

**ATAC V meeting**

**12 - 14 December 2006**

**Speech of Mrs. Aida Opoku Mensah**

**OIC, ISTD**

Dear members of the Vth African Technical Advisory committee,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Addis Ababa, for the first meeting of the Vth African Technical Advisory committee (ATACV) and I would like to thank you for having kindly accepted our invitation.

This year's ATAC membership is a very special one- as most of you are not just experts and/ or advisors but colleagues and friends who've been working with us for a while and it was only natural that at this particular moment-when we are celebrating the 10 years of AISI - we wanted ATAC to be more of a family gathering than a simple advisory committee.

As you may know, ECA has recently repositioned itself and strategically realigned its programme priorities with the priorities of the AU and NEPAD in order to make unique contributions to member States' efforts to address their

development challenges. As you also know, ECA's strength derives from its role as the only UN agency mandated to operate at the regional and subregional levels to harness resources and bring them to bear on Africa's priorities.

In accordance with its mandate, ECA has **therefore** refocused its programme priorities on a more limited set of sectors and areas where its competence and contributions are widely acknowledged. In this context, ECA will strive to achieve results in two related and mutually supportive areas:

- **Promoting Regional Integration in support of the African Union vision and priorities.**
- **Meeting Africa's special needs and emerging global challenges.**

As a result of this repositioning, the expected outcomes include:

- **Increased regional integration and Increased integration into the global economy;**
- **Accelerated progress toward achieving the MDGs including poverty reduction, sustainable development and gender equity;**
- **Improved macroeconomic policies and economic governance;**
- **Enhanced development of ICT and participation in the knowledge economy;**
- **Improved statistical capacity of member States to enable planning for achieving the MDGs and for monitoring of progress; and**

- **Strengthened and better-networked institutions and centers of excellence.**

As far as our subprogramme is concerned, our activities will be anchored on promoting the use of ICT for development; awareness on information society and knowledge economy, geoinformation for development; and Science and Technology for development.

In the area of ICT4D ECA will mainly focus on:

- supporting strategies for building the African Digital Economy and creating an enabling environment for the knowledge economy,
- building capacities for securing networks and Infrastructure for the Knowledge Economy (e-Security) and strengthening the role of SMEs in the Digital/Knowledge Economy,
- supporting activities aiming at fostering regional economic integration, including facilitating intra-regional,
- Facilitating dialogue and sharing of experiences between countries and promoting awareness among key stakeholders of the importance of the Information Society and Knowledge Economy,

- supporting harmonization of policies and regulations at the regional level based on the AISI and NEPAD frameworks and work in all sub-regions to develop a harmonized sub-regional ICT policy and monitoring framework etc

**In the area of Geo Information for Development:** activities will focus on development of GIS for various socio-economic sectors; development of an African Regional Geospatial Data Infrastructure (ARGDI) and the deepening of ongoing work on the development and maintenance of the standards-based African Geoinformation Clearinghouse at ECA.

**In Science and Technology:** ECA will work in this area to promote the use of science, technology and innovation in economic development. This will be achieved by helping to articulate science, technology and innovation systems for Africa's development and promoting the establishment of Science & Technology parks and incubators in member States. Research and development activities will also be undertaken on selected emerging issues and topics of importance to member States. As part of its work to promote the application of S&T for Development, ECA will provide support to selected Centres of Excellence in the various sub-regions and facilitate networking among them.

As you see, our activities are many and the challenges are enormous. This is particularly the reason why we need your continuous support and expertise in this endeavor.

As you will also see, when the ATAC TOR will be presented, what we are expecting from you is:

- to act as experts, in your own capacity and not as representatives either of government, or an institution, be it public or private;
- to assist ECA and its partners to turn national and sectoral ICT policies, strategies and plans as well as WSIS recommendations into concrete action plans,
- to act as spokes-persons of the AISI, in all the possible fora, in order to make the initiative better known and to assist in mobilizing appropriate resources;

Your recommendations will be presented as the ATAC position during the upcoming Vth meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI V ) on " Employment and the Knowledge Economy" which will be held in April 2007 here in Addis as well as during other regional and international foras.

I am convinced that with your contribution and expertise, we will have a very fruitful meeting.

I would like, once again, to thank you for being with us and I wish you a pleasant stay in Addis Ababa.

I thank you very much