



PICTA Bulletin is a monthly publication that provides information on activities of members in the partnership, as well as offers news on ICT-related activities in Africa. This bulletin is also available at: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/picta/PICTAbulletin>

NEWS: PICTA Members.....

Scan-ICT launched in The Gambia, Cameroon and Mauritius. The Scan-ICT project was launched in The Gambia, Cameroon and Mauritius during national consultative workshops held from 29 to 30 November 2005 (The Gambia), from 5 – 6 January 2006 (Cameroon) and 23 January 2006 (Mauritius). These events identified core ICT indicators, reviewed the processes and reflected on research and methodological issues related to the studies, including a work plan and timeframe for implementation of Scan-ICT project in the countries. The major outcomes of the workshops include:

- Enhanced awareness on issues related to measuring the Information Society, including the Scan-ICT processes and documents
- Better understanding of the roles of stakeholders in the implementation of the project
- Institutional arrangements and a plan of action for the implementation of the project, including the integration of ICT indicators in the national surveys conducted by National Statistics Offices
- Consensus reached on the Scan-ICT methodology framework and preliminary list of core and extended ICT indicators to be used for the countries.

Scan-ICT programme was launched in November 2000 as a collaborative project between the Acacia programme of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and ECA, with financial support from the European Union (EU) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD). The programme monitors the penetration, impact and effectiveness of ICT applications in pilot countries across Africa, providing added value to the AISI implementation at the national, regional and global levels. The countries selected to participate in the second phase of Scan-ICT with support from the Government of Finland include Cameroon, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sudan, and Swaziland. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/scanict.htm>

Achieving affordable bandwidth in West and Central Africa. The workshop was organized by the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), held from 30 November to 2 December 2005 Saly Portudal, Senegal. Participants were drawn from NGOs/civil society organizations involved with connectivity, public policy-makers, ISPs/telecom operators, regulators, and ICT ministries. The event combined information sharing, plenary sessions, and working groups in an Open Space format to look at four key issues. These were: 1) an overall vision for affordable bandwidth, 2) user requirements and reaching less well-served areas, 3) policy and regulatory reforms, and 4) investment in network development. More: Mohammed Timoulali (mtimoulali@uneca.org).

IICD receives renewed support from the Dutch government. The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) successfully gained support for its work from The Netherlands' Minister of Development Cooperation, Agnes van Ardenne. With this support comes a financial backing amounting to 20 million euros. Allocating the funding shows that IICD is working well. IICD was established in 1996, with the aim of fighting poverty in developing countries by realising sustainable development through ICT. IICD are active in nine countries: Burkina Faso, Bolivia, Ecuador, Ghana, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Its aim is to have developed a unique strategy in which terms such as 'local ownership' and 'capacity development' are key to development. More: Hilde Eugelink (information@iicd.org).

Swaziland validates its ICT Policy. About 50 participants drawn from government, private sector, civil society, international and regional organizations (SADC) attended the NICI Policy validation workshop organized by the ECA on the 26th of January 2006 in Mbabane, Swaziland. This workshop presented participants with an opportunity to critique the Kingdom of Swaziland's ICT Policy whose drafting was coordinated by ECA as part of its technical assistance under the auspices of the AISI with financial assistance from the Government of Finland. The workshop resulted in the adoption of the final draft policy, which would be presented to the cabinet for approval in the next few weeks. The final approved document will be showcased at a local ICT Fair in March 2006. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/swaziNICIws.htm> Contact: Sizo Mhlanga (smhlanga@uneca.org).

ECA and IDEP go virtual to address African training needs. The UN Institute for Development and Economic Planning (IDEP) and ECA's Development Information Services Division have joined forces to develop a virtual learning academy to be referred to as the African Virtual Learning Academy (AvLAC.org). The two entities plan to operate the Academy as a mutual exchange of resources where IDEP and vLAC training expertise and modules will be integrated transparently. The overall objective is to create a collective mechanism through which to channel African constituents for specialized development related training. It is expected that AvLAC.org can offer 10 to 15 specialized and focused courses given that IDEP has accumulated a great deal of information with regard to economic planning and is well known in the region for its training programmes. The initial slot of courses will range from Internet User Training to Regional Integration and will be targeted to both organizations' traditional clients. More: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/idep-disd.htm> Contact: Dawit Isayas (disayas@uneca.org).

CODESRIA to become an AVLIN node. With possibly the largest collections of African social science research findings on the continent, CODESRIA, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa has recently expressed interest in becoming a node of the African Virtual Library and Information Network (AVLIN), spearheaded by the ECA Library. AVLIN is a network of virtual and digital libraries providing internet-based information and knowledge assets, resources and services to policy makers, and researchers from across the African continent. Among its goals is for AVLIN to serve as a gateway of gateways to facilitate knowledge exchanges among interested Africans and connect them to leading African libraries, universities and information centers dealing with socioeconomic development issues. AVLIN also offers a general framework, model and opportunity for the acquisition of concrete technical knowledge for the effective development and management of digital libraries and electronic information networks. More: Petrina Amonoo (pamonoo@uneca.org) and Dawit Isayas (disayas@uneca.org).

OTHER NEWS..... OTHER NEWS.....

Ethiopia: National consultation on ICT education. The workshop was organized by the College of Telecommunication and Information Technology (CTIT) took place from 26 to 27 January 2006 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Over 300 participants drawn from all stakeholders (government, academia, private sector, donors, etc.) attended the workshop. A number of sessions were conducted focusing on ICT education, ICT human resource development, the role of the private sector and donors, and national ICT policy issues. Participants

recommended that a sectoral e-strategy on education and ICTs be developed, and a national task force be constituted to deal with ICTs and education in Ethiopia. More: <http://www.gstit.edu.et>

Uganda: Government to set up full ICT ministry. (The Monitor) -- The Government will create a separate ministry to manage and coordinate the ICT sector. This follows a recommendation by the ICT working group of the Presidential Investors Round Table (PIRT), a two-year task force mandated to consult and advise the government on critical areas to accelerate growth and development. President Y.K. Museveni, has blessed the formation of the ICT ministry and promised to appoint a minister by March 2006. ICT is a critical stimulant to the development of a country that wants to be an equal member of the developing nations. Creation of a full ICT ministry will bring resources (funds) closer to the stakeholders and allow for an equal dissemination of the service countrywide thus creating more jobs and easing access to information. More: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/>

Ghana: Telecommunications bill meets stiff opposition from stakeholders (GINKS) -- Stakeholders in the ICT industry in Ghana have requested that the proposed Telecommunications Bill 2006 and the National Communications Authority ACT 2005 be redrafted in take into account convergence. The two bills are being developed by the Ministry of Communications as part of the process to streamline the communications sector in Ghana. At a well-attended meeting organized to solicit the views of industry stakeholders, various dissenting views were expressed about the proposed bill. Beginning on a rather surprising note, the head of the regulatory agency, Major Tandoh, NCA Acting Director, disagreed with the whole bill and suggested that the bill be completely put aside. In his view an amendment of the old NCA Act 524 is a much better solution. In his words this new bill 'is going to make my work more difficult'. Major Tandoh was not the only one worried about the new Bill, ISP veteran Dr. Nii Quainoo of NCS said, the bill fundamentally lacked a strong community focus. He said by focusing the bill on Telecommunications it completely neglected the trend towards convergence and shut out the Internet community altogether. Prof. Clement Dzidonu, who chaired the meeting, reminded the drafting committee that convergence is a clearly stated objective of the overriding Ghanaian ICT4AD policy and that this should be reflected in the bill. More: <http://www.ginks.org/>

Tanzania: Regulator now allow multiple services over single network (IPPMedia) -- The new licensing regime, introduced by the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority, now permits multiple services over a single network. "This has opened the door for 6 Telecoms to enter the market and build an advanced international access network that links Tanzania to the world using more efficient technologies," the Director and Chief Executive

Office of Six Telecoms Company Limited, Rashid Shamte, has said. Shamte said this after TCRA awarded his company three new licences that are the International Network Facilities Licence, the International Network Service License and the Application Service Licence. Commenting on their licences, Shamte said: "Last year, TTCL had exclusive rights over the international gateway. More: <http://www.ippmedia.com/>

Meeting on India/AU Pan-African Network Project (PANP). The PANP Steering Committee meeting took place from 30 – 31 January 2006 at the Africa Union HQ in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting reviewed technical modalities and operational arrangements made for launching the network by creating e-education and e-health network nodes in all the 53 African countries, and 5 sub-regional nodes. The brainchild of President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, this Pan African network aims at bridging the digital divide and accelerate development throughout Africa. The 63.7 million project, which will be funded by the Indian external affairs ministry under its Aid-to-Africa Budget programme, is being hailed as the modern face of the India-Africa relations and cements the growing synergy in developmental projects. The project, which is likely to become operational by 2007, includes setting up a VVIP network that will network the Presidents of all the 53 African countries who will have a ready access to their counterparts through videoconferencing and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) facilities. More: <http://www.africa-union.org>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10 – 12 February 2006, Internet Governance - The Way Forward: From Tunis via Malta to Athens, Radisson SAS Bay Point Resort, Malta. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis resulted in the decision to establish an Internet Governance Forum. The decision taken by parties at the WSIS indicates WHAT the Forum should do and WHO should be involved (multistakeholder approach). However, it remains to be seen HOW the Forum will be organised. Organized by the DiploFoundation, this conference aims to provide an initial mapping, through addressing the structure, approaches, representation/participation, complementarities between stakeholders, and proposed solutions. Prominent players in the Internet Governance debate will also address issues such as Internet Governance Capacity Building; Policy Lessons Learned from the WSIS Process (2002-2005); Implementation of the WSIS Conclusions on Internet Governance; Multistakeholder Approach to Internet Governance; International Cooperation and Internet Security; and Legal Challenges of Internet Governance. The conference will also include a presentation on the results of the Internet Governance Research Project, which began in September 2005, with the participation of 20 researchers. The conference will mark the launch of

the Internet Governance Capacity Building Initiative, involving more than 15 institutions involved in training and research activities in the field of Internet Governance/Policy. The initiative participants will develop a plan of action for 2006/2007. More: <http://www.diplomacy.edu/Conferences/IG/default.asp>

14 – 17 February 2006, Applying Geographic Information Systems to SADC Development, Cape Town, South Africa. The Centre of Specialisation in Public Administration and Management (CESPAM), a SADC institution set up in 2000, is organising this activity within its ongoing Executive Training Programme. The seminar will treat the subject of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and its application to development particularly in the SADC region and is intended for senior managers and policy makers in the civil service, state corporations and agencies as well as senior management from local government, professional associations and the private sector with an interest in GIS. This is an interactive seminar, which will provide participants with opportunities to freely exchange ideas, knowledge and experience with each other and the resource persons facilitating this seminar. This will be achieved through the use of discussion groups and case studies. The event is sponsored and co-organised by the Government of South Africa together with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany through its aid agency (GTZ). More: <http://www.cespam.net>

23 – 25 February 2006, IDLELO2: Achieving millennium development goals through community software?, Nairobi, Kenya. The Free Software & Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA) in Collaboration with ECA, InWENT Capacity Building International, Germany and the eGovernment Directorate of Kenya are organizing the Second IDLELO Conference on Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) to be held at the Nairobi Safari Park Hotel in Kenya from the 23rd to 25th February 2006. The first IDLELO Conference which attracted over 250 delegates was held in January 2004 in Cape Town, South Africa. IDLELO is a Zulu word for a common grazing ground. The conference aims at stimulating a local FOSS Software Industry in Africa, and bringing together practitioners, decision makers and FOSS developers to learn how FOSS works. IDLELO2 was also identified as a potential opportunity to gather opinion on incorporating the gender component in FOSS and explore the challenges that hinder active participation of young Women in Software Development. More: <http://www.fossfa.net/idlelo2/index.html>

01 – 03 March 2006, IFISI World Forum, Marrakech, Morocco. The "International Forum of ICT Strategies and Investment" (IFISI) organized in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Formatiscom, will be held at the Marrakech Congress Center (Palais des Congrès) under the High and Effective Patronage of

His Majesty, Mohammed VI, King of Morocco. As a continuum of phase two of the World Summit on the Information Society, in Tunisia, IFISI is intended to bring effective and concrete answers to the complicated issue of funding of national, local and corporate ICT projects. The primary goal of this forum is to afford countries and organizations to present business plans of their ICT investment projects and strategies to a varied audience of venture capitalists, private equity funds, and other capital providers. The event will also provide numerous networking opportunities for informal interaction between organizations seeking capital and prospective investors. The Forum, with its emphasis on investment and ICT business will be articulated in session presentations and other parallel events. More: <http://www.virtualis-net.com/ifisi/index.html>

7 – 15 March 2006, World Telecommunications Development Conference, Doha, Qatar. ITU sanctioned "World Telecommunications Development Conference" is being hosted by the State of Qatar on March 7-15, 2006. The purpose of the Conference is to agree on development priorities in view of the high-level recognition of the Digital Divide between developing and developed nations created by the rapid but uneven expansion of ICTs. ICT-1-WORLD is the first ever exhibition to run in conjunction with a World Telecommunications Development Conference, therefore, it is unique in its appeal to delegates, media and business influencers. More: <http://www.ict-1-world.com/>

7 – 9 March 2006, ICTs for Civil Society, Indaba Hotel, Fourways, Johannesburg, South Africa. The Southern African NGO Network (SANGONeT), in conjunction with The Information Society Institute (Tisi) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, invites academic/scientific and action-research papers dealing with the theme, "The Information Society as a Response to Poverty and Inequality in Southern Africa", for presentation at the conference. The areas of interest include, but are not limited to, research on information and community informatics in the new and emerging information societies of Southern Africa. More: <http://www.sangonet.org.za/conference2006>

8 – 11 March 2006, 5th FIG Regional Conference in Accra, Ghana. The conference is organized by the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) and the Ghana Institution of Surveyors (GhIS) and co-hosted by the Ministry of Land, Forestry and Mines (MLFM) of Ghana. It is the first FIG Regional Conference to be held in West Africa. As has been the case with the previous FIG regional conferences the conference in Accra will be organized in co-operation with other international and regional organizations like the United Nations and its agencies (e.g. FAO, UN-Habitat and ECA, as well as other international geospatial societies and ISM). The focus of the 5th FIG Regional Conference will be on land administration and good governance as

conditions for sustainable development. More: <http://www.fig.net/accra/>

14 – 16 March 2006, e-Trade in Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. ECA is organizing an e-Trade Forum under the auspices of the Africa node of the Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePoINet) at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The forum will help to promote and build confidence in e-business development, and sensitize stakeholders to emerging e-business opportunities and their impact on national strategies. It will uniquely combine learning, expertise sharing (South-South and North-South), interactive dialogue, networking, and business matching and be used to launch the African e-Trade Initiative. The forum will be followed by a workshop, on e-finance including e-payment, e-loans and e-money transfer. More: Aida Opoku-Mensah (aopoku-mensah@uneca.org).

ANNOUNCEMENTS/RESOURCES

AFRICA: NEW PUBLICATION ON ICTS. "Mainstreaming ICTs: Africa Lives the Information Society" is a contribution towards efforts to bridge the policy-practice divide. The book is aimed at development practitioners and ICT innovators interested in inventive technology applications for social justice and development. The book contains 10 case studies reflecting on the innovative and creative ways ICTs have been used to promote people-centred development in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries. More: <http://www.pambazuka.org/index.php?id=31436>

SOUTHERN AFRICA: NEW TRENDS LED BY SOUTHERN AFRICA. Africa's largest Sub-Saharan Internet sub-region, Southern and Central Africa leads the way with new trends, says a new report out recently. Outside North Africa, Southern and Central Africa has some of the most developed Internet country markets on the continent. As a result, a number of trends developing there are beginning to spread across the continent. These are the findings of a new report published by Balancing Act recently. More: <http://www.balancingact-africa.com/news/current1.html>

PICTA Bulletin is a monthly information sharing service designed to keep members informed of each other's activities in the area of ICTs in Africa. Please send relevant information, stories or exchanges you may want to share with other members to atentime@uneca.org for inclusion in subsequent issues of the PICTA Bulletin. If you have any comments and/or suggestions, please contact:

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