



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
SUBREGIONAL OFFICE FOR EASTERN AFRICA

ECA/SRO-EA/ICE/2009/01  
Original: English

## SRO-EA

01

### 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) Mahe, Seychelles, 27-29 April 2009

### Theme: "Tracking Progress on Implementing ICTs for Development in Eastern Africa"



## AIDE-MEMOIRE OF THE ICE MEETING



## 1. Overview

The Subregional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) covers 13 countries, namely: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda. It also works in partnership with Regional Economic Communities, mainly: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Intergovernmental Committee on Development (IGAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). Other institutions are also partners to SRO-EA, such as: the Transit Transport Coordination Authority/Northern Corridor (TTCA/NC), the Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA), the Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), the Nile Basin Initiative, the African Union and United Nations Agencies.

The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) is a steering organ mandated by the ECA Council of Ministers to supervise the activities of subregional offices, including that for Eastern Africa.

It meets every year in view to:

- i. Consider the report on activities of the SRO-EA
- ii. Consider medium-term plans of action, programmes of work, as well as strategic orientations for the Subregion.

In addition, the Committee is a forum for exchange of views among experts from member countries, regional economic communities and researchers on economic and social conditions of the Subregion in view to defining modalities of cooperation and formulating recommendations for the integration and development of countries in the Subregion.

The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts in 2009 will take place at a time when the world economy is mired in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. The crisis has already had a severe impact on global commodity markets with far-reaching implications for the prospects of the developing world at large. Economic growth in Africa is expected to decelerate in 2009, as the contagion effects of the global economic slowdown spreads through weakened export demand, lower commodity prices and a decline in investment flows to the region.

## **2. The Rationale for the theme of the Meeting: *“Tracking Progress on Implementing ICTs for Development in Eastern Africa”***

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have been associated with globalization due to their impact on the global economy. ICT's offers the developing countries opportunity to reduce poverty at the fastest possible speed. The significant contribution of ICT to poverty reduction, economic growth, productivity and efficiency of public services is well recognized. Research indicates that countries which have a

10% higher telephone penetration rate over the long run are likely to register 0.6% higher annual growth in GDP. Specifically, ICTs help to promote economic growth; expand economic and social opportunities; improve the efficiency of many economic sectors, markets, institutions and governments; and make it easier for the poor to obtain access to resources and services and have their voices heard in the decisions that shape their lives.

Overall, there is a growing consensus that ICT potential for development should be harnessed by developing countries, in support of their efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to attain growth and social development.

In Eastern African countries, e-strategies tend to concentrate mainly on (a) Public sector reform in terms of e-government, public administration, local communities; (b) Education; and (c) Health. Basically, countries aim at transforming their economies into service economies, based on knowledge management with a shift from traditional agriculture and industry. Further, only a few of such e-strategies are being effectively implemented due to lack of sound financial mechanisms; and the inadequacy of the necessary pillars of infrastructures, human resources development, regulation, contents and applications. All these considerations point to the need to take stock of “**ICT Development in Eastern Africa**” so as to derive necessary policy implications including the identification of necessary interventions to help member countries participate effectively in the global economy.

### 3. Objectives of the Meeting

The meeting will have three major objectives:

- 1) Assess economic and social conditions of the Eastern Africa subregion during the last years, particularly considering the current global financial crisis that may have already affected most economies in the Subregion, and recommend appropriate policies to undertake in order to mitigate the impact of the crisis and maintain a sustainable economic growth for the coming years and achieve MDGs. Experts will assess progress made by member countries in areas of economic growth, sustainable development, intra-regional trade, and the role RECs could play in fostering regional integration.
- 2) On the basis of the report of the Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meeting on: ***Tracking Progress towards the Development of ICTs in Eastern Africa subregion and Prospects***, the ICE will make recommendations on appropriate policies towards building a regional information and knowledge economy where ICTs can play a catalytic role for economic growth and sustainable development. To make a concrete contribution to the ICE participants, SRO-EA will offer two parallel training sessions respectively on: (i) the implementation of ICT in the areas of e-government and/or e-trade, and (ii) Developing Strategies and Comprehensive Action Plan for National Information and Communication Infrastructures (NICI).
- 3) On the basis of the report of the Ad-hoc Expert Group Meeting on Assessing Multi-Year Programmes ‘MYPs’) and the presentations by individual RECs, the ICE will make recommendations on the implementation of Multi-Year

Programmes of cooperation between ECA-SRO/EA and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the Eastern Africa subregion. ECA has been implementing MYPs with some RECs aimed at tackling critical issues of regional integration, capacity building on poverty reduction, among others. To date, ECA has signed MoUs with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Other MoUs on multi-year programmes are under discussion with the East African Community (EAC) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

#### **4. Expected Outcomes**

The meeting will lead to:

- i. Appropriate policies to address current economic challenges, including innovative mechanisms of mobilizing both international and domestic resources for investment and accelerating regional integration;
- ii. Recommendations meant at building a regional information and knowledge economy and the respective roles of national, regional and international institutions;
- iii. Appropriate recommendations on how to successfully implement Multi-Year programmes in view to strengthen RECs as building blocs of regional integration processes;
- iv. Clear mandates to the Subregional Office for Eastern Africa, Regional Economic Communities and other partner institutions for the way forward in the coming years.

#### **5. Modalities for the Organization of the Meeting**

The meeting will be organized in four parts:

- i. ICE Meeting as a statutory organ of the ECA;
- ii. An Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on ICT and Economic Development;
- iii. An Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on Multi-Year Programmes;
- iv. Two training sessions on:
  - a. The implementation of ICT in the areas of e-government and/or e-trade
  - b. Developing Strategies and Comprehensive Action Plan for National Information and Communication Infrastructures

## 6. Dates, Venue and Composition of Delegations

- a. Dates and Venue: The meeting will take place in Mahe, Seychelles, from 27 to 29 April 2009.
- b. Composition of Delegations:
  - i) Member states will select/nominate their respective representatives for the ICE. It is expected that the delegates for the ICE will be high-level experts in the areas of planning and regional integration. Taking into consideration its limited resources, SRO-EA will sponsor only one ICE delegate per country, i.e. a return air-ticket from home country to Seychelles and payment of daily subsistence allowance (DSA) at UN rates. Other additional delegates will be sponsored by either their own government or other institutions.
  - ii) Representatives of regional and international organizations will also participate to the meeting as resource-institutions and will be requested to present their contributions to Ad-Hoc expert meetings and to the ICE. Invitations will therefore be extended to them also. SRO-EA will sponsor one delegate per REC from the six partner RECs (COMESA, EAC, IOC, IGAD, CEPGL and ICGLR) and partner institutions, namely: TTCAN/NC, PMAESA and EASSI and The Nile Basin Initiative.
  - iii) Participants to the Ad-Hoc Expert meetings on ICT and Multiyear programmes will be invited in their own capacity and the cost of their participants will be covered by SRO-EA.

## 7. Working languages of the meeting

The ECA working languages are French and English, with simultaneous interpretation.

For any further information related to the confirmation of participation of delegates, you may contact:

**The Director**  
**ECA, Subregional Office for Eastern Africa**  
**P.O. Box 4654**  
**Kigali, Rwanda**  
**Fax: (250) 0252 586546**  
**Tel : (250) 0252 586549 /8 /4 ; (250) 510675 /6 /7**  
**Email : [easrdc@uneca.org](mailto: easrdc@uneca.org)**