

*Introducing the...*

# African Youth ICT4D Network



African Youth Lead Action in the Information Society:  
People and Development over Profit and Technology

## 1 AFRICAN YOUTH AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

It is no longer news that Africa needs to hook up with the new opportunities that are being presented by Information and Communication Technologies. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process helped highlight the significant networks, processes, people and efforts that had remained unacknowledged till the summit's commencement.

A major discovery during the first phase of the summit is the role of young people in Africa's desire for her rightful place in the Information Society. Youth are not only tomorrow's leaders, but today's leaders. We shape the efforts, will deliver the



polices and may as well help Africa arrive at the desired destination within the boundaries of the Information Society.

The second phase of the summit presents a unique opportunity to consolidate the efforts of young people during the first phase, while also presenting an opportunity for them to continue the projects that they started. These include, but are not limited to, national campaigns, networks and new initiatives.

Africa's regional meeting for the second phase was a one-time opportunity for Africa to understand, appreciate and support the role of her youth in the process of bridging Africa's digital divide. During the regional meeting in Accra, young people from every corner of the continent gathered to discuss high-end and mutual issues surrounding their various roles in the Information Society.

What can youth bring to Africa's table in her bid to hook up to the fast-moving Information Society train? What more does Africa need to do in order to get the best of her youth? These are questions that were be answered at the end of the Youth Sessions (pre-



events, workshops and launching of the African Youth ICT4D Network - AYIN). A major attraction at the youth input into the regional meeting was the launching of the pan-African and all-inclusive network that will help young Africans connect



with each other along our path of contributing to Africa's inclusion in the Information Society.

Between the last days of January and the fifth day of February 2005, Africa's young ICT leaders met in Accra, Ghana, to provide assurance and momentum for Africa's efforts towards active participation within the Information Society. We agreed to work together, hence the emergence of the African Youth ICT4D Network (AYIN), a veritable platform for African youth input to the WSIS process.

## 2 THE AFRICAN YOUTH ICT4D NETWORK

### 2.1 What is AYIN?

The African Youth Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) Network – AYIN – is a pan-African and



all-inclusive platform for African Youth input into the African Information Society agenda. With a vision of, “a networked generation of *young* Africans empowering themselves and contributing to

the continent’s active participation in the Information Society”, the network is set to move youth inclusion to the next level, as far as the Information Society is concerned.

### 2.2 Where is AYIN coming from?

AYIN was launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2005 at the second African Regional meeting for the World Summit on the Information Society (Accra 2005), but the network is a product of time and efforts. Beginning with a fortunate crystallization of youth advocacy efforts which were later supported by the Economic Commission for Africa (through a mailing list), young Africans discussed their role and expectations around the Information Society.

These discussions led to the emergence of concrete proposals on the path to



follow in order to move in the direction of progress. With the support of numerous organizations, youth gathered at Accra 2005 and came up with action-laden recommendations – including the

setting up of the African Youth ICT4D Network through which they promised to lead action within the Information Society.

### 2.3 AYIN: Another network?

AYIN does not seek to replace, or compete with existing networks. Rather, our aim is to identify, complement and support such



networks as possible avenues through which Africa's dream can be realized.

In the course of delivering our Plan of Action, the network will liaise with individuals, organizations, institutions, people groups and other networks in engaging sustainable and efficient mechanisms that can accelerate Africa's wholesome development through the instrumentality of Information and Communication Technologies – Africa's password to leadership in the New Economy.

### 2.4 Who is involved?

The African Youth ICT4D Network involves organizations that are led by youth, or work around youth issues. All young Africans – regardless of location, sex, language or creed – own this network. Experts, *newbies* and enthusiasts will join hands to build the Africa of our dreams, especially as it relates to the role that ICTs can play in such processes.



### 3 YOU AND THE NETWORK

#### 3.1 How does the AYIN work?

The network set up a coordinating team, the AYIN Bureau, to lead organizational strategies. The bureau acts in line with the constitution, and helps lead the implementation of the Plan of Action. The network has also nominated an 11-man bureau, representing all the five regions of the continent and the Diaspora.



#### 3.2 Where can I get more information?

Upon leaving Accra, the network registered two domain names – [www.ayinetwork.org](http://www.ayinetwork.org) and its French equivalent, [www.reseauaji.org](http://www.reseauaji.org). This online platform will help provide a one-stop centre for information on the network, its people, activities, opportunities and successes! While the online home of the network is being set up, you may get more information by sending an email to [info@ayinetwork.org](mailto:info@ayinetwork.org).



#### 3.3 How can I be involved?

You are one of the many wonderful people who can participate in the activities of the network, support its programs or advise the bureau. You can help promote AYIN efforts in your local community – village, school, community, town, state, country or sub-region. Please direct all requests, or offer of support to [info@ayinetwork.org](mailto:info@ayinetwork.org).



#### 4 CONCLUSION: AFRICAN YOUTH RESOLUTIONS

In the framework of the Information Society, the African Youth ICT4D Network,

**Aware** that the Information Society should be about people and development;

**Considering** the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Millennium Declaration, the Bamako Declaration, the African Youth Declaration on the WSIS and the NEPAD;



**Convinced** that Africa's youth have and should play a key role in bridging the digital divide;

**Reaffirming** our common desire to establish an Information Society that focuses on people and development over profit and technology;

Has agreed as follows:

1. We invite all youth-led or youth-oriented organizations from all African regions including the Diaspora to adhere to this declaration
2. To launch the African Youth Information and Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D) Network
3. That we, as youth, will lead action within the Information Society and ensure sustainability and efficiency of the African Youth ICT4D Network
4. That Governments should commit resources and political will towards the translation of past recommendations into visible and sustainable action



5. That Governments should provide an enabling environment for youth input and empowerment, e.g. through the provision of tax incentives for youth-led Information and Communication Technologies business start-ups
6. That International Organizations should support the implementation of the African Youth ICT4D Network's (AYIN) action plan
7. That the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) will



establish a youth desk to manage the activities of the network, and facilitate youth participation in relevant regional meetings such as the Africa/Arab WSIS Meeting and the Fifth African Development Forum (ADF V)

8. That the Committee on Development Information (CODI) will integrate youth views into its work plan, and facilitate the involvement of youth at the CODI IV meeting on the Information Economy
9. That we endorse and support the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) as one of the financial mechanisms to tackle the digital divide, and request for youth representation on the DSF council
10. That relevant stakeholders (women, media, academia, private sector, civil society, African youth in Diaspora, etc) will support the action plan and work of the African Youth ICT4D Network