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**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Third Meeting of the Committee
on Development Information (CODI)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

10-17 May 2003

**Report of the African Technical Advisory Committee
(ATAC)
on the implementation of the AISI**

INTRODUCTION

In May 1996 the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). In resolution 812 (XXXI) adopting the Initiative, the Conference of Ministers mandated ECA to institute an African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) made up of African experts in all aspects of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the information society to provide advise on the implementation of AISI. ATAC members also play an advocacy role, identifying best ICT practices, and assisting ECA mobilize resources for its work programme.

Since 1997 two committees have been established (ATAC I & II), and ATAC II has just completed its term and new members (ATAC III) were appointed in September 2002. Hence, the first meeting of ATAC III took from 4 to 5 November 2002, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Welcoming Address

In her welcoming remarks, Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director of the Development Information Services Division of the ECA, reminded ATAC members about their specific roles and responsibilities, and the expectations of the ECA. She emphasised that although ECA was not a funding institution, it could facilitate activities at the policy and strategic planning levels, reiterating the importance of the role of ATAC to ECA, including the role that ATAC members could play, at a personal level and collectively as a group. In addition ATAC members were expected to act as spokespersons on ICT for development issues and in promoting AISI related matters, as well as mobilize financial resources, play a catalytic role in the electronic discussion lists and meetings, and their contributions to the knowledge base of ECA (e.g. CODI III), commenting and adjusting ECA's work programme, and to UN ICT Task Force – African Stakeholders Network (ASN) and the African preparatory process to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

A moment of silence was observed in memory of the late Professor Mamadou Gueye, ATAC II president.

Presentation: ATAC Terms of reference

1. The Secretariat made a presentation on the introduction to ATAC, objectives and Terms of Reference, followed by points of clarification and a short discussion.

Introductions

2. ATAC and Secretariat members introduced themselves.

Election of Officers

3. The ATAC meeting elected the following officers:

Chairperson:	Dr. John Dada
Vice-chairperson:	Ms Angele Bonane
Rapporteur:	Dr. Olivier Nana Nzepa

Participation

4. The first meeting of the third African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC III) held from 4th to 5th November 2002 had in attendance 8 ATAC members, 1 observer and staff members of the ECA Secretariat led by Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane.

Adoption of Agenda

5. Participants adopted the provisional programme agenda and proceeded with the main deliberations.

Presentations and Recommendations

6. The Secretariat made presentations on the AISI and regional and international partnership mechanisms such as the Partnership for ICTs in Africa (PICTA), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the UNICT Task Force – African Stakeholders Network (ASN), the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), and the DOT Force Network. Presentation were also made on the “*Common Position for Africa's Digital Inclusion: Recommendations of the meeting on Africa's Contribution to the G8 DOT Force and the UN ECOSOC Panel on Digital Divide*” and “*Bamako 2002 and Africa's position on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)*”. The presentation summarised the contents of the two documents prepared for the respective forums. Key issues from each document were extracted and discussed, and ATAC members made the following recommendations:

- Development of ICT industries for software development in Africa and, in this regard, the role of local entrepreneurs should be emphasised
- Concerted efforts should be put in place for outreach activities in promoting African innovative ideas and research on the development of the information society in Africa
- Support/strengthen African participation in global ICT fora .
- Encourage more civil society participation in ICT fora in Africa.
- Work towards creating enabling environment and removing/reducing barriers for implementation of ICT initiatives at the country level, including sustainability of ICT projects and local peoples' participation.
- The Bamako 2002 follow-up should address the issue of opening up business opportunities in Africa
- Importance of showing evidence of social returns on ICT investment.
- African private sector needs to play a leading role in funding
- The central and leading role of AISI should be recognised by the various international constituencies.

7. The secretariat has also made presentations on Development Information Services Division's (DISD) work programme and budget for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. The Committee was requested to review the work programme, after which the following recommendations were made:

- Need to assist Governments in implementing the appropriate systems and plans in the implementation of policies.
 - Creation of e-Parliament networks, and training programmes for MPs in Africa.
 - Training of all stakeholders, including MPs, the Media and others.
 - Sensitisation of policy makers on ICT policy.
8. Another presentation was made on the activities of the Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA) for 2000-2002 and the draft programme of activities for 2003. ATAC members subsequently approved the report of activities and the work programme with the following recommendations for future ITCA interventions:
- Development of incubator models to nurture successful applications and systems for the private sector in their participation in the development of the information society.
 - Establishment, support and strengthening of open source software networks and applications in Africa.
 - Provision of distance learning facilities.
 - Decentralisation of training to sub-regions and countries (including the ECA Sub Regional Offices).
 - Continuation of training of trainers programmes
 - Development of applications that demonstrate use and suitability of information technology to African countries and decision-makers, including multipurpose touch screen kiosks.
9. Participants were also informed about the third meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI III), planned for May 2003 on the theme “Information and governance”. The Committee was requested to review the CODI III proposal on e-governance and provide directions and comments. After reviewing the proposal, the Committee adopted it without major changes.
10. The presentation by Anne-Rachel Inne, the newly appointed ICANN Internet Policy Analyst, allowed members to stress on the importance of Africa’s representation at the international decision making level.

The role of ATAC members and the thematic focus

11. A proposal was made by the secretariat about possible roles of ATAC members based on their areas of expertise. Apart from calling for the active participation of ATAC members in electronic discussions, meetings and other knowledge sharing activities, the proposal focused on initiating a series called the African Information Society for Development (AISD) Series. Suggested topics included policy and infrastructure, language, gender, civil society, media, education, health, private sector, and Diaspora.
12. Members welcomed the suggestion deciding to work on-line to deliberate among themselves on how they could rise up to the challenge of the proposed thematic focus based on the expertise of each ATAC member. Discussions on the way forward included: timelines, incentives, and coordination, and the following recommendations were proposed:

- Each member will coordinate specific thematic areas and all members will contribute to the production of the Series.
- That ECA owned the copyright on all materials generated out of the Series, which would be in the public domain.
- An Action Plan on implementing the proposal should be developed, and each member expected to provide input to the process by the first week of December and Thandi Mbvundula agreed to coordinate this activity.
- Some kind of incentive package should be made available and the activity would be tied in to the implementation of the International e-Development Resources Network (IeDRN) and the Connectivity Centre for Africa (CCA), which are proposed collaborations between ECA and the Canadian Government.
- Developing an incubator model was suggested as essential component of the process, Otema Yirenyki produced an outline, which is attached to this report.

Date and venue of next meeting

13. It was agreed that there would be a meeting during CODI III, which is scheduled for 12 to 15 May 2003 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Closing

14. The current ATAC chairperson, Dr. John Dada, thanked all participants for their active participation and contributions. Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane made the closing remarks, thanking all members for accepting to serve as ATAC members for the next two years and for their active participation and enthusiasm during the meeting. She also thanked the Secretariat/staff and the interpreters for their facilitation. Ms Bounemra reminded ATAC members that the ICT agenda in Africa was so huge and needed the contribution of each and everyone, therefore working together some impacts could be visible in harnessing ICTs for development in Africa.

Annex I : ___MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCUBATOR

A framework

- To establish an incubator at ECA which can be replicated at the regional and national levels
- Three phases of development
 - Develop the conceptual model
 - Pilot phase
 - Role out regional and national levels
 -

Concept Level

1. Define structures and ‘rules of engagement’ (mechanisms for selecting candidates for operating incubators)
2. Develop financial model
3. Benefits analysis (ROI)
4. Evaluation/Performance Matrix

Pilot Phase

Launch Pilot with support of ECA, Academic/Universities, Private Sector & Media to create an incubator that supports an African

1. Research and Development
2. Entrepreneurial initiatives

For a period of one year.

Provide all resources

1. Financial
2. Human (technical, training, etc)
3. Infrastructure
4. Post-Pilot funding to ensure sustainability of projects (possibly private sector would buy the concept and fund further development)
5. Impact Analysis of Incubator

Develop Regional and National Incubators

1. Cascade model to regional level
2. dissemination of information -----Outreach
3. Measure success

Cascade to National Level

This has been successful in India for small-scale enterprises.

Annex II: DRAFT AGENDA



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA AGENDA

PROVISIONAL

Annual Meeting of the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
4 - 5 November 2002, United Nations Conference Centre, Caucus Room 11

Monday, 4 November 2002

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 13:00 – 14:30 | <i>Registration</i> |
| 14:30 – 14:40 | <i>Welcoming and introductory remarks – Director, DISD, Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane</i> |
| 14:40 – 15:00 | Introduction of participants |
| 15:00 – 15:15 | Introduction to ATAC, objectives and Term of References

http://www.uneca.org/aisi/atac.htm#About ATAC |
| 15:15 – 15:20 | Election of Officers (Chair person, vice Chair & Rapporteur) |
| 15:20 – 15:40 | The African Information Society Initiative (AISII): 1996 – present

http://www.uneca.org/aisi/ |
| | ICTs in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

http://www.uneca.org/nepad/ |
| 15:40 – 16:00 | Q&A Session |
| 16:00 – 16:20 | <i>Coffee Break</i> |
| 16:20 – 16:40 | UNICT Task Force/ African Stakeholders Network (ASN) |

<http://www.unicttaskforce.org/>

AISI and other initiatives/partnership mechanisms: GKP, DOT Force,
GDOI

<http://www.uneca.org/aisi/picta/>

<http://www.gdoi.org/>

<http://www.globalknowledge.org/>

16:40 – 17:20

The Common Position for Africa's Digital Inclusion:
Recommendations of the meeting on Africa's Contribution to the
G8 DOT Force and the UN ECOSOC Panel on Digital Divide

<http://www.uneca.org/aisi/docs/CommonPositionDoc.pdf>

Bamako 2002 and Africa's position on the World Summit on the
Information Society (WSIS)

<http://www.uneca.org/aisi/Bamako2002/index.htm>

17:20 – 18:00

Q&A session

Tuesday, 5 November 2002

09:00 – 10:00

Presentation on ECA's work programme for 2002/2003 & 2004/2005

The Information Technology Center for Africa

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

Q&A session

10:00 – 10:30

CODI III: Information and Governance

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

Q&A session

10:30 – 10:45

Coffee break

10:45 – 12:00

Discussions on ECA's activities in implementing AISI and role of
ATAC

12:00 – 15:30

Lunch and Rapporteurs meeting

15:30 – 16:15

Recommendations on the way forward

16:15 – 16:30

Date & venue of next meeting, and AOB

16:30

Closing

ANNEX III: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Ms. Angèle Bonane
Secrétaire général
Conseil régional de l'épargne publique
et des marchés financières
01 BP: 1878
Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire
Tel.: +225 20332304
Fax: +225 20215605
E-mail: angele.bonane@crepmf.org

Dr. Dawit Bekele
Senior Lecturer/President
Addis Ababa University
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 620185
Fax: +251 1 620285
E-mail: dawit@ethiolink.com

Mr. John Dada
Programs Director
Fantsuam Foundation
BayanLoco, Adjacent LEA Primary School
P.O.Box 58, Kafanchan
Kaduna State, Nigeria
Tel.: +00881631447772
Fax: +00881631447772
E-mail: johndada@fantsuam.co

Dr. Ousmane Ly
Executive Coordinator
REIMICOM
Geneva, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 223728855
E-mail: ousmane.ly@dim.hcuge.ch;
oussouly@keneya.org.ml
Website: <http://www.keneya.org.ml>

Ms. Anne-Rachel Inne
Policy Analyst
ICANN/USA
California, USA
Tel.: +1 310 8239358
Fax: +1 310 8238649
E-mail: sultane@yahoo.com

Miss Otema Yirenkyi
Management Consultant
Federal Strategic Consulting
IBM Global Services
6710 Rockledge Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817
(301) 803-3793 T/L 262
Email: yirenkyi@us.ibm.com

Mr. Olivier Nana Nzépa
Professeur/Consultant
Regional co-ordinator Anais.Afrique Centrale
P.O. Box 13918 Yaoundé - Cameroon
Tel.: (237) 223-02-15 / 221-22-87 / 986-31-70
Fax (237) 223-02-15
E-mail: Nzeps@hotmail.com

Ms Thandi Mbvundula
Managing Director
Epsilon & Omega
ADL House
P O Box 31125
Lilongwe 3
Malawi
Telephone: (265)824446
Email: ThandiM@eomw.net or tpcm@yahoo.com
Web: www.eomw.net

Ms. Dorothy Okello
PO. Box 4005
Kampala
Uganda
Current address: 1950 Rue Lincoln, #411
Montréal, QC H3H 2N8
Canada
Tel: (514) 937-4843
Email: dokello@wougnet.org

Secretariat

Mr. Afework Temtime
Associate Information Development Officer
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
P.O.Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 51 11 67
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: atemtime@uneca.org

Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah
Team Leader, Promoting Information Technology for Development
Development Information Services
Division (DISD)
P.O.Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 51 11 67
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: opoku-mensah@uneca.org

Mr. Assefa Bahta
Information Network Officer
Development Information Services
Division (DISD)
P.O.Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 44 34 55
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12

E-mail: assefab@uneca.org

Ms. Bethlehem Teshager
Development Information Services
Division (DISD)

P.O.Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 44 54 17
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: bteshager@uneca.org

Ms. Eskedar Nega
Information Development Officer
Development Information Services
Division (DISD)

P.O.Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 51 11 67
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: enega@uneca.org

Mr. Frew Dubale
Information Assistant
Development Information
Services Division (DISD)

P.O.Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 44 35 65
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: fdubale@uneca.org

Mr. Girma Dessalegn
Researcher, ITCA
Development Information Services
Division (DISD)

P. O. Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 44 50 22
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: gdessalegn@uneca.org

Mr. Gorfu Asefa
Information Network Officer
Development Information
Services Division (DISD)

P.O.Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 44 32 48
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: gassefa@uneca.org

Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane
Director
Development Information Services
Division (DISD)

P.O.Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 51 14 08

Fax: +251 1 51 05 12

E-mail: kbounemra@uneca.org

Mr. Lishan Adam
Regional Advisor
Development Information Services
Division (DISD)
P.O.Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Tel.: +251 1 51 45 34
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: ladam@uneca.org

Mr. Makane Faye
Senior Regional Advisor/Manager ITCA
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
P.O.Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 51 11 67
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: mfaye@uneca.org

Mr. Sultan Mohammed
Trainer, ITCA
Development Information Services
Division (DISD)
P.O.Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 44 33 29
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: smohammed@uneca.org

Mr. Tefera Woldeyes
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
P.O.Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: +251 1 51 11 67
Fax: +251 1 51 05 12
E-mail: woldeyes.uneca@un.org/ twoldeyes@uneca.org