



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

MISSION REPORT

Egypt - Round Table on ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth (e-trade)

14 June 2007

Cairo, Egypt

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I. Background to the ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth Initiative

The Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePol-NET) was launched in December 2003 at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva. The Africa Node of the ePol-NET, launched earlier in May 2003 during the third meeting of ECA's Committee on Development Information (CODI), is set up to address policy issues, regulations and strategies in areas such as e-commerce, legal and policy frameworks, telecommunications policy and regulation, Internet governance, e-government and connectivity strategies. The Economic Commission for Africa, with support from the Government of Canada set up the African regional node to the ePol-NET. The Canadian partners to the Africa Node of the ePol-Net are Industry Canada and the Canada ePolicy Resource Network (CePRC).

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) under the Global ePolicy Resource Network launched the ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth (e-trade) Initiative in March 2006 following a continental forum on the issue. Six country studies on ICTs, trade and economic growth were launched in Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa. The reports of the six country studies under the ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth (e-trade) initiative were finalized by the end of 2006 and early 2007. Two country round tables (Ethiopia, 26 – 27 February 2007 and Kenya, 8 – 9 February 2007) were prepared following the initial plan to table the outcome of the studies to a round table composed of stakeholders in the countries. The stakeholders included experts from the trade, banking, economic planning, and ICT sectors, among others. The round table for Egypt took place on 14 June 2007. Additional round tables were scheduled for Ghana (25 – 26 June 2007) and Senegal (27 - 28 June 2007). The last round table is expected to be held in South Africa from 30 – 31 July 2007.

The final reports that incorporated the discussions and recommendations of the round tables in Kenya and Ethiopia were received in April 2007. The remaining final reports are expected to be received before the end of July. Following the round tables, concrete actions are identified in each of the countries as follow up.

II. Report of the Round Table on the Role of ICT in Facilitating Trade in Egypt

1. The round table was held on 14 June 2007 in the conference room of the Information Technology Industry Development Agency (ITIDA), located in the Smart Village, Egypt. (Please see annexes one and two for the agenda and list of participants).
2. Dr. Nagwa ElShenawi, Strategic Planning Director, Information technology Industry development Agency (ITIDA), Ministry of telecommunication & Information technology, who also conducted the research, welcomed participants and invited Mr. Mohamed Timoulali, Regional Advisor, ECA to make an opening speech.
3. Mr. Mohamed Timoulali welcomed the participants to the round table and highlighted the ECA-Egypt cooperation in the area of ICT for Development (ICT4D). He also briefed the participants on ECA's work in ICT4D and the ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth Initiative.
4. Following Mr. Timoulali, Mr. Assefa Bahta, Information Network Officer and ePol-NET Project Officer presented the country studies undertaken under the ICTs, Trade and Economic growth Initiative. In his presentation, he highlighted the six country studies in

Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa. He also explained the need for the round tables and highlighted the findings from Ethiopia and Kenya. In conclusion, the way forward to the initiative was presented.



Dr. ElShenawi following the comments from participants



Some of the participants of the round table

5. Dr. Nagwa ElShenawi presented the country study and findings. Her presentation addressed the following topics:

- Background to ICTs in Egypt including laws such as the telecom law, the WTO basic telecom agreement, IP law, e-signature law developed by ITIDA, and the cyber crime law prepared by ITIDA.
- Egyptian ICT facts and figures
- The Egyptian Economy (imports and exports)
- The role of the Government in trade facilitation including customs reforms
- SMMEs utilization of ICT based on a survey conducted among 1821 SMMEs
- Focus on the utilization of ICTs (telephone, fax, mobile, computer, Internet)
- Benefits of and difficulties in conducting e-commerce
- E-trade applications in Egypt with a focus on Egyptian web site portals focusing on e-commerce such as the Trade-egypt.com Business-to-Business (B2B) portal
- Measuring the effect of Internet in trade facilitation
- SWOT analysis on the role of ICTs in trade facilitation
- Conclusions and Recommendations

Dr. ElShenawi also introduced Mr. Moataz Yekan, an Economic Researcher, as an associate in the study.

6. Dr. ElShenawi's presentation was followed by comments and questions from the participants of the round table.
7. Dr. Sheriff Kamel, an IT Professor in the American University in Cairo highlighted the need to reflect the value added/impact behind the ICT penetration figures presented. He also stressed the need to highlight the "trust element" in e-trade. According to him logistics, supply chain and related issues needed prior focus before addressing the technology. Dr. Kamel also noted that the future for e-trade in Egypt should be more focused on B2B. He also mentioned the need to develop/address the people factor in e-trade. Finally, he recommended the study to incorporate the issue of mobile solutions as the move to m-commerce was coming up in 3 – 4 years.
8. Dr. Nadia Hegazy from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology informed the Round Table that the study needed to address issues of agreement for trade across African borders, including the improvement of related infrastructure such as roads and shipping. Dr. Hegazy also called for portals making available the trade laws in countries and success stories in e-trade. According to her, e-government in a country was a prerequisite to e-trade in a country. E-procurement was the main e-Government component essential for e-trade.
9. Dr. Nagla Rezk, an Associate Professor of Economics from the American University of Cairo, stated that e-trade was a link in a chain. As such, the non-'e' challenges in trade were as important as the 'e'-challenges. The study should also look into the non-'e' aspects of the economy. Human resource capacity building was a human aspect of e-trade that needed a closer look in the study.
10. Eng. Ezz El Din El Nattar from Trade – Egypt Co. stated that the challenge to be addressed in the study should be an explanation as to why Egyptian products were not making it to big markets. Sharing the experience of the tradeegypt.com portal, Dr. El Nattar explained that they spent four years in R&D, benchmarking, etc. before the launch of the portal. He also shared some of the challenges faced by the tradeegypt.com portal as well as user statistics. Accordingly over 2,000 sellers were registered while 15,000 buyers were attracted to the portal in 2006.
11. Mr. Ahmed El-Sheriff from SpeedSend.com Co. shared the experience of his B2B e-commerce website in the context of the study. The website was in the business of handling the procurement of office supplies for corporate entities. According to him the challenges in e-commerce in Egypt were people (finding the right people to run the system) and financing (initial funding and the payment of loans, etc.) Mr. Mohammed Hussein, also from SpeedSend.com Co. stressed that the 'e-' in e-trade was only a medium.
12. Dr. Sheriff Hashim, Deputy CEO of ITIDA stressed the need to put right business practices before moving to 'e-' He also briefed the round table that ITIDA was putting an effort to link the ICT industry with academia as one of its activities and welcomed this study on the role of ICT in facilitating trade in Egypt. He informed the participants that

an investment fund was available under the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and e-commerce/e-trade projects were welcomed. As a result of the experiences shared by participants he proposed a quarterly consultations between ITIDA and businesses.

13. Eng. Ahmed Sabry from Chamber of Information Technology and CEO of IT Vision, a B2B business for marble and granite producers in Egypt, called for a market focused and sector specific e-trade portal. According to him the study should recommend e-trade for increasing export. He highlighted language as a problem in terms of some enterprises being involved in exporting faced problems of writing up request for Proposals (RFP), etc.
14. Eng. Ayman Rashed from Corsat.com Co. raised the issue of project delivery of IT service providers. He also stressed the need for assuring the quality of IT human resources. A proposal was for MCIT to offer scholarship.
15. In response to Eng. Rashed's comment, Mr. Timoulali from the ECA asked the inclusion of the role of the IT providers association in the study.
16. Dr. Nagwa closed the round table with a note of thanks to all the participants and assured that the points raised would be included in the final report.

III. Follow up discussions with Dr. Nagwa ElShenawi and Mr. Moataz Yekan

The ECA team held discussions with the expert who undertook the study and her associate following the round table. The team suggested the following follow up activities that would lead to the finalization of the report:

- Bringing out the survey results in the e-trade report as it had led to the collection of unique information.
- Annexing the two best practices in terms of the use of e-commerce to facilitate trade.
- The need to identify upto three recommendations and prioritize them for implementation.

The consultant agreed to present the final report before the end of July 2007.

Annex 1: Agenda of the round table



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

***“Role Of ICT In Facilitating Trade In
Egypt”
ROUND TABLE***



Information Technology Industry
Development Agency

AGENDA

Tuesday 14 June 2007	
09:30 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:15	Welcome-note (Dr. Sherif Hashem – ITIDA Deputy CEO)
10:15 – 10:45	Purpose of the Study (Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) representative)
10:45 – 11:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:00 – 11:45	Study Presentation “Findings & Recommendations” (Dr. Nagwa El-Shenawi)
11:45 – 13:15	Comments & Feedbacks (Experts)
13:15 – 13:30	Closing Remarks (ITIDA & ECA)
13.30 – 15:00	<i>Lunch</i>

Annex 2: List of participants of the round table

Round table for the Results and recommendations of

The role of ICT in facilitating trade – (Case of Egypt)

14 June 2007

List of participants

Name	Company
Dr. Sheriff Hashim	Information Technology Industry Development Agency
Dr. Nagwa El-Shenawy	Information Technology Industry Development Agency
Moataz Taha	Information Technology Industry Development Agency
Nancy Badr	Information Technology Industry Development Agency
Mahmoud Mansour	Information Technology Industry Development Agency
Dr. Nadia Hegazy	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
Samia Moussa	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
Hazim El Shabrawy	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
Mahmoud El Shishiny	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
May Ragab	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
Assefa Bahta	Economic Commission of Africa
Mohamed Timouli	Economic Commission of Africa
Dr. Mona Wahba	Egyptian Commercial Services
Magda Shaheen	American chamber of commerce
Dr. Sheriff Kamel	American university of Cairo
Dr. Nagla Rezk	American university of Cairo
Eng. Ahmed Sabry	Chamber of Information Technology
Eng. Ezz El Din El Nattar	Trade - Egypt Co.
Dr. Sherein Ghoneim	World Economic Forum
Moataz Yekan	Economic researcher
Eng. Ayman Rashed	Corsat.com Co.
Ahmed El-Sheriff	SpeedSend.com Co.
Mohammed Hussein	SpeedSend.com Co.