". In any instances where proprietary software is implemented, reasons must be given to justify its use. Migration of current systems is also planned. This will be done in a phased approach, beginning with applications such as replacing MS Office with Open Office or KOffice and replacing Internet Explorer with Firefox. This will in time lead up to the operating system, replacing Windows with a Linux distribution. Migration to Apache for the running of government websites has already occurred within a number of departments. All new software developed for or by the government is to be based on open standards and licensed under an open source licence where possible. More: http://www.apc.org/english/rights/africa/?apc=he_1&x=5193463

DRC: Alternatives reveals the first independent study on an Internet infrastructure that can serve the entire country. The NGO Alternatives revealed the first independent feasibility study on the implementation of a vast infrastructure the size of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at the beginning of August 2007. Carried out by Congolese researchers with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the company, Xit Télécom, and the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), the study proposes, in particular, that the implementation of the network be carried out in partnership with the Société Nationale d'Electricité du Congo (Congolese National Electricity Company - SNEL). The new network could then use SNEL's extra high voltage infrastructures, and be expanded at the same time as the electric power infrastructures, which would mean substantial savings. Contrary to some previous evaluations, which assumed expenses of approximately one thousand million dollars, the study evaluates the project at \$231 million. The planned network alone would cover over 5,467 kilometres, which is approximately the distance between the Congolese capital, Kinshasa, and the city of Cairo, in Egypt. It would serve every one of the 26 provinces in the DRC, as well as Kinshasa. The results of the study, which was ordered by the Office Congolais des Postes et des Télécommunications (Congolese Posts and Telecommunications Office - OCPT), will be

presented to the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Congolese private sector and various civil society players, such as the media, NGOs and educational establishments. Founded in 1994, Alternatives is an NGO, which works for social justice in Canada and abroad. More: www.alternatives.ca

Zambia: India Funds ICT Training in Zambia. Zambia and India have signed an agreement that will see India fund Zambian centres to train researchers and the public in information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Peter Daka, the Zambian minister of science and technology, and River Wallang, the Indian high commissioner to Zambia, signed the agreement in Lusaka on 12 September 2007. More: <http://tinyurl.com/22lozr>

Africa: Mobile Communications for Rural Homes. Ericsson, the world's leading telecommunications supplier, has announced that it is partnering with The Earth Institute at Columbia University to provide connectivity to the Millennium Villages project. The partnership is designed to bring mobile communication and Internet services to approximately 400,000 people in ten African countries where the project is being implemented. More: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/internet/43439>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1 – 5 October 2007, ICT AFRICA 2007, Kenyatta International Conference Centre, Nairobi, Kenya. ICT Africa is an annual continental information and communications technology conference addressing all aspects of ICT development in Africa. The conference is convened by NePAD council in collaboration with the NePAD Kenya secretariat. The 2007 event will be organised by Global Conferences, Cape Town, South Africa. More: rjacobs@globalconf.co.za

3 – 5 October, Infrastructure Partnerships for African Development (IPAD) Central Africa, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. iPAD Central Africa 2006 provides an opportunity to network directly with key partners. The event aims to facilitate regional planning and collaborations under one roof between government, the public sector and business. iPAD Central Africa 2006 is a one-stop-shop for investigating investment opportunities in DRC and the Central African region as a whole. More: <http://www.spintelligent-events.com/ipad-central2006/en/>

10 – 11 October 2007, World e-Parliament Conference 2007, Geneva, Switzerland. The Conference is being organised jointly by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

(ASGP), through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The World e-Parliament Conference 2007 will be an expert forum on the use of new technologies to modernize parliamentary processes and improve parliamentary dialogue with citizens. It will provide an opportunity to debate the challenges and benefits provided by ICT and will analyse successful approaches, identify good practices and lessons learned. The Conference is aimed at Members of Parliament, Secretaries General and parliamentary staff and officials who work with ICT, such as legislative staff, IT administrators, knowledge managers and librarians, as well as representatives of international organisations and institutions working in the above mentioned domain. More: <http://www.ictparliament.org/worldparliamentconference2007/>

28 October 2007, GKP Africa Briefing Meeting on GK3 Engagement Opportunities, Kigali, Rwanda. Organised by UNECA, GKP Africa Regional Coordinator, this is a closed, by-invitation-only meeting of the GKP Africa Regional Network to share with GKP Network Members in Africa on GK3 engagement opportunities. More: [Eskedar Nega \(enega@uneca.org\)](mailto:enega@uneca.org).

29 – 30 October 2007, Connect Africa Summit of African leaders, Kigali, Rwanda. Connect Africa will be launched at the Summit under the patronage of the President of Rwanda, Mr Paul Kagame, as well as the Chairman of the African Union and President of Ghana, His Excellency, Mr John Kufour. It will be organised by the International Telecommunication Union, the African Union, the World Bank Group and the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development, in partnership with the African Development Bank, the African Telecommunication Union and the UN Economic Commission for Africa. More: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/connect/africa/2007/>

28 – 30 November 2007, The Fourth Web for Development (Web4Dev) Conference, Nairobi, Kenya. The Conference's theme is "Driving economic and social development with the Internet", and will focus on helping developing countries bridge the digital divide. Since its inception at a conference organised by the World Bank in 2003, the Web for Development meetings are now well established as a forum for the web community of UN agencies, and international development civil society organisations interested in using their expertise to show how the Internet can promote development. The three conferences already held have evolved to include not only the public sector, but the private sector as well. More: <http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=546>

ANNOUNCEMENTS/RESOURCES

M-Payments 2007- 2012: Commerce and banking in the mobile world- NEW REPORT! This new 100+ pages in-depth management report focuses on the impacts of the technology as well as the potentials of m-payments. More specifically, the report addresses questions such as what are the most innovative forms of m-payments available and which generate the most revenue?, why m-payments and banking will be critical to mobile development?, who should you be aligning yourself with m-payments and what are they doing?, how can you make a success of mass market proposition in Europe and North America?, which technologies will become most successful, why and how you can be a part of it? The price for a copy of the report is GBP£1999. Contacts: Ming-Wai, Tel: +44 (0) 207 549 9946 or email: ming-wai.wong@visiongain.com

GRACE – Africa. Carried out in 12 African countries, GRACE aims to bring together African researchers to study ICTs and women's empowerment in an effort to influence debates on gender and ICTs as well as national and provincial policies. Managed and implemented by Research for the Future, with funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), this programme uses research as a tool to build capacity and foster exchanges on topics ranging from mobile telephone use, to the ways in which women could use e-commerce, to barriers to ICT use and women's strategies to overcome these obstacles. A key element informing GRACE's knowledge construction process is participation and capacity building: creating the space and skills for the research teams to develop their own methodology for understanding what "empowerment" and "gender" may mean in multiple African contexts. Results will be documented in a professionally edited online and printed publication. More: <http://www.comminit.com/africa/experiences/Pds102005/experiences-3397.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 for inclusion in subsequent issues of the PICTA Bulletin. If you have any comments and/or suggestions, please contact:

*Eskedar Nega
Programme Officer
ICT Policy and Development
ICTs, Science & Technology Division (ISTD)
Economic Commission for Africa
P. O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-11-5445315
Fax: 251-11-5510512
E-mail: enega@uneca.org*