Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh

Annual International Conference

ICT: Africa's Revolutionary Tools for the 21st Century?

22nd-23rd April 2010

Call for Papers

New information and communication technologies (ICTs) have taken Africa by storm. By far the highest uptake has been of mobile phones, and while rates of internet uptake in Africa have been slower, in many countries technologies that enable mobile internet access are now beginning to enter the mass market. New applications, and in some cases new devices, are also being introduced, at times in partnership between technology companies and development agencies. ICT seemingly embraces every aspect of the development spectrum, and has lead to increased academic interest in the Information and Communication Technology for Development, or ICTD/ICT4D discipline. At the same time, many Africans are using ICT – especially mobile phones – for less explicitly developmental, everyday communication that was otherwise impossible when landlines, the postal service or buses were the best options for communicating at a distance. Nowadays mobile phones are being used for more frequent communication, often over much shorter distances, and may prove to change interrelationships – not least between state and non-state actors – in unexpected ways. With this in mind, the Centre of African Studies is calling for papers that address the conference title, 'ICT: Africa's Revolutionary Tools for the 21st Century?'.

Given the broad range of uses to which ICT are put, the conference organisers welcome papers that relate to the use or potential of ICT in influencing change in Africa. Papers may wish to address issues of access, adoption, or impact, and may be framed in any discipline. Topics might include, but need not be restricted to: health (including veterinary science), education/learning, livelihoods and socio-economic interaction, finance (including money transfer), culture, media, governance, or any other aspect of empowerment. Papers covering other topics will also be considered, and both theory-based and empirical papers covering any region or country in sub-Saharan Africa are welcome.

The conference will take place at the University of Edinburgh's new state-of-the-art School of Informatics building. Funding will be available for a limited number of individuals presenting papers, with priority given to presenters based in Africa. Presented papers will be considered for inclusion in a peer-reviewed journal special edition. Attendance is limited and the number of prospective self-funded attendees who are not presenting papers may be restricted.

Those who are interested in presenting a paper should send an abstract of no more than 300 words to **African.Studies@ed.ac.uk**, placing 'ICT' in the subject heading. The abstract submission deadline is 12th February 2010 and applicants will be notified shortly after this date.