

**First meeting of the Committee on Development Information**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION (CODI)**

**Economic Commission for Africa**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**28 June-1 July 1999**

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**(a) INTRODUCTION**

1. The Committee on Development Information (CODI) is one of the seven subsidiary bodies of the Commission for Africa, established in 1997 by the twenty-third meeting of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic and Social Development and Planning. As a subsidiary body of the Commission, CODI provides policy and technical guidance for the sub-programme “harnessing information for development”. The Development Information Services Division (DISD) is responsible for implementing this sub-programme which covers information and communication technologies; statistical development; database development and management; geo-information and library, documentation and information services.

2. The terms of reference of CODI, as established by the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1997 (see Annex), identify the areas of responsibility of CODI. So as to operationalize the terms of reference, CODI considered its terms of reference at its first meeting (28 June-2 July 1999) and elaborated on them further with a view to better focus the work of CODI. The terms of reference as revised and adopted are presented hereunder.

**(b) GENERAL**

3. The Committee on Development Information, acting within the framework of the policies and procedures of the United Nations and subject to the general supervision of the ECA Conference of Ministers shall:

- a) Promote the growth of an information society in Africa through the utilisation of information and communication technologies for the organisation, management and dissemination of information in Africa;
- b) Advise on measures to improve all aspects of statistical development of member States including international comparability having regard to the recommendations of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations;
- c) Advise on the building, maintenance and dissemination of regional development databases, including bibliographic, textual and spatial databases, and assist in strengthening the capacity of member States to improve their national information systems;
- d) Promote the development and utilization of geographic information technologies as decision support tools for the socio-economic development of member States;
- e) Foster regional cooperation and integration among members States, with the participation of key stakeholders in the field;
- f) Offer a platform for African participants to interact with their counterparts from the developed world and promote negotiation on bilateral and multilateral technical assistance.

**Membership**

4. The Committee on Development Information shall be composed of statisticians, information and geo-information specialists and librarians who are government officials of the members States of the Economic Commission for Africa.

### **Observers**

5. States, not members of the Commission, inter-governmental organizations, academic institutions and research centers, agencies of the UN and non-governmental organizations shall be invited to the meetings of CODI and its sub-committees as Observers.

### **Sessions**

6. The Committee shall meet once every two years and shall report on its sessions to the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa.

7. Work at sessions of the Committee shall be organized in plenary meetings and in sub-committees. A joint report of the plenary and sub-committees meetings shall be agreed to at the final plenary meeting of each session of the Committee,

8. At the beginning of each session, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons and two Rapporteurs.

### **Sub-committees**

9. Three sub-committees in the following specialized fields shall be established:

- Information and Communication Technologies;
- Statistics;
- Geo-information.

10. The sub-committees may establish ad-hoc or standing workings groups, as necessary, for the duration of the meeting, between meetings and as long as necessary.

11. Each sub-committee shall appoint a Chairperson, a Vice-chairperson and a Rapporteur.

12. Each sub-committee shall adopt its report which shall be agreed to at the final plenary session of CODI.

### **Others**

13. Member States and agencies shall bear the cost of their attendance at the sessions of the Committee;

14. Except as provided for herein, the Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Africa shall, where relevant, apply to the sessions of the Committee.

### **(c) SUB-COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGIES**

15. The sub-committee on information and communication technologies will provide a forum for discussion on all matters related to the utilisation of information communication technologies for the organisation, management and dissemination of information in Africa and, with particular reference to:

- a) examination of progress in this area since its last meeting;
- b) examination of trends, globally and within Africa, and present state of knowledge in this area;
- c) exchange of country level experiences;

- d) identification of priority issues to be recommended for action by African member States;
- e) examination and approval of norms and standards relating to this area;
- f) reviewing the situation of human resources development in Africa in this area and making recommendations for its improvement;
- g) reviewing and making recommendations on activities on promoting information and communication technologies for development in ECA's work programme;
- h) recommending any studies or documentation that may be required to facilitate the work of the Committee on Development Information.

### **Membership**

15. Member States will nominate their representatives from among government officials responsible for the use of information and communication technologies in the management of development information.

### **Observers**

16. Observers will be sub-regional and regional organizations, universities and research institutes with particular interest in the work of information and communication technologies for the management of development information, as well as ECA's partners from bilateral, multilateral and non-governmental organizations and foundations with an interest in this area.

### **Monitoring and reporting**

17. Each member State shall submit a progress report of its activities to the secretariat at least two months before the next meeting the sub-committee.

### **(d) SUB-COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS**

18. The sub-committee shall provide a forum for discussion on all aspects relating to statistical development which are of interest to its members, in particular it may:

- a) propose policies for the coordination of statistical development in Africa.
- b) examine progress and identify problems on statistical development;
- c) promote self reliance and technical cooperation among countries of the region;
- d) examine trends, globally and within Africa, and present state of knowledge in this area;
- e) exchange of country level experiences;
- f) establish arrangements for the improvements of all aspects of methodologies, norms and standards and practice under African conditions;
- g) review the relevance of regional statistical training programmes to the needs of the countries of the region and promote the training of African statisticians;
- h) consider and make recommendations on the statistical work programme of ECA;
- i) promote the collection and dissemination of internationally comparable statistics of ECA member States as are required by policy makers, enterprises, researchers and the general public in the ECA region.
- j) ensure the dissemination of the results of its work to national statistical offices, international organizations, enterprises or any other user;
- k) recommend any study that may be required to further the objectives of the Committee on Development on Information.

### **Membership**

19. The heads of the national statistical service of ECA member States or their representatives shall be members of the Sub-committee.

## **Observers**

19. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division shall be associated with all work of the sub-committee. The officers responsible for statistical activities in international, regional and sub-regional agencies and users of statistics may be invited to participate.

### **(e) SUB-COMMITTEE ON GEO-INFORMATION**

20. The sub-committee on geoinformation shall be the forum for high level representatives of ECA member States to discuss, share information and establish policies for the development and the use of geographic information, in particular it shall:

- (a) raise awareness on the benefits to be derived through the utilization of geographic information for socio-economic development,
- (b) promote its development and utilization in member States;
- (c) identify and raise awareness about priority issues in geographic information;
- (d) examine and review progress made by member States
- (e) facilitate capacity building with regard to spatial information capture, management, dissemination and utilization.
- (f) provide information, with partnerships, on recent and proven trends and present status of knowledge and advise on new and proven technologies and methodologies to improve spatial data collection and its processing into useful information for decision-making;
- (g) promote the development of methodologies and standards in these fields;
- (h) develop and support the establishment of national, regional and global geo-spatial infrastructures with the aim of facilitating integration of data and optimizing the use of resources.
- (i) identify, promote and support regional projects;
- (j) examine and provide principles regarding ownership, access to, custodial responsibilities and commercial aspects of spatial data, which will promote transparency and the flow of spatial data and information.
- (k) The sub-committee will liaise and coordinate its activities with other similar international, regional and sub-regional bodies, initiatives and conferences.
- (l) Promote networking among institutions and practitioners in geoinformation, and generate synergy at national level to facilitate its management.

## **Membership**

21. The heads of national agencies responsible for the production and custody of geographic data and information, (such as mapping agencies, remote sensing centres, geographic information councils, etc) or their representatives shall be members of the Sub-committee. Each member State will identify the focal points.

## **Observers**

22. Observers will be representatives of national, subregional, regional, international organizations, UN agencies, IGOs, NGOS, academia and research institutions, private sector and the industry, including producers and users of geoinformation; and the heads of the national agencies from non-African governments or their representatives.

## **Monitoring and reporting**

23. Each member State shall submit a progress report of its activities to the secretariat at least two months before the next meeting the sub-committee.

**Annex**

The terms of reference of CODI as established by the ECA Conference of Ministers in 1997 were to:

- a) review and advise on the implementation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI): An action framework for national information and communication infrastructure with a view to suggesting measures to accelerate its implementation;
- b) mobilize funding and technical assistance for the implementation of AISI;
- c) identify and suggest techniques for the application of geographic information for natural resource exploitation and management;
- d) examine and advise on progress by member States in all aspects of statistical development;
- e) advise on the establishment of arrangements for the improvement of all aspects of methodology and practice in the areas of statistics, information science and geographic information systems (remote sensing and cartography); and
- f) coordinate the training for African personnel in the areas of statistics, information science and geographic information systems.