



NEPAD Dialogue

Focus on Africa



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Agreement on broadband ICT network for Eastern and Southern Africa



An ICT infrastructure workshop to discuss the establishment of an integrated regional broadband ICT network in Eastern and Southern Africa was hosted by the NEPAD e-Africa Commission in Johannesburg on 28–30 July 2004.

The response to the invitation to the workshop was overwhelming, with over 100 delegates and dignitaries from 21 African countries attending.

The delegation included operators of telecommunication networks, utility infrastructure operators (power line, gas, and oil pipeline), ICT policy makers and regulators, funding agencies, and other stakeholders from the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

Among the dignitaries were Dr. Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri (above right), Minister of Communications of South Africa; Mr. John Nasasira, Minister of Works, Housing and Communications of Uganda; Dr. Bernard Zoba, the African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy; Mr. Amadou Top, the representative of Minister Mamadou Diop of Senegal.

Ms. Lyndall Shope-Mafole, Chairperson, Presidential National Committee on Information Society and Development and e-Africa Commissioner responsible for e-policies and e-strategies, presided over the workshop proceedings.

African Union commitment

During her address to the delegates, Minister Matsepe-Casaburri urged participants to consider the impact of gender, environmental and sociological dynamics during their deliberations, as this was essential if ICT development was to impact positively on the lives of all African people.

The Minister emphasised the importance of sound ICT policy and efficient regulatory frameworks. She also reiterated the commitment of the Government of South Africa to ensuring the success of NEPAD and all its projects.

During his address, Dr. Zoba stated that ICT plays a pivotal role in achieving sustainable development and that Africa lacks sufficient ICT infrastructure.

He said it would be of great benefit to Africa if the electricity and railway authorities in Africa followed the same process that this workshop was applying to the development of ICT infrastructure.

He emphasised the commitment of the African Union to the work of the e-Africa Commission and the great expectations for the outcome of this workshop.

The promoters of some key ICT infrastructure initiatives were given the opportunity to present their specific projects. These included the Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System (EASSy), the SR11 project, the Comtel initiative, the Kenya Pipeline Company's ICT infrastructure requirements, and the COM-7 project.

Regulatory constraints

Delegates agreed that a need existed to consolidate and align projects, but it was acknowledged that a rationalised regional network that spans such a vast area of Africa could not be developed overnight as there were many complex issues requiring deliberation and consultation amongst stakeholders.

Regulatory constraints were in some instances also an impediment to establishing an integrated regional network and the free flow of traffic between countries.

The Commission was urged to take up this issue with policy makers and regulators in the region as a matter of urgency.

Speaking during the opening of the policy and regulatory session, Minister Nasasira challenged participants to develop an "ICT without frontiers" mentality following the example of "Doctors without borders". In developing the ICT sector, duplication must be avoided and an environment attractive to investors must be created.

Delegates recognised that a supportive policy and regulatory framework was key to achieving an integrated regional broadband ICT network. Certain key issues had to be addressed to ensure that competition was increased and prices were reduced. Delegates expected NEPAD to play a leadership role in taking this process forward.

Regional co-operation

During discussions it was mentioned that where sector reforms had occurred in Africa, growth in tele-density (telephones per head of population) had triggered increased private sector investment. There were now many more opportunities, however, to improve ICT infrastructure and to increase service delivery.

The establishment of the SAT-3 / WASC submarine cable system and the current SRII initiative were examples of regional cooperation that could develop infrastructure and vastly improve the continent's connectivity.

A pertinent point made during the deliberations was that ICT infrastructure development was not an end in itself, but it facilitates human development, regional economic growth, interaction between communities, and wider access to education.

At the conclusion of the workshop, it was agreed that a preliminary draft rationalised network, based on the findings of an assessment of ICT infrastructure and development projects in the region and the inputs gathered at the workshop, would be developed and distributed to stakeholders for review and comment by mid-August.

A follow-up workshop of key project initiators would then be convened at the end of August to address the details of an agreed basic network, establish ownership of the projects that emerged and set the ready-for-service dates.

It was agreed that at the earliest opportunity, the e-Africa Commission would initiate a dialogue with ICT policy makers in the region with a view to resolving such regulatory issues as may impede or prevent the realisation of the rationalised regional network through which communications traffic could flow freely.

The overwhelming consensus of opinion was that the workshop was a success. It presented an opportunity for delegates from a wide spectrum of ICT-related organisations to meet to discuss their plans and other common interests, and to find ways of strengthening collaboration. More importantly, an agreed integrated broadband regional ICT network was formulated and a programme for its development was established.

Basic network finalised

As undertaken during the workshop, a follow-up workshop took place on 31 August. Key network developers participated and an agreed basic network was finalised.

It was noted that current feasibility studies being undertaken on behalf of some of the project initiators will determine the optimum means of providing the optical fibre connectivity -- whether buried along roads, along railway tracks or pipeline servitudes, or suspended along electricity power routes.

The participants agreed that this network will constitute a firm basis for the development of ICT broadband infrastructure in Eastern and Southern Africa and that they would endeavour to bring it about. They requested NEPAD, donors and funding agencies to assist them in this effort.

In the short term, the Commission will convene meetings of operators, donors and other potential investors to discuss the funding of cross-border connectivity projects, where this was required.

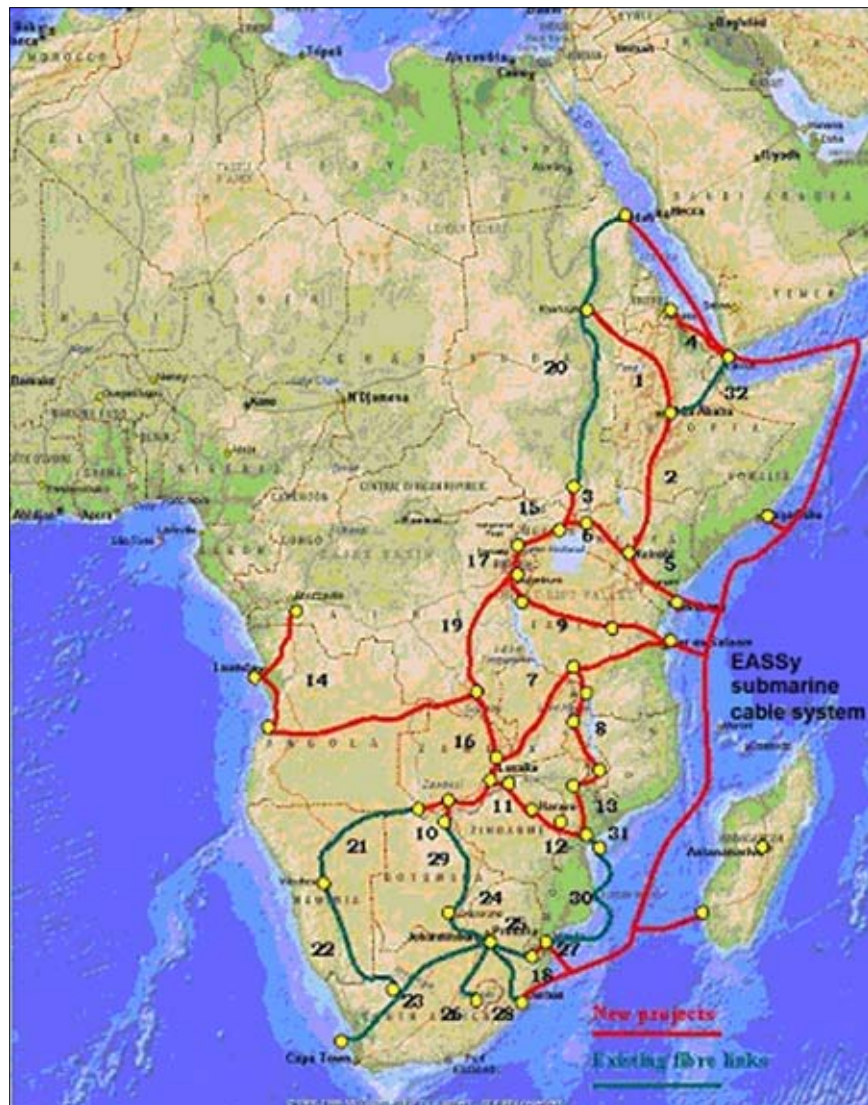
In conclusion, the network developers took ownership of individual projects and committed to establishing the network within a 3-year period.

List of agreed projects required to fulfill the objective of establishing a basic rationalised regional broadband ICT network in Eastern and Southern Africa:

Project	LINKS	PROJECT OWNERS / PROMOTERS / BUILDERS	ROUTING	READY FOR SERVICE DATE
1	Ethiopia-Sudan	Comtel	Addis Ababa-Khartoum	2007
2	Ethiopia-Kenya	Comtel	Addis Ababa-Nairobi	2007
3	Sudan-Uganda	e-Africa * Commission	Juba-Kampala	TBD
4	Djibouti-Eritrea	Comtel	Djibouti-Asmara	2007
5	Nairobi-Mombasa	EASSy / Kenya Pipeline Company	Nairobi-Mombasa	2006
6	Kenya-Uganda	Comtel / EASSy / KPC	Nairobi-Tororo-Kampala	2006
7	Tanzania-Zambia	Com-7	Dar es Salaam-Mbeya-Kasama-Mpika-Kapiri Mposhi-Kabwe-Lusaka-Livingstone	2007
8	Tanzania-Malawi	Comtel / SRII	Mbeya-Mzuzu-Lilongwe-Blantyre	2006
9	Tanzania-Burundi	Com-7	Dar es Salaam-Dodoma-Tabora-Kigoma-Bujumbura	2007
10	Namibia-Zambia-Botswana	SRII	Katima Mulilo-Livingstone-Kasane	2005
11	Zambia-Zimbabwe	SRII	Lusaka-Kariba-Harare	2005
12	Zimbabwe-Mozambique	Comtel	Harare-Mutare-Chimoio	2007
13	Malawi-Mozambique	SRII	Blantyre-Tete-Chimoio	2006
14	DRC-Angola	Comtel	Lumumbashi-Benguela-Luanda-Kinshasa	2007

*** The e-Africa Commission will seek to find project owners for this link.**

The agreed basic rationalised broadband ICT network for Eastern and Southern Africa:



Banker tells international gathering:



Africa taking charge of its own destiny through Peer Review

With the introduction through NEPAD of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Africa had taken the initiative and had begun to take charge of its own destiny, the Chief Executive of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Mandla Gantsho (right), told the International Programme for the Development of Evaluation Training (IPDET) at its recent meeting in Ottawa, Canada. He was speaking on “Raising the Stakes in Evaluation: A key to Africa’s Renaissance?”

The global development dilemma, he said, was that far too many people lived in poverty and underdevelopment: the world was “iniquitous” and there was unhealthy dependency by some of its regions on others.

“Posed as a question the subject of my address is in fact a hypothesis or proposition that proffers evaluation as a key to these challenges, he said.”

“Asked differently the question is: How can we draw on the monitoring and evaluation body of knowledge and practice to help us advance the development agenda, in particular the millennium development goals, to achieve sustainable improvements in the quality of life of the poor?”

APRM – a novel evaluation initiative

Africa, he said, had in recent times given new impetus and meaning to evaluation, at a continental organisational level – a level where it could make a substantial difference.

He described the African Peer Review Mechanism as “a novel evaluation initiative”.

“Key African development institutions, notably the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the UN Economic

sustainable development and accelerated regional and continental economic integration.

“It involves sharing lessons of experience, and reinforcing successful best practices, including identifying deficiencies and assessing capacity building needs of participating countries.”

A new era in the region

Mr. Gantsho told the international gathering: “Many of us believe that the APRM heralds a new era of mutual accountability, transparency and commitment to good governance in our region. At the core of all of this, is a new culture and systematic practice of monitoring and evaluation.

“For development finance institutions (DFIs) such as the DBSA, this is important not only to help countries get on a fast track to development, but also to address the matter of high risks in financing development in the region.

“In a globalising world, the NEPAD initiative takes cognisance of the power of partnerships.

“Although the APRM does not address the important questions of fair and equitable trade and the effectiveness of Official Development Assistance (ODA), NEPAD, on another front, does seek to harness the power of evaluation to help bring about a more balanced engagement between Africa and its international development partners in respect of these matters.

“The need for serious reform of ODA has long been a matter of lively debate within the donor and international communities as well as in developing countries receiving aid.”

As part of the NEPAD initiative, Mr. Gantsho said, new mechanisms for mutual international dialogue on international development assistance and ODA had been proposed.

Special-purpose NEPAD forum

“The idea is to place objective evaluations of development effectiveness and related policies at the heart of this dialogue, so that the lessons learnt from countless evaluations can be factored into the manner in which policies are reformed, and ODA is delivered. The aim is to examine – in partnership - the effectiveness of development policies and international programmes.

“A special-purpose NEPAD development forum will play a leading role in this regard.”

Beyond the realms of ODA, he added, this African initiative also sought to apply in trade and other negotiations, the evaluation’s of certain domestic polices practised by international development partners, such as farm subsidies and subsidisation of uncompetitive industries, which seriously prejudiced the interests of African and other developing countries.

“Alongside many other DFIs, we at the DBSA have been keen to embrace this new spirit and initiative. It is a bold agenda, but an important one if in Africa we are to move beyond business as usual, and more seriously tackle some of the deeper causes of under-development.

“I believe that the power of monitoring and evaluation coupled with the transparency and accountability of democratic governance, not just in a national context but also internationally, can begin to put in motion an enabling environment and conditions for accelerated socio-economic development in Africa.”

NEPAD and AU Strategic Plan

THE second annual Global African Business Titans conference, to be held in Dar-es-Salaam on 12-13 October 2004, will be officially opened by Tanzania's President Mkapa.

The conference, which is being organised by the Black Business Executive Circle of South Africa, will this year focus on "the East African opportunity".

The first annual Titans conference was launched in Johannesburg last year to explore how NEPAD could serve as a catalyst to help businesses from the African diaspora to trade and invest with one another within a borderless "Global African Economic Community". It attracted nearly 150 speakers and delegates from all over the world.

This year the conference will continue to further the efforts of NEPAD and will also buttress the recently released 2004-2007 Strategic Plan of the Africa Union.

The aim will be to support and facilitate the development of greater public-private dialogue and input relating to the AU's Strategic Plan and to again engage business and organisational leaders from within the African diaspora on ways to increase the flow of commerce and general support for the economic development of Africa.

Calendar of Events

- **1 - 2 October**, APR Panel meeting, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- **3 - 4 October**, Global Tillage Network Meeting, Nairobi, Kenya.
- **4 - 5 October**, African Partnership Forum (Meeting between the NEPAD Steering Committee and G8 Leaders' Personal Representatives, other development partners, and OECD Member States), Washington DC, USA.
- **7 - 12 October**, UN-Inter Agency Task Force: prepCom for the Second World Conference on Disaster Management in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **11 - 14 October**, World Food Programme Executive Board Regular Session, Rome, Italy.
- **12 - 13 October**, Global African Business Titans conference, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.
- **14 - 15 October**, World Food Prize International Symposium Award Ceremony, Des Moines, Iowa, USA.
- **14 - 15 October**, NEPAD / Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS) Seminar, Libreville, Gabon.
- **22 - 23 October**, NEPAD Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- **25 October**, NEPAD advisory panel meeting, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- **1 - 2 November**, Water Centres of Excellence Workshop, Botswana. (**postponed to early 2005**)
- **22 - 23 November**, NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSIGC) Meeting, Algiers, Algeria.
- **22 - 25 November**, Conference on Successes in African Agriculture, Nairobi, Kenya.

Ms. Thaninga Shope-Linney
Tel: +27(0)11 313 3331
Fax: +27(0)11 313 3778

Manager – Publications and Editorial

Ms. Mundia Kunyanda
Tel: +27(0)11 313 3161
Fax: +27(0)11 313 3778

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MMi Concord

Tel: +27 (0)21 421 0646/48/70
Fax: +27 (0)21 425 8249
Email: info@mmiconcord.com

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