

THIRD MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION (CODI-III)

INFORMATION NOTE

Date: 10-17 May 2003

Theme: Information and Governance

BACKGROUND

What is CODI?

The Committee on Development Information (CODI) is one of the seven technical Committees established by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of Ministers during its review of the Intergovernmental machinery of ECA at its twenty-third session in May 1997. This committee took over the functions of the joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Population and Information specialists, and of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa, and also ensures the implementation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISII). Its terms of reference include:

- To promote the growth of an information society in Africa;
- To advise on measures to improve all aspects of statistical development of member States;
- To advise on the building, maintenance and dissemination of regional development databases, including bibliographic, textual and spatial databases.

The Committee meets every two years in accordance with Resolution 826 (XXXII), adopted at the aforementioned conference. CODI conducts its technical deliberations under three subcommittees, namely:

- Sub-Committee on Information and Communications Technologies,
- Sub-Committee on Statistics, and
- Sub-Committee on Geoinformation.

Previous Meetings

The first meeting of CODI (CODI-I) was held in Addis Ababa from the 28 June to 2 July 1999 under the theme "Harnessing Information for Development". The second meeting was also held in Addis Ababa, from 4 to 7 September 2001 under the theme of "Development Information for Decision Making". Participants at these meetings included delegates from member States and observers from United Nations agencies, Europe, Asia and North America, as well as sub-regional, regional and international organizations, academic and research institutions, multi-national corporations and small business enterprises.

CODI meetings usually include specialized technical working group sessions and workshops on topics such as land information systems, strengthening statistical capacity for poverty monitoring, the use of ICT by small and medium enterprises (SMEs), spatial data infrastructures (SDIs), monitoring and measuring good governance in Africa, knowledge management, and the African Virtual Library and Information Network.

THE THIRD MEETING OF CODI (CODI-III)

The Theme

The development agenda of Africa, as set out in ECA's work plan, the Millennium Development Goals, NEPAD and other initiatives cannot be achieved without good governance. In recognition of this, the theme "**Information and Governance**" has been chosen so that the attention of practitioners in the various fields involved in development information will be focused on their role and contribution in the on-going discourse on governance in Africa. Indeed, good governance requires transparency and community participation in the decision process. Decision and policy analyses require relevant information. It is therefore important that appropriate data are collected and maintained, and that they are processed into information and made easily accessible by the general citizenry. The importance of improving access to information for decision-making has long been established. CODI-II, which included a working group session on monitoring and measuring good governance, was on the theme of "Development Information for Decision Making" and deliberated on providing information for decision making. This meeting therefore, will build on outcomes of CODI-II, and will focus on harnessing information for good governance in Africa.

Objectives/Expectations of CODI-III

The overall objectives of CODI-III are:

1. To discuss and recommend strategies to member States and the Commission for providing information for good governance.
2. To review the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of CODI-II.

The meeting is also expected to discuss and recommend strategies for sustained resourcing and maintenance of information services, systems and institutions to make relevant information available and accessible to decision makers and the general public in a form that is ready for use.

Format of the Meeting

The programme is structured to emphasize the synergies between the various fields and groups, while providing for in depth treatment of very technical issues at the level of sub committees. There will therefore be a mix of plenary sessions involving all participants, and parallel sub-committee sessions devoted to discipline-specific topics. The main meeting will run from Monday to Thursday, and pre-meeting and post-meeting workshops and seminars will take place on Saturday and Sunday preceding the meeting and Friday and Saturday following the meeting.

The Keynote Address

A keynote speech on the subject of governance will set the tone for the meeting. To be given by an expert on governance, the speech will elucidate the meaning of governance and present its ramifications and vision for Africa. The speech will essentially present challenges for Africa on such issues as effective public administration, a functioning legal framework, efficient and predictable regulatory structures, and transparent systems for both financial and legal accountability. Three discipline-specific panellists will then respond to the address and present the contributions of the subcommittees in dealing with the challenges.

Participants

Every member State sends an official government delegation comprised of statisticians, information and geo-information specialists and librarians. These are usually drawn from National Statistics Offices, Population Agencies, National or University Libraries, Archives and Documentation

Centres, Information and Communications Agencies, National Mapping Agencies and other geoinformation management organizations. There are also observers representing countries outside Africa; United Nations agencies; sub-regional, regional and international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations; academic and research institutions; multinational corporations; small and medium enterprises; civil society organizations and private practitioners. The workshop and seminars are open to other invited stakeholders from various sectors of the society in Africa who would benefit from them.

Funding

CODI is a statutory meeting of ECA. Therefore delegates and observers are expected to cover the cost of their travel and subsistence for the duration of their stay in Addis Ababa. The funds for organizing and supporting the main meeting come from the regular budget of ECA. The workshops are usually organized in collaboration with partners, who may fund the costs associated with bringing the experts and facilitators, and sometimes the travel and subsistence of invited participants at the workshops.

Exhibitions and Posters

The United Nations Conference Centre has a large exhibition space, which will be made available for displays of information material, products, services and posters. Exhibits will be on display throughout the duration of the meeting. At least 200 delegates and observers representing government officials, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academicians and private practitioners in the fields of ICT, libraries, geoinformation and statistics are expected to attend.

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