

PICTA Bulletin is a quarterly 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

The 2009 Technology in Government in Africa (TIGA) Awards announced. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Canadian Fund for Africa are pleased to announce the Technology in Government in Africa (TIGA) Awards which aim to recognise the work of African Governments in the effective use of ICTs for public services delivery as part of ECA's African Information Society Initiative (AISII) and Canada's ICTs for development programme. The Awards are aimed at African Governments and institutions based in Africa that are engaged in initiating, developing and implementing ICTs for public services in Africa contributing to the development of the Information Society in Africa. The deadline for applications is 31 January 2009. More: <http://www.uneca.org/tiga/>

GKP Executive Committee and Membership Committee/Regional Coordinators meet jointly in Paris. The GKP Executive Committee (EXCOMM) met jointly with the Membership Committee/Regional Coordinators on 18 September 2008 in Paris. EXCOMM Chair Michael Clarke chaired proceedings which commenced with UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communication & Information, Abdul Waheed Khan welcoming participants. UNESCO played host for the meeting. The meeting participants were then presented with updates on and discussed various network matters including the network's membership status, outcomes from the Virtual Annual Members' Meeting 2008 (VAMM'08), the GKPnet initiative, GKP's progression as a Global Action Network, and the Regional Coordinators' Workplans for 2008-2010. Membership Committee Chair Omar Dengo Foundation's Eduardo Monge presented an update on the Network's membership changes since 1 January 2008, as well as an analysis on the level of member engagement for 2008. More: <http://www.globalknowledge.org/>

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Access to Learning Award (ATLA) 2009. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's annual "Access to Learning

Award" is inviting applications. The Award recognises the innovative efforts of public libraries and similar institutions outside the United States to connect people to information and opportunities through free access to computers and the Internet. The award is offered by Global Libraries, a special initiative of the foundation's Global Development Program. The deadline for application is 31 October 2008. More: <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/GlobalDevelopment/GlobalLibraries/AccessLearningAward/RelatedInfo/ATLAApplicationForm.htm>

NEWS: ECA Activities ECA Activities

Stakeholders adopt The Gambia NICI Plan. A workshop held in Banjul on 24-25 August 2008 brought together experts from various stakeholder groups, comprised of Government ministries, private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), academia, and media to review and endorse "The Gambian ICT4D-2012 Plan". The document is the product of a series of activities which commenced in 2003, based on ECA's African Information Society Initiative (AISII), and which led to the adoption of the Gambia National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) Policy by Cabinet in 2006. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in March 2008 between ECA and the Department of State for Communication Information and Technology (DOSCIT) of the Gambia, to develop an implementation plan for the policy. The ICT Policy is set within the general framework of the Gambia Vision 2020 and is geared towards recognizing the areas where ICT would contribute to the attaining of the overall objective of the following four strategic issues identified in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP):

- Enhancing the Productive Capacity of the Poor;
- Enhancing Access to and the Performance of Social Services;
- Local Level Capacity Building; and
- Promoting Participatory Communications Processes.

The goal of the NICI Plan is to develop the Gambian Information Economy and to accelerate the process of transforming the country into an African Silicon Valley, aimed at serving as a hub within the West African sub-region for the development and production of high-income knowledge products and

value-added services. Funding for the Gambia Plan is from the first phase of the Finland Project (The Cooperation in the Development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Africa) related to NICI development. More Makane Faye (mfaye@uneca.org).

Sixth African Development Forum to Focus on Gender Issues. The sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI) will be convened on the theme "Action on gender equality, empowerment and ending violence against women in Africa" from 19 to 21 November 2008 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Forum, one of the principal events of the Economic Commission for Africa's 50th Anniversary celebrations, is being jointly held with the African Union (AU) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The Forum will give prominence to eliminating violence against women as a major impediment to social and economic development on the continent and the achievement of the MDGs. This is in line with the UN Secretary-General's Campaign to End Violence against Women launched on 25 February 2008 and which will run from 2008 through 2015 to coincide with the target date for achieving the MDGs. Other themes that the Forum will discuss with regard to gender equality include: HIV and AIDS, Health and reproductive rights, Education, Training and skills development, Migration, Governance, Conflict, Peace and security, Employment, Markets and trade, Food security, Land and property rights, Climate change, Water, Sanitation and energy, Financing for gender equality, and ICT. The forum is expected to among other issues, come up with a plan of action that will provide clear recommendations for member States and development partners to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. More: <http://www.uneca.org/adf>

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

East African States discuss ICT policy harmonization. East African States discussed ICT policy harmonization in a meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya on the 30th of July, 2008 in. Participants discussed plans for regional ICT policy harmonization and to determine if and how a single regulation policy can be applied uniformly. "Our ultimate aim is to ensure that the policy must not favour one country or its businesses and citizens over another," said Bitange Ndemo, permanent secretary of Kenya's Ministry of Information and Communication. The EAC, which includes Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, has lagged behind in its quest to unite the region due to a sentiment among members that policy plans favoured Kenya. The meeting discussed a draft harmonization framework for ICT Policies in the region and the findings to guide national stakeholders in their discussions on the best and most practical way to achieve national and regional ICT policy objectives, said Juma Mwapachu,

EAC secretary general. The draft framework identified interconnection costs, innovative technology and finance, open access, Internet governance and ICT-related environmental concerns (e-waste) as the major issues to be addressed. More: <http://www.itnewsafrika.com/?p=795>

Africa Still Hampered by Lack of Geographical Data. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) could play a vital role in improving agriculture and boosting food security in Africa. However, only a few African countries were capable of developing such systems, partly because of a lack of basic geographical data. This arose during the third Map Africa Conference, which took place in the Cape Town, South African from August 25 to 26, 2008. The Conference revolved around geographical information technology systems, which are computer applications that capture, store, analyse, manage, present, monitor and visualise spatial information that is linked to a geographical location. Anneliza Collett of the South African department of agriculture regarded GIS as crucial in managing land: "we need to know about things such as erosion, about natural resources and which areas are suitable for agriculture. GIS enables us to do so, as it combines all relevant and necessary information in one visual system." According to Derek Clarke, Chief Director of the surveying and mapping unit at South Africa's Ministry of Land affairs, geographical information technology could play an important role in improving farming practices across Africa. "Geographic information technology systems, when incorporating features such as climatologic information, water sources, infrastructure and soil structure, could show us which regions in Africa as a whole or in individual African countries are suitable for what kind of agriculture," explained Clarke. Such systems could also be developed to monitor changes in climate, rainfall, erosion and soil structure. When made available to farmers, this could help them adapt their farming practices to environmental conditions. More: <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=43685>

Internet penetration has become a key factor in financial well-being. According to research from Telecommunications Management Group, for every 1% increase in a country's Internet penetration, GDP per capita increases by US\$493 and a 1% increase in mobile penetration results in a per capita increase of US\$240. Many countries were now looking to broadband as the next leap in bringing connectivity to the African continent and wireless broadband had shown itself to be the most efficient, sustainable and cost-effective solution to bridge the continent's technology gap and drive broadband service in rural and remote areas. The regional growth of wireless services was certainly not a new development. Research firm Informa Telecoms and Media contends that as far back as 2001, the number of Africa's wireless telecommunication subscribers had overtaken the number of fixed-line subscribers in Africa, and project there will be 310 million wireless

subscribers across the continent by 2010. The deployment and use of wireless technologies had overtaken fixed-line installations because deployment was faster and more economically efficient. In developing markets such as Africa, the mobile phone often provided consumers with their first exposure to the Internet. Africa's broadband connectivity challenges were not entirely technical and financial. Even though 3G technologies were available for both fixed and mobile use, they were often constrained by licence limitations. Flexibility in licensing would enable the continent to reap the full advantages of 3G. With the cooperation of governments, operators and technology providers, wireless broadband could play a key role in expanding the availability of broadband services across Africa and narrowing the digital divide.

More: <http://www.itnewsafrika.com/?p=965>

Rwanda: Broadband rollout to improve healthcare. Rwanda's news agency reports that President Kagame said that the ongoing broadband rollout program will ease health service delivery for its rural people: "The increased bandwidth will allow us to send digital radiology images from district hospitals to experts in our capital Kigali and outside the country... Given that the overwhelming majority of our population lives in rural areas, this will allow many more patients to easily secure specialist opinion at significantly reduced cost." The month-long Rockefeller Foundation organised E-Health Conference took place from July 13 to August 08 in Bellagio Italy.. Delegates discussed accelerating innovative applications of emerging digital technologies to improve the health of poor and vulnerable people around the world - a field known as eHealth. Mr Kagame also told his high-profile audience of the TRACnet project that was linking up health centers providing ARVs to patients. The government, partnering with a US firm project - was connecting up to 178 sites caring for some 55,000 patients that were on ARVs. "TRACnet is successful because it was designed as a bottom up model that links record systems in health centers, and antiretroviral therapy sites across the country, to a central data warehouse", he said. More: <http://www.itnewsafrika.com/?p=914>

Botswana backs Eassy project with \$100m investment. The government of Botswana has invested US\$100 million in Africa's second biggest submarine cable project to bolster its plans to link with Europe via the east and west coasts of Africa. The East Africa Submarine Cable System (EASSY) project that runs under the Indian Ocean from Mtunzini in South Africa to Port Sudan in Sudan is currently under construction and is expected to be in operation by 2010. The Botswana government is also negotiating with Namibia and Angola to determine the most feasible way for Botswana to access the undersea cable from West Africa that will provide the country's link to Europe via West Africa. The country wants to link Europe through terrestrial and undersea

cables via east and West African coasts to ease communication problems, said Botswana Assistant Minister of Trade and Industry Duke Liphoko in an interview. Negotiations are under way with Angola and Namibia to determine the most feasible way to access the undersea cables, Liphoko said. The project, which will cost more than \$230 million, is being funded by the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, the African Development Bank, the European Development Bank, the German Development Bank and a consortium of 25 telecom operators. More: <http://www.itnewsafrika.com/?p=923>

Africa investor launches SRI Index with NEPAD and the UN. Africa investor (Ai), a leading international investment research and communications group, announced the launch of its Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) Index Series (the Africa investor SRI 50 & Africa investor SRI 30) at the United Nations in New York, as a concrete step to engage investors and business in support of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa. The Africa investor SRI Index Series is aligned with the MDGs and internationally recognised ESG principles, which form part of the selection criteria to assess companies working toward the achievement of the Goals. The SRI Index Series consists of the Ai SRI 50, a benchmark index to give development finance institutions, researchers, analysts and shareholders an overview of SRI across a broad spectrum of businesses and markets in Africa and the Ai SRI 30, an investable index targeting institutional and retail SRI investors. To advance the process, Africa investor has convened an independent expert Advisory Board for the Series to assist with its ongoing review and rebalancing. More: <http://www.africa-investor.com>

Kagame talks innovation & technology for Africa. The President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, has urged the developed world to assist developing countries through innovation and technology. Kagame was speaking at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The Rwandan leader was a guest speaker for the Compton Lecture Series, talking about the "Imperative of Science and Technology in Accelerating African and Rwandan Development." According to The Tech, Kagame commenced his talk by reflecting on "the imperative of focusing and utilising science and technology," to effect Africa's socioeconomic transformation. He called on the MIT community to take part in this effort to put innovation and entrepreneurship at the forefront of Rwanda's most valuable resource, its people. Kagame highlighted the One Laptop per Child initiative that is bringing computers to children in developing countries. Most of his talk centered on the positive benefits of mobile phone technology. "Africa is the fastest growing market for mobile phones," said Kagame adding that there were 28 million subscribers in the first quarter of 2008 alone. Mobile phones had been influential in spinning off small retail businesses as well as playing a leading role in

narrowing the digital divide and allowed businesses in Rwanda to become global by allowing them to reach customers outside of their immediate neighborhood. Kagame gave an example of Voxiva as an effective public-private partnership to address public health through mobile phones. Voxiva allowed users to relay data from the field in real time which was particularly useful in the exchange of patient data from remote areas. The Compton Lecture Series was established in 1957 with the mission of "bringing to MIT some of the great minds on the world scene." It is named in honor of former MIT President Karl Taylor Compton who led the Institute during the Great Depression and the Second World War. More: <http://www.itnewsafrika.com/?p=1176>

Ericsson to launch mobile Innovation Centre in Africa. Ericsson announced that it will establish an Innovation Center in sub-Saharan Africa to develop mobile applications that will benefit society as a whole, but with a special focus on meeting the needs of poor and rural populations. The initiative will focus on solutions in health, education, agriculture and small business development and is another important step in Ericsson's ongoing commitment to supporting the achievement of the UN's Millennium Development Goals. More: <http://www.icconnect-online.org/News/ericsson-to-launch-mobile-innovation-center-in-africa>

Zambia puts IT to use in October presidential election. The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) will use biometric data to identify those replacing their lost voter registration cards for the Oct. 30 presidential election. More: <http://www.icconnect-online.org/News/zambia-puts-it-to-use-in-october-presidential-election>

Uganda government will launch Web portal. The government of Uganda will soon have a nationwide Web portal that will consolidate the individual Web sites of various government institutions. "It will be a gateway and a one-stop center for all government information," Ambrose Ruyooka, Uganda's acting Commissioner of IT, said in an interview. The portal, which was commissioned by the Ministry of ICT, will also incorporate the government ministries, departments and agencies that do not maintain Web sites at this time. As a means of sharing information, the portal will provide links to all government sites and will lead to e-government service provision, Ruyooka explained. The Ministry of ICT has received a draft of the portal from the developer, Uganda Web Pages, and will seek comments from the general public soon, he said. A team drawn from the ministry and the Uganda Media Centre will provide and manage content for the portal. The new portal will take on the tasks of a private portal set up by Uganda Web Pages, which has become one of the country's main online resources. Critics of nationwide government Web portals have argued that the technology is not sophisticated enough to meet the needs of multiple agencies

More: <http://www.computerworldzambia.com/>
Mobile health to expand to 22 sub-Saharan countries. The United Nations Foundation and Vodafone Foundation's Technology Partnership is expanding its mobile health (m-Health) program to 22 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. To achieve the full benefits of technology, Technology Partnership has entered into agreements with DataDyne.org and the World Health Organization (WHO) to expand the use of EpiSurveyor, an open-source application that helps health-care workers track health data. Developed by DataDyne, EpiSurveyor is easily adaptable by workers in the field and can be downloaded to handheld devices. Successful pilot programs in Kenya and Zambia were followed by training sessions in Benin, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda. An additional 11 countries will be added to this list by the end of the year. EpiSurveyor allows health workers in urban and rural areas to easily collect, manage and share clean and timely program monitoring data, said Balcha Girma Masresha, medical officer in WHO's African immunization program. Its successful implementation has greatly improved the timeliness and availability of health-care data, making it easier to strengthen district level health-care programs involving immunizations against malaria and other preventative programs aimed at improving public health, the Technology Partnership said. The Technology Partnership has committed over US\$2 million to develop the m-Health program. These funds will provide direct support for in-country activities and for software development and support from DataDyne.org. More: <http://www.computerworldzambia.com>

Mobile banking revolutionising the livelihood of the poor and rural people in Kenya. A silent revolution is taking shape in the mobile phone and banking sectors and the biggest beneficiaries are likely to be low income earners and rural area residents in Kenya. bank accounts are now in the hands of mobile phone users as Kenya has become the first country in the world to introduce financial transactions system that does not involve a card. More: <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/468202/-/tkcdnb/-/>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

05 - 06 November 2008, Workshop to advance mobile applications development in East Africa, Kampala, Uganda. The overall objective of the workshop is to discuss and explore current and future use of mobile applications in East Africa. The workshop will collaboratively identify obstacles hindering the success of mobile applications and explore avenues through which these could be addressed. Participants are invited from various institutions, companies and organisations in the East

African region that are key in this field. In addition, a number of development partners interested in this field will also be sending representatives. The workshop is sponsored by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). More: <http://m4d.kcl.co.ug>

19 – 21 November 2008, Sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The theme of the sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI) will be on "Action on gender equality, empowerment and ending violence against women in Africa". The Forum, one of the principal events of the Economic Commission for Africa's 50th Anniversary celebrations, is being jointly convened with the African Union (AU) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). The Forum will give prominence to eliminating violence against women as a major impediment to social and economic development on the continent and the achievement of the MDGs. ICTs is one of the themes that the Forum will discuss with regard to gender equality.

More: <http://www.uneca.org/adf>

22 – 28 November 2008. AfriNIC-9, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (VENUE CHANGED...WILL BE ANNOUNCED SHORTLY).

The 9th AfriNIC Open Policy Meeting is open to everyone and provides an excellent opportunity to take part in Internet policy discussions. AfriNIC is a non-government, not-for-profit, membership based organization, based in Mauritius to serve African Internet Community. AfriNIC is the Regional Registry for Internet Number Resources for Africa. More: <http://meeting.afriNIC.net/afriNIC9/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS/RESOURCES

Global Innovation Forum for Education and Development.

The UN-DESA GAID (Global Alliance for ICT and Development) Committee of e-Leaders for ICT and Youth was created recently with the aim of providing global leadership in promoting the use of ICTs by youth for development. The Committee is co-organizing a *Global Innovation Forum for Education and Development in Yerevan, Armenia from October 21-24, 2008* which will focus on ICT innovation in the areas of access, connectivity, and relevant local content development. The Forum is set to encourage young people to be engaged in, and develop and propose new ICT initiatives that innovatively advance local communities in various emerging regions. Area experts from private and public sectors and selected young participants are invited to showcase their successful ICT practices during the four interactive days. The Forum will highlight new innovations in ICT and new ground-breaking business models and methods that successfully address the developmental needs in different societies. More: <http://www.un-gaid.org/en/node/2353>

UNESCO/ANSTI Diaspora Award. UNESCO/ANSTI is inviting African scientists in the Diaspora to apply for the above award. The award is offered to scientists who wish to attend scientific thematic conferences and workshops in Africa. The award includes the cost of an air ticket, accommodation and a daily subsistence for the duration of the conference. Women scientists in the Diaspora are particularly encouraged to apply. The applications should be sent to: ANSTI Coordinator, UNESCO Nairobi Office, Room C-116, P.O. BOX 30592, 00100, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: 254 2-7622619/20, Fax: 254 2-7622538, Email: ansti@ansti.org Web: http://ansti.org/mailman/listinfo/ansti_ansti.org

Short-listed GenARDIS III candidates announced.

The Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in the Information Society (GenARDIS) Small Grants Fund announced that twenty projects have been short-listed as possible GenARDIS recipients. The short-listed proposals are from sixteen countries in Africa and the Caribbean, and include the Dominican Republic, St. Vincent, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, the Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. More: <http://genardis.apcwomen.org/en/node/38>

Improving Technology Utilization in Electronic Government around the World, 2008.

This report by Darrell M. West reviews the current status of electronic government and makes practical suggestions for improving the delivery of information and services over the Internet. Using a detailed analysis of 1,667 national government websites in 198 nations around the world undertaken in Summer 2008, the report analyses the types of features available online, the variation that exists across countries and how current e-government trends compare to previous years, as far back as 2001. More: <http://www.icconnect-online.org/News/improving-technology-utilization-in-electronic-government-around-the-world>

Free and Open Source Software for Development.

In this book, the authors explore the grounds for high expectations on FOSS4D. Where do they come from and is there evidence to support these expectations? Over the last few years several projects have been initiated and some good results have been achieved, but at the same time many challenges have been encountered. What lessons can be drawn from these experiences and do these experiences contain enough evidence to support the high expectations? Several projects and their achievements are considered. In the final part of the book, the future of Free and Open Source Software for Development is explored. Special attention is accorded to the African continent where the challenges are considerable.. What is the role of Free and open Source Software for Development and how do we need to position and explore the potential? What are the threats? The book aims at professionals who are engaged in designing and implementing ICT for Development

(ICT4D) projects and wish to improve their understanding of the role that Free and Open Source Software can play.

More: <http://www.iicd.org/articles/free-and-open-source-software-for-development/>

GKP Annual Report 2007 out now! GKP reached a decade of network excellence in sharing knowledge and building partnerships in the year 2007. Read about the Network's achievements in this 46-page Annual Report, including its most significant intervention in 2007 - the Third Global Knowledge Conference (GK3).

More: http://www.globalknowledge.org/gkps_portal/index.cfm?&menuid=540

PICTA Bulletin is a quarterly 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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