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## Phase II of NEPAD Cities Programme to take off

A special session to launch Phase 2 of the NEPAD's Cities Programme which will raise awareness and sensitise local authorities and communities to the relevance of NEPAD objectives to African development, is to be launched. The session will also enhance the capacity of local authorities to assist national governments in addressing NEPAD objectives and manage the delivery of basic services to reduce poverty and foster socio-economic cohesion in Africa.

The NEPAD cities initiative aims to address urbanisation and its consequences in order to make African cities more attractive for economic investment. Seven cities were selected to kick-start the programme in July 2003. These cities include Durban, Bamako, Lagos, Lusaka, Nairobi, Rabat and Douala. The mayors of these cities are to attend the special session.

The profiles of these cities were prepared by their respective municipalities with technical assistance from the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT). They were then discussed intensively by all mayors of these cities at the First NEPAD City Consultative Forum held in Lagos in May 2004. More cities, including Addis Ababa, have requested to join the programme.

*Source: BuaNews Online: [www.buanews.co.za](http://www.buanews.co.za), 26 September 2007*

## Stakeholders commit to accelerating the African Broadband Initiative

A workshop in Johannesburg on harmonising the policy, legislative and regulatory aspects of the NEPAD African regional broadband initiative has ended with a commitment by stakeholders to accelerate progress towards the early completion of the project.

Participants underscored the importance of intra-regional multi-entity cooperation, and noted that while some countries had already taken steps to modify their policies, laws and regulations to support ICT convergence and open access principles, others may need some help to do so. With a deadline of 31st March 2008 for the harmonisation process to be completed by each member country, policy-makers, regulators and representatives of key regional organisations also discussed processes for signing and ratifying the Kigali Protocol and implementing the required changes.

Participants discussed the state of ICT policy; legal and regulatory reform and convergence in countries represented at the workshop; the significance of co-ownership and licensing of a Special Purpose Vehicle that will operate on Open Access Network principles; and changes that need to be made to existing policies, laws and regulations to enable countries to bring their operating environments in line with each other.

Dr Spio-Garbrah, a former Minister of Communications of Ghana, emphasised the importance of establishing new and proper arrangements for a multi-country broadband project such as that proposed for Eastern and Southern African countries. He recalled that

*Continued on Page 2*

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EVERY MONDAY  
**NEPAD Briefs**



*Continued from Page 1*

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that the West African sub-region had continued to suffer from high costs of bandwidth because the consortium that owns the existing cable had constructed that project without any policy or regulatory oversight from governments and regulators in the sub-region.

He advised countries and ICT consumers in the Eastern and Southern African region not to assume that the mere presence of fibre-optical cables on their shores or land would mean lower communications costs.

A lot depends on how the NEPAD Broadband Infrastructure project cable is owned financed, managed, operated, priced, and regulated or not regulated, he said.

*Source: Commonwealth Telecommunication Organization News, 28 September 2007*

## Now, NEPAD Business Guide to be published annually

The overwhelming success of the first NEPAD Business Foundation (NBF) Official Business Guide, launched at the World Economic Forum on Africa in June has encouraged NBF to embark upon an annual publication of the Guide.

The NBF was founded at the behest of President Thabo Mbeki to facilitate private sector participation in various NEPAD initiatives across the African continent. The Official Business Guide is thus the authoritative communications vehicle developed in support of the NBF's strategic objectives in line with those of NEPAD - offering a unique high-profile business communication platform and bringing like-minded parties together with a common goal of supporting business development across Africa.

In essence, it provides the necessary facilitation and guidance on how best to engage with all key stakeholders wishing to trade, partner or invest in Africa making it invaluable for any organisation doing business in Africa. The recipients of the Guide are carefully identified through the NBF database and networking platform, to ensure maximum reach and effective and highly focused distribution to policy-makers and decision-makers. The 2007 edition has been in high demand from various embassies, foreign trade offices, bi-lateral Chambers and Departments of Foreign Affairs.

*Source: African Path, 26 September 2007*

### UPCOMING EVENTS IN OCTOBER:

**9-13 October:** Expert working group meeting on the NEPAD e-Schools business plan, Johannesburg, South Africa.

**10-11 October:** Adhoc Expert group meeting on the External Review of UN wide system support to the implementation of NEPAD : The cluster system at the regional consultations, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**29 October:** NEPAD Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue II, Abuja, Nigeria.

**30-31 October:** NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee Summit, Abuja, Nigeria.

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NEPAD Support Unit of the United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa:  
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**DID YOU KNOW?** The Mo Ibrahim foundation just released the Ibrahim Index of African Governance for 2007 conducted by the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University with rankings for all 48 sub-Saharan countries. The foundation is an African initiative established by Dr Mo Ibrahim to stimulate debate on good governance, providing objective criteria by which citizens can hold their government's accountable as well as recognising achievement in African leadership.

**For more information: [www.moibrahimfoundation.org/index](http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/index).**