



Economic Commission for  
Africa



Ministry of Communications  
Government of Ghana



Swiss Agency for  
Development and Cooperation



## The African Regional Preparatory Conference for the WSIS

### “Media in Africa Information Society”

Breakout Session

30 - 31 January 2005

#### **I- BACKGROUND**

Since its launching in 1996, AISI has been implemented mainly in the form of national ICT policies and plans, known as National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) policies and plans. The role of the media in the process of building an inclusive Information Society, has been highlighted in the AISI: “In addition to being an essential means for information dissemination, the mass media plays a critical role in spreading awareness in Africa of the importance and benefits of the information revolution. Newspapers, radio and television provide an easy, accessible and cheap means of carrying information to the end user. Communities in Africa do not have to wait for the Internet to receive much of the information it carries. The mass media can access many of the existing sources of information and provide broad channels of communications to the poor and to remote areas. “

The second phase of the World summit on the Information Society presents a unique opportunity to consolidate the efforts of media during the first phase, while also presenting an opportunity for them to continue the projects that they started to have showcase in Tunis.

#### **II- Forum Global objective**

The overall goal of the forum is to build a critical mass of journalists that can specialise on Information Society issues whilst promoting awareness in society based on the AISI media-training module. The forum will also help to create an African media ICT4D framework conducive to sustaining the overall goal.

#### **III- Forum specific objectives**

It is expected that the following specific objectives will be accomplished:

- familiarize participants with terms such as ICT4D, information society and how to combine the MDGs as goals, ICT4D as a means and involvement of Media as a process in the most effective way. It examines threats and challenges facing ICTs, and define what is meant by an African Information society Initiative (AISI) framework: national and sub-regional e-strategy development and implementation and SCAN-ICT project,
- outline threats and challenges facing ICTs
- discuss and highlight the importance of policies and the function of NICIs, RICIs, VICIs and SICIs, in particular;

- discuss and outline the challenges and debates surrounding Intellectual Property (IP), the advantages of open source software and open content and strategy of knowledge management.
- develop a Media policy and strategy in the Information Society,
- launch ICT4D Media Network .

### **III- Expected Outcomes**

In line with the above-mentioned objectives, the following outcomes are expected:

- Participants awareness on how to combine the MDGs as goals, ICT4D as a means and involvement of Media as a process in the most effective way
- Participants awareness and capacity on ICTs policies and strategies and their role in the Information Society through the use of the AISI media training module;
- A Media Policy and strategies in the Information Society in line with the WSIS Action Plan;
- An Africa ICT4D Media Network;

### **IV- Participation**

The bulk of participants will be drawn from across the media spectrum, namely existing ICT4D Media networks, radio, television, newspapers as well as practitioners from on-line media.

#### **4. Forum content**

##### **Session 1: Information for Development - Media role**

This session co-chaired by GKP and SDC, aims :

- To familiarize participants with terms such as ICT4D, information society and how to combine the MDGs as goals, ICT4D as a means and involvement of Media as a process in the most effective way?
- African Information society Initiative (AISI) framework: national and sub-regional e-strategy development and implementation and SCAN-ICT project, to present practical case studies on ICT usage in Africa using sample from an AISI radio series
- the importance of community radio in bridging the digital divide by transferring internet content to the airwaves and in promoting an open and inclusive information society will be highlighted.
- Other aspects of this session will be a global overview of broadcasting for development in the information society

##### **Session 2: Open source/ Intellectual Property and Knowledge Management and the medias**

This session will present the challenges and debates surrounding Open source, standard, content and the Intellectual Property (IP). An overview of Knowledge management or information sharing. . The advantages of archiving indigenous information and the value of networks and databases will be discussed.

##### **Session 3: Policy and strategy to sustain the Media role in the Information Society:**

The session will focus on the current issues and debates surrounding ICT4D in Africa, media perspective and implementation of WSIS Action Plan. Working groups will formulate policies and strategies for Media involvement in building an inclusive Information Society in Africa.

#### **Session 4: Building African Media ICT4D Network:**

The government not only provides for the existence of a suitable/stable political climate for development, but provides the requisite policies, standards and guidelines under which the society should operate to achieve agreed development goals. While some resources are best provided by government, there are others which can be provided more effectively and efficiently by other stakeholders. Structured stakeholder participation mechanisms help to maximize the diversity and quality of expertise available for policy formulation and implementation by drawing on sources beyond government and generate a rich source of information on opportunities. The Media ICT4D Network represents one of such framework which brings together Media professionals and institutions at national, sub-regional and continental levels to discuss and establish policy and strategies for building an inclusive Information Society. This session will present the objectives and structure of the network.