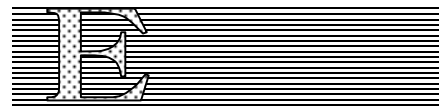




UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.: LIMITED

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Annual Meeting of the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

12 - 14 December 2006, United Nations Conference Center

Developing e-Government indicators

Introduction

Reliable statistical data and indicators regarding readiness, use and impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) help policy makers formulate strategies for ICT-driven economic growth, social development and the prevention of a new form of socio-economic exclusion, termed the “digital divide”. In December 2003, during the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, a Plan of Action was approved by Heads of State and governments. One of the issues agreed upon was: *“All countries and regions should develop tools so as to provide statistical information on the Information Society, with basic indicators and analysis of its key dimensions. Priority should be given to setting up coherent and internationally comparable indicator systems, taking into account different levels of development.”*

Also, at its first meeting held in Addis Ababa from 10 to 11 May 2004, the Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA), recommended that *“ECA should cooperate with the National Statistical Systems to begin the collection of statistics on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) using a harmonized framework.”*

Hence this activity responds to both worldwide and regional calls for Information Society statistics and complements the work being done by ECA in the framework of the SCAN ICT project.¹

The partnership on measuring ICT for development

However the lack of comprehensive ICT statistics poses a major obstacle to decision-making, such as setting priorities, allocating resources, benchmarking and evaluating impact. In this context an international, multi-stakeholder partnership on measuring ICT for development was launched in June 2004. This Partnership aims to accommodate and develop further the different initiatives regarding the availability and measurement of ICT indicators at the regional and international levels. It provides an open framework for coordinating ongoing and future activities, and for developing a coherent and structured approach to advancing the development of ICT indicators globally, and in particular in developing countries. Its objectives are as follows:

- Achieve a **common set of core ICT indicators**, to be harmonized and agreed upon internationally, which will constitute the basis for a database on ICT statistics.
- Enhance the **capacities of national statistical offices** in developing countries and build competence to develop statistical compilation programmes on the information society, based on internationally agreed upon indicators.
- Develop a **global database on ICT indicators** accessible via Internet.

OUTPUTS

- The first set of core ICT indicators was adopted at the WSIS Thematic Meeting in Geneva (7-9 February 2005).
- The Partnership Publication Core ICT Indicators was launched by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development on 15 November 2005, at WSIS in Tunis. It

¹ SCAN-ICT was launched within the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) by ECA in cooperation of IDRC, the European Union and NORAD. The second phase is supported by Finland. <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/scanict.htm>

presents the core ICT indicators, definitions, model questions and suggestions on data collection for developing countries.

- The publication “Measuring ICT: The Global Status of ICT Indicators” was also released at WSIS in Tunis and presents the results of a stocktaking of statistical measurement of ICT in all countries.

Regional Workshops have taken place in Addis Ababa, Beirut, Gaborone and Santiago de Chile for capacity building in developing countries.

Current partners include EUROSTAT, ITU, OECD, UNCTAD, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the UN Regional Commissions (UNECLAC, UNESCWA, UNESCAP, UNECA), UN ICT Task Force, and the World Bank Group.

The Partnership list is comprised of *forty-two* core ICT indicators under *four* categories: (a) ICT infrastructure and access, (b) access to, and use of ICT by households and individuals, (c) use of ICT by businesses, and (d) ICT sector and trade in ICT goods. The agreed-upon list was recognized at the 36th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, held in New York, during 1-4 March 2005.

However, the list was not intended to be a final list, as it does not cover all vital sectors of the information society in details. Hence members of the Partnership agreed to further develop specific sectors including e-government, and ECA was entrusted to coordinate development of e-Government indicators.

ICTs in Government

ICTs are used to harness the operations of Government services, to facilitate service delivery, to promote responsiveness, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, transparency, the rule of law, openness and knowledge sharing. ICT applications and services are used in various parts of society and government such as the public service, the legislature, parliament and local authorities. Based on various key functions of ICTs, the following 7 areas proposed for use as a starting point for defining an exhaustive list of

e-Government indicators for the Partnership. These themes are based on a literature review of various documents produced in Africa and elsewhere, dealing with public reforms, local authorities and also the private sector².

The following 7 themes are proposed for developing core indicators:

1. Public sector management
2. Delivery of public services
3. Facilitating development of the private sector
4. Legal and judicial reforms
5. Policy, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks
6. Strengthening the capacity of parliaments
7. Empowering Local authorities

I. Public Sector Management

This activity may deal with e-administration and can be seen as a means of strengthening the capacity of public service institutions and improving public sector performance. It can facilitate access and minimise the burden of administration and reduce opportunities for corruption.

II. Delivery of Public Services

This activity may deal with e-services and e-citizens and can be seen as an effective channel for decentralizing the provision of public services. It can incorporate electronic transactions for government-to-citizen (G2C), government-to-government (G2G) and government-to-business (G2B) initiatives.

² Striving for Good Governance in Africa: synopsis prepared for ADF IV by the Economic Commission for Africa, 2005.

LOG-IN Africa Methodology Workshop: Pan-African Outcome Assessment for LOGIN, by CAFRAD and IDRC, 2006.

This may facilitate various interconnections and interactions at government level and also between government and the population as well as the business sector.

III. Facilitating development of the private sector

This activity may deal with e-business and can be seen as an important element to encourage private investment and initiative. This may be considered as enabling on-line support to private sector through one-stop portal for investors, and also as e-procurement and e-bid applications. It would also provide required information on markets and investment opportunities.

IV. Legal and judicial reforms

This activity may deal with e-justice and may be seen as a means to modernising the functioning of the judicial system. It may include computerizing all the justice process, digitizing justice records, on-line access to justice records and development of databases on court cases.

V. Policy, Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

This activity may deal with indicators on Legal regimes, ICT Policy and regulatory frameworks that facilitate government processes and delivery of services.

VI. Strengthening the capacity of parliaments

This activity may deal with modernizing Parliaments, e-voting, making parliament resources accessible on-line and interaction with constituents using web resources and email. This may also include institutional resources, such as parliamentary databases and libraries.

VII. Empowering Local authorities

This activity may deal with on-line community participation, decentralization of e-services especially citizen interaction with government (licenses, certificates of various types and categories, tax payments, land registrations; etc.). This may be delivered through web sites and kiosks.

Recommendations to ATAC

Taking into account comprehensive coverage and mandate of the Partnership, this ATAC session will focus on core indicators for use of ICT in Government within an African perspective. ATAC members are expected to review the above set of areas and make recommendations for a preliminary list of indicators for making Government services available through ICT in the African countries.

The Way Forward

The indicators would form the basis of Africa's input in the framework of the Partnership. In addition they would be the starting point for a regional report on e-government readiness in Africa within the context of the Technology in Government in Africa (TIGA) project to be launched in April 2007 during the 5th meeting of ECA's Committee on Development Information (CODI).