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## AfDB hosts third annual Africa's International Media Summit

The African Communications Agency (ACA) convened the Third Africa's International Media Summit (AIMS) from 27-30 March 2008 in Tunis. The event was a three-day critical discussion on issues relating to the proper and adequate dissemination of information about the 'New and Emerging Africa' and the re-branding of Africa. The African Development Bank with the support of the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), and the Diaspora African Forum (DAF) hosted the event.

"How the Youth can help change the image of Africa in the re-branding process" was the theme of this year's AIMS in line with the AU Declaration of 2008 as the year of the youth. Stakeholders in the Media Industry, Senior Government Officials from across the continent, and from the African Diaspora, with responsibility for information, participated in the Summit.

Proposed as a five-year process, AIMS' concept was borne out of a conscious commitment to the long overdue re-branding of Africa, in accordance with its emerging and promising renaissance process. The Summit is also designed to encourage, inspire and learn from the African-base and international media in all its forms and to provide support information and assistance to African ministers of communication, information, public image, and tourism.

The ACA, with headquarters in Accra and offices in South Africa and Nigeria, focuses on establishing partnerships and developing initiatives to help change the negative perception of Africa created by the media and to introduce African businesses to the global marketplace.

*Source: All Africa, 27 March 2008*

## Microsoft launches new solutions for Africa

ICT giant Microsoft has launched its latest software solutions to the African market, in the hope that these will mark a turning point in the way that large companies and governments use and manage their widespread computer networks, an official has said.

Briefing journalists, David Ndungu Marketing Manager of Microsoft for East and Southern Africa said: The new software solutions will be of particular interest to information technology (IT) professionals and managers, executives and senior public officials responsible for IT, and people who develop software applications across Africa.

Microsoft's creation and launch of these software solutions is based on feedback from IT professionals who say they spend too much time and money managing existing systems and not enough investing in new capabilities that gives them a strategic business advantage.

The company is planning to distribute the new products using its 200 partners in the continent. The Manager also indicated that existing partners of Microsoft in Ethiopia who have software assurance with the company could use the new products without any cost.

In order to make accessible computers to the majority of African people, Microsoft is working in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on how to provide reloaded computers for communities and schools in Africa, since last July.

*Source: AfricaNews, 26 March 2008*



## Investments in agricultural water critical to achieving the MDGs, say AfDB, World Bank and NEPAD

The African Development Bank (AfDB), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the World Bank called for an increase in funding and a renewed focus on agricultural water management in Africa, including irrigation, drainage and rainwater harvesting.

Representatives of AfDB, NEPAD and the World Bank issued the call after a special session on agriculture water use in Africa held in Tunis at the First African Water Week. The meeting discussed challenges facing agriculture water development in Africa and a proposal for a new initiative aimed at scaling up investments and ensuring a more reliable, broad-based and sustained flow of funds for agricultural water, as well promoting analytical work and supporting sectoral strategies in the field of agricultural water.

The Initiative would promote knowledge sharing, dissemination and capacity strengthening. It would launch innovative business lines in support of agricultural water management and sustainable development. It will also foster regional integration, coordination and partnerships, and empowerment of national and regional stakeholders.

According to the World Bank's latest World Development Report, growth in the agricultural sector in Africa is vital to poverty reduction and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"Strategic public and related private investment in water management will be essential for the intensification of agricultural production and for meeting targets for poverty alleviation, food production and economic recovery by 2015," said Richard Mkandawire, NEPAD's Agriculture Advisor.

The Tunis meeting discussed the agricultural water strategy: Investment in agricultural water for poverty reduction and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa which was jointly prepared by the World Bank, AfDB, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and International Water Management Institute (IWMI), in response to NEPAD's desire to implement land and water management (Pillar I) of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). The CAADP encompasses among other objectives an increase in the area under sustainable water management in Africa to 20 million hectares, up from less than 7 million hectares at present.

*Source: M2 PressWIRE, 27 March 2008*

## Cable system to get another competitor

A new undersea cable system is planned from Portugal to South Africa along the west coast of Africa. In the coming week, the Infinity Worldwide Telecom Group of Companies (IWTGC) looks set to finalize the funding of its first phase build for its international fibre route from Portugal to South Africa along the west coast of the continent.

A West African bank, a leading institutional investment advisor and European institutional investment advisors are all in the final stages of agreeing an investment package that will come up with the funding for the first stage of the Infinity project. Once agreed, work will start 45-60 days after funding package has been inked.

Infinity already has an MOU with VSNL (owners of Neotel) for engineering and design support; use of its global infrastructure; network services; and operational support. VSNL's International Global Network spans across 4 continents and comprises major ownership of 206 356km of terrestrial network fibre and sub-sea cable.

*Source: MyBroadband NEWS, 29 March 2008*

### UPCOMING EVENTS IN MARCH:

**31 March-2 April** First session of the Joint Annual Meetings of the AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and ECA African Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development: Meeting Africa's New Challenges in the 21st Century (Addis Ababa)

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**DID YOU KNOW?** The Development Marketplace Grant competition is a competitive grant program which plans to award up to \$200,000 each to about 15 to 20 finalists for presenting the most innovative and viable ideas for designing, developing, and delivering modern off-grid lighting products and services to Sub-Saharan Africa. Based on the premise that a sustainable market is one that grows the local economy, the competition required that each project team include a partner organization based and operating in Africa. For more information: [http://www.africanews.com/site/list\\_messages/17091.com/stories/200802220920.html](http://www.africanews.com/site/list_messages/17091.com/stories/200802220920.html)