

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

“Science With Africa” Conference: Science and technological innovation critical for Africa's economic growth. “The scale of the challenge facing Africa in the area of science and technology is huge but it can be overcome with vision, commitment and unwavering determination,” said UN Under-Secretary General and ECA's Executive Secretary Mr. Abdoulie Janneh at the opening of the Science with Africa Conference, organized by ECA in collaboration with the African Union (AU) with support from the Canadian e-Policy Resource Centre (CePRC) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The conference, took place from 3 - 7 March 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, aimed to explore how African scientists can increase their collaboration and participation in international science initiatives and research and development projects as well as promote the use of science and technology in the African development process. Speaking to the gathering of scientists, scholars, international research partners, policymakers and entrepreneurs, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh said that Africa is the only region yet to fully exploit the great potentials of using science and technology as an engine of growth and development. Also addressing the gathering were a representative of UNESCO's Director General, African Union's (AU) Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology Prof. Nagia M. Essayed, and Ms Beate Wilhelm, Head of the thematic and knowledge department from Swiss Development Corporation (SDC). Microsoft, Ethiopian Airlines and Nokia-Siemens Networks sponsored the event. The Conference outlined specific plans of actions for implementation under each of the Conference themes. More:

<http://www.uneca.org/sciencewithafrica/>

20 Ideas selected during “Science With Africa” Idea Factory. The Idea Factory is an innovative method for generating ideas, selecting and implementing innovative ones. Supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, this project is an example for meaningful international

collaborations of Global Knowledge Partnership members. This innovation aims at establishing concrete measures to boost R&D in Africa. In the context of this conference, the Idea Factory has facilitated the establishment of selected research ideas, which will be jointly implemented by BrainStore and African scientists, engineers and technologists. Conference participants developed practical ideas for concrete initiatives that foster the scientific development and research in Africa. During the conference, 5,000 inspirations were collected in the Creative Workshop and at the Ideation Shop; these were compressed to 450 proposals of which 144 have been examined by a panel of experts. Twenty (20) ideas were presented to the conference. The ECA, SDC and BrainStore will organize a workshop devoted to the implementation of the outcomes of the Idea Factory in Africa within a few months. More: <http://www.uneca.org/sciencewithafrica/>

GKP AFRICA 2008: Powering Africa with ICT & Entrepreneurship. The Global Knowledge Partnership Regional Network for Africa convened for GKP AFRICA 2008: Powering Africa with ICT & Entrepreneurship in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 3 March 2008, in conjunction with the Science with Africa Conference on 3 to 7 March 2008. Issues discussed include not only the role of ICT in encouraging entrepreneurship, but also the impact of ICT on Climate Change adaptation at the grassroots' level. Partnerships related to Entrepreneurial Learning and Entrepreneurial Radio were also brokered as well. GKP AFRICA 2008 was hosted by the ECA. More: http://www.globalknowledge.org/gkps_portal/newsmaster.cfm?&menuid=2&action=view&retrieveid=533

NOVATECH 2008. NOVATECH 2008 - An Information and Communications Technology (ICT) forum took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at the ECA Conference Centre from 13 –15 February 2008 with a call for increased investments in the ICT sector. The forum, known as NOVATECH 2008 is the first stage of a dynamic process for the promotion and support to the ICT sector in East Africa and Indian Ocean countries. Presenting the statement of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Mr Abdoulie Janneh; Ms Aida Opoku-Mensah, the director of ECA's Science and Technology division, stated that ICTs was one of the fastest growing sectors in Africa and are therefore ripe for infusion of investments. “In today's global information-driven society, economic

success is increasingly based on the effective utilisation of intangible assets such as knowledge, skills and innovative potential are key resources for competitive advantage,” the statement adds. NOVATECH 2008 is organised by ProInvest (www.proinvest-eu.org), a common programme of the European Commission (EC) and the group of African, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. NOVATECH 2008 offered a platform for intense information and interaction between participants from Europe and the ACP. More: <http://www.novatech-proinvest-eu.org>

ICT for Health Network launched in Tanzania. A network which will focus on ICT for Health - known as Afya Mtandao (Swahili for Health Network) - was officially launched on January 31st 2008 in Mwanza, Tanzania. The network unites Tanzanian health workers and promotes the use of ICT in the health sector by providing a knowledge-sharing platform for health workers, raising awareness of ICT in the health sector and providing ICT support services for health institutions. Sponsored by the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), the network is open to all health sector stakeholders in the region. It is also working in close collaboration with the Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC) in the process of being registered and becoming an independent organisation in June 2008. This development also comes in tandem with the launch of a dedicated web portal, to be found at www.afyamtandao.org. More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/ict-for-health-network-launched-in-tanzania-1>

Introducing mobile phones to a farming project in Ghana. Towards the end of 2007 the IICD-supported Eastern Corridor Agro-Market Information Centre (ECAMIC) project of the Ghanaian Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa (SEND Foundation) started using mobile phones to improve market access for rural farming communities. In January 2008 Shafiu Shaibu from the SEND Foundation paid a visit to the Netherlands. The ECAMIC project already uses a broad range of ICTs to promote market access and equity for farming communities in the Eastern Corridor of the Northern Region of Ghana. The project utilises both ‘high-end’ and ‘low-end’ ICT resources: from Internet, websites and mobile phones to community notice boards (chalkboards) and public-address systems. Consequently, the project reaches a number of rural communities through a deployment method that itself resolves to use appropriate technologies. In other words: a technology that can work with the needs and capabilities of its target users. Farming families are organised into cooperatives and provided with agricultural market information that allows them to work in a more predictable market environment. The ultimate goal of the project is to improve the lives of the farmers by helping them to increase their income.

More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/introducing-mobile-phones-to-a-farmers2019-project-in-ghana>

Nokia launches recycling initiative in East Africa. Nokia has launched a recycling initiative in East Africa that offers consumers a structured way to dispose of old mobile phones and accessories. The move comes amid fears that cast-off mobile phones are posing an increasing risk of hazardous toxic chemicals in the developing world. Consumers can drop off old mobile phones, including handsets from other manufacturers, at designated Nokia centers in the region. The devices will be sent to recyclers in Europe for processing. Nokia customer care manager for East Africa, Nicholas Maina, said in February 2008 that the initiative would enhance safe disposal of gadgets. No money will be given to people as an incentive to return the old phones, and Nokia is only providing an infrastructure to ensure that disposal is properly done. The initiative by Nokia comes at a time when many countries in Africa are becoming more concerned about lack of proper handling of electronic waste. The initiative is backed by all key mobile-phone vendors including LG, Matsushita-Panasonic, Motorola, Phillips, Samsung and Siemens. More: IDG News Service (<http://www.networkworld.com/news/2008/022708-nokia-launches-recycling-initiative-in.html>)

NEWS: ECA Activities ECA Activities

Nigeria's ICT Infrastructure Plan validated by Stakeholders. Following a workshop held in Lagos on 17 January 2008, over 100 experts from various stakeholder groups, comprised of Government ministries, private sector, non-government organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), academia, women and youth groups endorsed Nigeria's Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD) Plan. The work was coordinated by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), which established the National Strategic Action Plan Committee mandated by the Federal Government to draw up an e-strategy action plan and programmes in line with the national development objectives and priorities of the country, especially the “Vision 20-20-20 aimed at positioning Nigeria amongst the 20 leading economies in the world by year 2020”. The ICT4D Plan is organized into 11 broad policy focus areas, and identified programmes for short, medium, and long-term implementation by stakeholders. The process was financially supported by the Government of Finland. More: Makane Faye (mfaye@uneca.org).

Gambia Scan-ICT report released. The Scan-ICT project for the Gambia marks another milestone in the development of the ICT sector, measuring access, usage and exploitation of ICTs in the Country. This study was coordinated by the Department of State for Finance and Economic

Affairs, the Department of State for Communications and Information and Technology and the Gambia Bureau of Statistics. Henceforth the exercise will be integrated in the regular data collection mechanism of the Statistical Bureau. The project was part of the second Phase of ECA's Scan-ICT initiative supported by the Government of Finland and implemented in five countries: Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius and Rwanda. More: <http://www.scanict-gbos.gov.gm/>

Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Association of Regulators of Information and Communication for Eastern and Southern Africa (ARICEA). The Meeting took place from 22-23 Feb 2008 in Cairo, Egypt. In a follow-up 6th Meeting of ARICEA Telecommunications and IT Committee, the draft COMESA ICT Strategy was presented by ECA for review and comments. The ICT Strategy Guidelines identifies relevant issues concerning the application of ICT in sectors where its application could produce multiplier effects for the development of the whole region. The ICT strategy highlighted the priority areas, which are infrastructure, human resources, ICT industry, policy and regulatory environment and e-services applications. The Strategy document was amended taking into account the comments made by the members of the committee, and is submitted to the COMESA organs for the adoption. More: Mohamed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org).

Gender and e-Government workshop. A one-day workshop on Gender and E-government was organised on 21 March 2007 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Over forty participants attended the workshop drawn from Ministries of Information and Communication Technologies, National Gender Machineries and representatives of Regional Economic Communities. The workshop was organized under the framework of the Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePol-NET) the ECA and the Canadian ePolicy Resource Centre (CePRC) with the aim of developing an Action Plan framework for Gender and e-Government. The main objective was to facilitate the use of ICTs as tools for empowering and benefiting women and men, for full inclusion in e-government programming and service delivery. The workshop was also a culmination of the series of workshops held in Tunis, Tunisia and Maputo, Mozambique on "Gender and e-Government" in June 2006 and March 2007, respectively. More: <http://www.epolafrica.org/events/2008/gender-egov/about.asp>

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

African countries' ICT policy– going from the blah, blah, blah cycle to getting something done. In a week in which the heart of South Africa's ICT industry - Sandton - suffered continuous load-shedding (rolling power cuts), no-one doubts that developing a modern ICT-enabled economy in Africa

is a challenge. It is easy in these circumstances to respond cynically by asking: Government? What is it good for? But a small number of African Governments have managed to make a difference through facilitating major projects but the majority are in the slow-track when it comes to getting the big things done. Russell Southwood looks at why some countries talk, whilst others do. More: <http://www.balancingact-africa.com/>

FOSSFA urges African Governments to participate more effectively in the debate on Open Standards. The Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA) called on African governments and Standards bodies to participate more effectively in the global debate on Open Standards, especially the Open Office Extended Markup Language (OOXML) standard. Following a five-day conference in Dakar, Senegal (17 -20 March 2008), with a theme, "Making the Knowledge Economy Work for Africa", participants agreed that open standards allow for interoperability (e.g. software packages from various sources can work together), promote innovation and economic growth, and help users avoid being locked-in to proprietary solutions. FOSSFA encourages African governments to facilitate the debate on Open Standards, and involve national experts in decisions regarding technology standards. FOSSFA is closely following the open standards debate in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, South Africa, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe which have the right to vote in a decision on OOXML on March 29, 2008. FOSSFA strongly urges those of them that voted "YES" in the past to abstain in the next voting session to allow for greater national and continent-wide debate on the issue. More: <http://www.fossfa.net> or <http://www.idlelo.org>

Intel Quits the One Laptop Per Child Project. Six months after Nicholas Negroponte's One Laptop per Child Project and Intel decided to 'go it together', the latter has announced leaving the project and resigning from the OLPC Board. The reason, Intel says, is that the OLPC Board demanded the chipmaker stop selling its 'Classmate PCs' while on board the OLPC Project. In Intel's words, the OLPC board asked it to end support to all non-OLPC platforms, instead focusing exclusively on OLPC. The One Laptop per Child Project, the brain-child of Professor Nicholas Negroponte from MIT, has its mission statement to sell as many inexpensive (\$100) laptops to poor children in developing countries. Even before Intel and OLPC joined hands in July last year, Intel's 'Classmate PCs' were always a source of tension between the two. At one point in time, Negroponte went on record to accuse Intel of "dumping" its 'Classmate PCs' so as to keep OLPC (XO) laptops well out of reach of needy children across the globe. The Intel-OLPC partnership, while it lasted, was aimed at developing an Intel-based version of the OLPC laptop. But with Intel dropping-out from the OLPC Project, all that would change

now. An Intel spokesperson explained that for them, it's never been about a single solution to get laptops into the hands of poor children, unlike OLPC. Meanwhile, the OLPC Project hasn't been all that successful considering it eventually required a Give One Get One program to give it that much-needed push.

More:

<http://www.itnewsafrika.com/2007/archives/507>

European Union's Convention on Cyber Crime (ETS No. 185): First International Treaty on Crimes Committed Via the Internet. The Council of Europe, along with the U.S., Canada and Japan signed a convention on Cyber crime. The convention provides a legal framework for the protection of society against cyber-crime. The convention stresses adopting appropriate legislation and fostering international co-operation in this arena. It is the first international treaty on crimes committed via the Internet and other computer networks. In particular, the convention deals with infringements of copyright, computer-related fraud, child pornography and violations of network security. This Convention has been adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe at its 109th Session (8 November 2001). 41 European countries along with U.S., Canada and Japan have signed this convention. The goal of the convention is to establish a fast and effective regime of international co-operation against cybercrime.

More:

http://www.ibls.com/internet_law_news_portal_view.aspx?s=articles&id=7884E3

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

29 March 2008, GKP FORUM on Entrepreneurship: Transforming the World through Entrepreneurs, Doha, Qatar. This GKP FORUM will take place in conjunction with the UNESCO International Conference and Exhibition on Knowledge Parks, held from 29 to 31 March 2008.

More:

http://www.globalknowledge.org/gkps_portal/newsmaster.cfm?&menuid=2&action=view&retrieveid=537

29 – 31 March 2008, The UNESCO International Conference and Exhibition on Knowledge Parks, Doha, Qatar. UNESCO seeks to bring together all the stakeholders involved in the establishment of knowledge parks in order to create favorable conditions for major regional partnerships. Co-organized by UNESCO and the Qatar Foundation (Qatar), the conference and the exhibition are designed to introduce a spectrum of creative ideas for knowledge parks in the developing world. Therefore, it is an excellent opportunity for industries to be present and to sponsor this event with an eye on partnering with governments, UN agencies, NGO's and donors to build regional knowledge parks. Focus areas include ICT Creative Industries and Entrepreneurship, Digital Knowledge Management; and Models of ICT-based Knowledge Parks for

Development. The Conference will discuss how Knowledge Parks can serve economic development priorities in developing countries focussing on strategic do-mains for development - education, science and health. It will explore modalities and south-south/ north-south partnerships for countries to build their own Knowledge Parks in the most relevant domains. More: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24148&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

17 – 18 April 2008, ITU Symposia on ICTs and Climate Change, Kyoto, Japan. As part of a major new initiative on the overall topic of ICTs and climate change, ITU is organizing two Symposia on ICTs and Climate Change. The first will be held in Kyoto, Japan 15-16 April 2008, hosted by MIC Japan, and the second in London, UK, on 17-18 June, hosted by BT. These symposia will bring together key specialists in the field, from top decision-makers to engineers, designers, planners, government officials, regulators, standards experts and others. More: <http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/worksem/climatechange/index.html>

20 – 25 April 2008, UNCTAD XII, Accra, Ghana. The twelfth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII), will be on the theme: "Addressing the opportunities and challenges of globalization for development", and sub-themes include 1) Enhancing coherence at all levels for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction in global policy making, including the contribution of regional approaches; 2) Key trade and development issues and the new realities in the geography of the world economy, 3) Enhancing the enabling environment at all levels to strengthen productive capacity, trade and investment: mobilizing resources and harnessing knowledge for development, and 4) Strengthening UNCTAD; enhancing its development role, impact, and institutional effectiveness. More: Website: <http://www.unctadxii.org/en/>

28 - 30 April 2008, A NEPAD Council Europe EVENT: First Europe-Africa Business Summit (EABS), Hamburg, Germany. This is the first intercontinental market place and forum for private businesses and investors in Europe and Africa having its debut in April 2008 against the scenic backdrop of Germany's historic "Gate to the World", Hamburg. EABS was initiated by a committee of organisations active in the fostering of European-African economic cooperation. It is constantly striving to increase public and private sector awareness of the many commercial opportunities held by intercontinental trade and investment. More: <http://www.nepadcouncil.org>

29 –30 May 2008, e-Learning Africa, Accra, Ghana. eLearning Africa 2008 is a conference organised by ICWE GmbH and Hoffmann & Reif that focuses on ICT for development, education and

training in Africa. The event establishes and links a Pan-African network of decision makers from governments and administrations with universities, schools, governmental and private training providers, industry, and important partners in development cooperation. More: <http://www.eLearning-Africa.com>

ANNOUNCEMENTS/RESOURCES

PIWA-Information Society Prize 2008 - Haayo Prizes

Within the framework of its objective to strengthen journalist capacity on ICTs of the its "Haayo-Mediatic" (<http://www.haayo.org/>) project funded by the Open Society Institute West Africa (OSIWA), the Panos Institute West Africa (PIWA) is launching a media production contest on ICTs. The contest is open to all print and broadcast media journalists from West and Central Africa. Theme of the 2008 edition is "ICTs and elections in Africa". Journalists who wish to take part in this contest should send one or two articles or radio productions presenting an outlook on the theme. PIWA will award three prizes to the best productions (written media or radio) in the contest. More: <http://www.haayo.org/PIWA-Information-Society-Prize.html>

Global Gateway: An interactive online resource

Global Gateway: An interactive online resource for everyone concerned with improving ICT access for people with disabilities has been launched by the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict), a partnership initiative of the United Nations Global Alliance for ICT and Development. The site, which is aimed at private, public, and non-governmental organisations includes news, reports, country and company profiles and case studies. More: <http://www.g3ict.com/>

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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