



Economic Commission for Africa  
Southern Africa Office



**Report of the Ad Hoc  
Expert Group Meeting on**

## The Role of **Development Information** in the **Economy**





Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)  
Southern Africa Office (SRO-SA)

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# Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on the Role of Development Information in the Economy

12 – 13 March 2007  
Lusaka, Zambia

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFREF	African Geodetic Reference Frame
AEGM	Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting
ARAPKE	African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy
ARICEA	Association of Regulators of Information and Communication in Central and Eastern Africa
AISI	African Information Society Initiative
AU	African Union
CODI	Committee on Development Information
CODI-KLIS	Sub-Committee on Knowledge, Libraries and Information Services for Development of the Committee on Development Information
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DI	Development Information
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECA-SA	Economic Commission for Africa, Southern Africa Office
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IP	Internet Providers
IT	Information Technology
KM	Knowledge Management
LIS	Library and Information Services
MAPS	Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NICI	National Information and Communication Infrastructure
NSOs	National Statistical Offices
NSS	National Statistical Systems
PoA	Plan of Action
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategies
R&D	Research and Development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
RICI	Regional Information and Communication Infrastructure
RRSF	Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa

SADC	Southern African Development Community
SATUCC	Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council
SDI	Spatial Data Infrastructure
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Reliable, and Timely
WSIS	World Summit on Information Society

## Executive Summary

This is the report of an Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia on 12 and 13 March 2007 to review a draft of the technical publication on “The Role of Development Information in African Economies.”

After deliberations, the experts recommended that the background report on Development Information presented by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) be restructured to clearly reflect its purpose and deal with all issues pertinent to development information and avoid concentrating solely on Information and Communication Technologies. In the revised report, a clear definition of Development Information should be provided to enable users of the document to place the subject matter in its proper context. In addition, experts recommended that the final technical publication should recognize and relate to the major international, African, regional and sub-regional development strategies, including SADC’s Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), especially their development information and human resources dimensions. Experts observed that education was key to development and emphasized the need for countries to concentrate on developing a culture of reading, upgrading and maintaining educational infrastructure, and enhancing access to information. With respect to access to information, experts recommended that Africa’s library and information services be revamped and made accessible to all citizens. The Experts, realizing the poor usage of geoinformation in policy making on the continent, recommended that member nations should recognize geoinformation as basic infrastructure for meaningful development, since most human activities and information related to them are spatially or geographically based. Further, to guide the finalisation of the technical publication, the experts developed a report outline and provided a description of the contents and the dimensions to be addressed in each section of the final report.

## 1.0 Background

1. The impact of rapid globalization and the emerging new global economic order has elevated information and knowledge products as dominant raw materials in the world economy. In the new age, development information (DI) has become an important driver of economies and economic development. DI is strategic for development and planning, policy making and underpins innovation and creativity across the whole spectrum of the economy by acting as the main driver of productivity growth and the restructuring of businesses. It affects skills and employment and facilitates the opening up of markets through the wider and faster flow of information and knowledge. Development Information also helps in understanding the main societal challenges such as population growth, unemployment as well as the threats and opportunities presented by liberalization and globalisation. Furthermore, the emerging knowledge economy is information-based and heavily dependent on labour force with ICT skills and this further strengthens the case for up-to-date development information for any society. The need for African countries to appreciate the importance of DI and develop appropriate environments for its growth and utilization motivated the study on the Role of Development Information in African Economies.

2. The Economic Commission for Africa, Southern Africa Office (ECA-SA) in collaboration with the ICT, Science and Technology Division at ECA Headquarters in Addis Ababa, organized an Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting (AEGM) to review a draft technical publication on *The Role of Development Information in African Economies*. The meeting took place in Lusaka, Zambia, from 12 to 13 March 2007.

## 2.0 Attendance

3. A selected group of experts from academia, private sector, regional economic communities and research and development institutions attended the meeting held at Taj Pamodzi Hotel, in Lusaka, Zambia. Staff members of ECA headquarters and ECA-SA participated in the AEGM. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.



## 3.0 Opening Session

### 3.1 Opening Remarks

4. The Chair of the ICE Bureau, Ms. Thabsile Mlangeni, Principal Finance Officer, Ministry of Finance, Swaziland, welcomed experts to the meeting and invited the Director of the ECA-SA Ms. Jennifer Kargbo to deliver her opening statement.

5. In her remarks, the Director underscored the importance of the Development Information (DI) to the development of African economies. She observed that despite progress in the current flow of information, Africa continued to lag behind the rest of the world, with the digital divide making clear the need to focus on development information as a priority for the continent.

6. She pointed out that development information was the main driver of productivity growth in the modern economy as it was strategic for development planning and policymaking. The Director noted that DI was crucial in understanding challenges of population growth, unemployment and the threats and opportunities of liberalization and globalisation. Furthermore, the emerging knowledge economy was information-based and heavily dependent on labour force with ICT skills and this further underscores the importance of DI.

7. The Director outlined the enormous challenges posed by an inefficient information system in Africa to include, among others, politics involving control over information, awareness, access, relevance of DI and its meaningful use, sustainability posed by technological limitations and weak human and institutional capacities, and coordination among the various actors involved in producing, and facilitating the sharing and exchange of information, as well as among the users of information who need it for capacity development and empowerment.

8. In concluding, the Director urged the experts to review the draft report and extensively discuss the issues pertinent to Development Information in order to enable the Secretariat to come up with a technical publication that would satisfy the needs of all stakeholders. She reminded the experts that the inputs from the meeting were critical in facilitating the preparation of the final technical publication. The Director emphasized that the technical publication was expected to assist African countries in creating an environment for the growth of the DI sector in order to exploit fully the benefits of globalisation and modernisation.

## 3.2 Organisational Matters

9. The meeting elected the following bureau;

- Chairperson - Ms. Thabsile Mlangeni, Ministry of Finance, Swaziland
- Vice Chairperson - Mr. Moubarak Lo, Emergence Consulting, Senegal
- Rapporteur - Mr. Bernard Chisanga, Centre for Policy Research and Analysis, Zambia
- Vice Rapporteur - Mr. Sives Govender, EIS-AFRICA, South Africa

10. The following Agenda was adopted.

1. Opening Session
2. Presentation of Draft Report on the Role of Development Information in African Economies
3. Plenary Discussions
4. Group Work
5. Presentation of Group Reports, Conclusions and Recommendations and Way Forward
6. Closure of Meeting

## 4.0 Presentation of the Draft Report on the Role of Development Information in African Economies

11. Representatives from ECA Headquarters delivered four presentations focusing on the following areas; Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Statistics, Library and Information Services (LIS) and Geo-information.

### 4.1 Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

12. The ECA representative informed the meeting that development and proliferation of ICTs continued to accelerate economic and social change across all areas of human activity worldwide. Emerging evidence indicates that Information and Communication Technologies were central to the creation of a global knowledge based economy and can play an important role in accelerating growth, promoting sustainable development and eradicating poverty in developing countries. This in turn facilitates effective integration into the global economy.

13. He emphasized that the crosscutting and pervasive nature of ICT meant that the potential could be tapped from both within and across countries, sectors, and enterprises resulting in new opportunities for economic growth and development in the form of new products, services and markets heralding new revenue streams. In addition to the traditional resources of capital, raw materials and labour, ICTs are now considered as a factor of production and economic growth. It is the accessibility of ICT that allows for the creation of the learning environment essential for innovation. And it is innovation that drives competitiveness in the economy. ICTs have been transforming businesses and peoples' lives throughout the world. ICT accelerates the movement of goods, services, ideas and people, which fuels the globalization process.

14. The presenter noted that ICT had the potential to shape and enhance a wide range of development applications in sectors such as government administration, transportation, education, manufacturing and trade, tourism, and financial services, thus enhancing opportunities of accessing world markets and accelerating economic growth. The role and contribution of ICT-producing industries to the economy, especially in their share in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), capital investment, and their impact on labour productivity and growth, particularly in the telecommunication sector on the continent illustrated the sector's ever growing importance.

15. He further informed the meeting that this was first attempt at estimating the contribution of ICTs to economic growth based on the report of the fourth ECA Committee on Development Information (CODI IV). He however, advocated for more analytical studies to estimate the contribution of ICT to growth and productivity on African economies focusing on; ICT production sectors, which directly contribute to an increase in the aggregate value added generated in an economy; the increase in total factor productivity in the ICT sector; the effect of ICT investment on growth through capital deepening; and the increase in total factor productivity in non-ICT producing sectors due to spillover effects of ICT production and use.

16. ECA's assistance to African countries and RECs in the formulation e-Strategies and facilitation of the adoption of ICT for socio-economic development, and also in the measurement of the impact of such e-strategies was critical in enhancing the region's integration into the world economy. The presenter identified challenges faced in ICT to include impact measurement, e-measurement dimensions and other issues specific to Africa and AISI development.

17. In conclusion, the presenter proposed the following actions to enhance the growth of the sector and its contribution to development on the African continent; regional integration, synergies harmonization and collaboration between development partners including RECs.

## 4.2 Statistics

18. In providing a background of the African key development agenda and their data implications, the ECA representative informed the meeting that specific, measurable, accurate, reliable, and timely (SMART) statistics were required to inform various development challenges facing Africa as a necessary part of the development infrastructure. He emphasised that the results agenda (MDGs, NEPAD, PRS) and the need to focus development efforts on measurable results had increased demand for quality statistics in recent years. However, due to weak human, financial, and infrastructural capacities, national statistics systems (NSS) were unable to cope with the increased demand for statistics and could not respond to emerging needs.

19. The presenter emphasised the relation between statistics and information and noted that the former was a key component of knowledge formation. Governments, the private sector and individuals needed accurate statistical information to make informed decision. He emphasised that statistics were a sound basis for designing, managing, monitoring and evaluating national development frameworks and strategies. Official Statistics provide an indispensable element in the information system of a democratic society, serving the Government, the economy and the public with data about the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation.

20. Three major challenges facing the African continent in strengthening the national statistical systems identified by the presenter included (i) a weak coordination among the various components of the NSS, (ii) a lack of commitment to statistical development by national governments and (iii) an inadequate human, financial and infrastructural resources in the NSOs and sectors.

21. He informed the meeting that in response to those initiatives, major stakeholders in statistical development in Africa, elaborated the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), to strengthen the NSS. The RRSF is built around four objectives: Advocacy, User Needs, Use of Statistics and Synergy in NSS. Its overall strategy is that each country should elaborate a National Strategy for statistical capacity building.

22. In conclusion, he recommended that Africa should (i) foster coordination among the various components of suppliers, producers and users of development information (NSOs, Line Ministries, private sector, research and training institutions) (ii) encourage horizontal integration of data in NSOs and sectors through use of common metadata and integrated household surveys and (iii) encourage and facilitate advocacy for mainstreaming development information using statistics, geoinformation, ICT and library resources in development plans so that statistics can occupy their rightful place in development.

### 4.3 Knowledge, Libraries and Information Services

23. The ECA representative informed the meeting that reliable access to development information and knowledge was a *sine qua non* for sustainable economic and human development. As primary and human-generated public goods on which human capacity development and empowerment depend, their undersupply or under-use results in poverty and multifarious underdevelopment. World leaders recognized the important role libraries played in ensuring reliable access to knowledge and information through the WSIS process, and called on all governments to ensure that citizens have adequate access to development information by addressing constraints faced at national level. The major constraints and issues to be dealt with include: the creation of enabling environment through appropriate policies, strategies and legislation; adequate financial and political support for libraries, to enable them perform their educational role, including life-long learning and e-literacy; the promotion of the role of libraries in poverty reduction and attainment of development; rights-based access to information, knowledge and ICT through the provision of community access points. Further, governments should provide resources for the creation of digital public library and archive services, digitization, and long-term preservation of intellectual and cultural goods and artifacts; create the legal assurance of freedom of information; recognize the

need for inclusiveness and diversity in access and content; the need for international cooperation and dialogue among and within groups; facilitate capacity building and recognize and respect the importance of intellectual property rights, as well as open source technology.

24. Currently the majority of libraries in Africa cannot effectively play their role as reliable source of DI due to the so-called “great African library decline”, which started in the early 1980s, at the onset of structural adjustment programmes. This decline is characterized by; poor funding; total lack of, or inadequate application of information technology; unavailability of, or unreliable access to the Internet; rusty professional skills and outlook due to inadequate resources for training and development; demoralized management; dusty shelves with old and irrelevant books; and inadequate or no physical development; and near absence of library activism and advocacy.

25. In concluding, the presenter emphasized that for library and information services to take their rightful place in the national development agenda, a set of forward-looking policies and initiatives had to be adopted and implemented within the framework of a national information society development scheme. An effective national policy and strategic information framework should cover infrastructure, funding, human resources, intellectual property, information sources, services and governance, and should involve capacity building for scaling up library and information services programmes. This framework should include the creation of ministerial level structures with the responsibility for policy, resource allocation, strategic inspections, and the introduction and administration of relevant laws, to provide the platform for visibility and advocacy on the importance of development information in the economy.

#### 4.4 Geo-information

26. The ECA representative informed participants that development was a process of effecting desired changes in the real world and that to be able to deliver these changes, the spatial contents of the real world, geospatial information, must be known. He emphasized that geoinformation products were indispensable to policy making, physical planning and sustainable development of the economy of any nation.

27. The areas of the economy where application of geoinformation products were central to best practice policy making and implementation included: good governance, security, population census, land administration, environmental monitoring, public utilities, boundaries and conflict resolution, tourism, communication, health, transportation etc. Geographic Information Systems provided formal tools and methods to represent, analyze complex biophysical and social indicators and provides various “what if” planning scenarios results in a controlled (scientifically repeatable)

manner in order to take a better decision. It was therefore critical to the development of the knowledge economy and a just information society.

28. He noted that although geoinformation did not arouse political interest, it was a basic infrastructure for sustainable national development. With the development in space and digital technologies in the past two decades, the time and cost for making spatial information and maps available for development and management purposes had been greatly reduced. Therefore, to ensure that appropriate geoinformation products were used in policy making and hence sustainable development, each country should, among other strategies, evolve a mapping policy, create state/national topographical database driven by GIS, and invest in capacity building.

29. The presenter concluded by emphasizing that the optimization of geoinformation data collection and its application in a sustainable manner was best done by adopting an infrastructure development approach, namely Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI), the backbone of the challenge for collecting, communicating, sharing and using geoinformation for development in Africa.

## 5.0 Plenary Discussions

30. In the ensuing discussions, it was suggested that the final report be reorganised in such a way that it clearly outlined its purpose and reflected the three specific areas; namely:

- Development information – provide definition and differentiate it from ICT,
- Challenges for Africa – undertake a diagnosis of Africa’s development problems, and then outline challenges for the four areas – statistics, LIS, geoinformatics and ICT; and
- Impact of DI on human issues – including productivity

31. The meeting suggested that DI issues in the report be contextualised as in regional and sub-regional development agendas such as in the Lagos Plan of Action, the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and NEPAD, indicating how these have been informed by information and vice-versa. In this regard, ECA informed the meeting of the request from SADC for the development of ICT strategies in the sub region. In response, ECA would develop ICT policy frameworks, plans, programmes (and resource needs), and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and in undertaking this task, ECA would consult with all stakeholders including information specialists, academia and research institutions.

32. The meeting was informed that emphasis should also be placed on upgrading and maintaining educational infrastructure in Africa, which had deteriorated mainly due to underfunding and was adversely affecting access to educational materials as a strategy to enhance access to information. The installation of computers in schools by, for example, the Botswana Government indicated seriousness by governments on the continent to enhance the appreciation of ICTs in schools. Such programmes should be emulated continent-wide and the private sector should be actively involved.

33. The fact that African countries tended to be consumers rather than producers of appropriate information was identified as a major problem in the debate around access to information. This was attributed to the shortage of appropriate skills on the continent, a result of the brain drain. Accordingly, they encouraged countries to create a conducive environment for African ICT experts to continue working on the continent and hence generate appropriate information and assist in improving the proliferation of ICTs and other technologies.

34. Experts questioned whether information was a public good in the strictest sense as access to some information even on the Internet was protected through either



subscription or passwords. In discussions that followed, issues of intellectual property rights were cited as being the reason some of the information was restricted. Concern was also expressed that even some government information, to which citizens have a right of access is regarded as 'classified'. Experts called for a relook at the restrictions on access to information with a view to lower them even further while protecting intellectual property.

35. The inability of African governments (officials) to domesticate and implement important resolutions/recommendations emanating from international and regional fora to which they were signatories (meetings, conferences and seminars.) was highlighted as a major constraint to progress in the development information field. African governments should take international resolutions seriously in order to continue to be part of the global village.

36. The meeting observed that discrepancies in data on the same subject reduced the credibility of statistics, and often made policy decisions difficult. The dynamism of statistics and definitions required that quality based on the SMART (specific, measurable, accurate, reliable and time bound) criteria be adopted to reduce such discrepancies and enhance the credibility of data.

37. Countries were encouraged to develop libraries and inculcate a culture of reading among its citizens to ensure citizens developed critical minds. Some experts, although in agreement with this, observed that poor communities facing the challenges of ensuring access to basic needs may consider access to learning materials through libraries as secondary. All the same, experts concurred that accessibility and relevance of existing libraries were important issues. To improve the report, experts agreed that discussion on libraries should also include information services, including Internet access.

38. The meeting agreed that, in most cases, limited financial resources, poor management and inadequate marketing of libraries militated against increased access to information on the African continent and these issues had to be addressed to enhance the use of libraries. Experts called on African governments to allocate more resources to improving the libraries infrastructure.

39. To improve the report, the meeting agreed that a glossary section with definitions of key terms was needed. Further, ICT and DI had to be clearly defined and differentiated in the early parts of the report. In addition, the role of ICT in the development continuum had to be discussed in the report.

## 6.0 Outcome of Group Work

40. Two breakout teams used “Notes and Guidelines”, the “Aide Memoire” and the Draft Technical Publication as the main guides for further discussions and brainstorming in order to enrich the report and provide further recommendations. The synthesis of the outcome of the breakaway sessions is given in the following sections.

### 6.1 Definition of Development Information

41. The Experts agreed to define Development Information as;

Knowledge which engenders awareness, understanding and empowerment for sustainable growth.

### 6.2 Overall Comments and Recommendations

42. In addition to issues raised during discussions, the meeting made the following general comments and recommendations:

1. Insert an acknowledgements section, indicating roles in the preparation of the technical publication;
2. Insert a table of contents and back of book indexes;
3. Insert an executive summary;
4. Insert a definition of terms and list of abbreviations and acronyms used;
5. Insert a list of tables, charts, boxes;
6. Include a discussion on the role of legislative and regulatory frameworks to empower professionals in library and information services;
7. Include a discussion on issues surrounding the implementation of WSIS and MDGs;
8. Conclusion should highlight major issues covered in each of the sections;
9. Discuss the need for indicators to facilitate utilisation of information by professionals;
10. Role of ICT required refocusing and expansion, best practices in the ICT area should be indicated, the coverage of ICT should be summarized;
11. Indigenous knowledge best practices should be highlighted and mention made of its access and protection to avoid its exploitation by others without benefit to Africans;
12. The division of the document into ICT, Geo-information, Statistics and LIS sections should not remain. This presents a disjointed and soiled approach to DI. For example the challenges are scattered all over the document, they

should be organized in one section. The text should be revised according to the outline provided below. Further, the document should emphasize the need for governments and stakeholders to pay attention to deliberate and determined expansion and use of development information as the prerequisite for achieving rapid and sustainable development outcomes in all economic and social sectors. It should present essential elements so as to serve as a stimulant for innovative policy ideas and a comprehensive reference for policy formulation and implementation by public authorities and a wide range of local and international stakeholders.

## 6.3 Proposed Outline of the Technical Publication

43. The meeting recommended that the main body of the technical publication be re-organized in **five generic sections**:

- a) **The Context**, provide details on the rationale for the document including nature of Africa's development challenges, the efforts and strategies employed to solve them and why the efforts are failing, or may fail, and the need for attention to turn to information cum communication-intensive, knowledge-centric approaches.
- b) **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**, provide definitions and explanations of concepts, the value and roles of the various forms and dimensions of DI in achieving development outcomes. This section should also clarify the complementarities and synergies of the various information and knowledge sectors and the need and modes for interdisciplinary and inter/multi-sectoral approaches.
- c) **How to make DI work for Development**, include the current state of play and challenges of using DI in Africa, the building blocks, provide illustrations of effective applications in the various economic and social sectors using best practices from Africa and elsewhere.
- d) **Recommendations and policy implications**, provide the way forward.
- e) **Action framework for Implementation of recommendations**, provide details on how implementation should be approached in Member States and the region as a whole, and how regional institutions such as ECA should facilitate effective implementation and capacity building efforts.

### 6.3.1 Detail on Contents of Sections

44. The meeting recommended that the report sections suggested in 6.3 above be expanded to contain the following additional issues;

## Section A: The Context

1. Introduction/preamble: why this document? What gaps is it going to fill?
2. Target audience of the report should be indicated; and
3. Justification of the study which should include development challenges and regional and sub-regional development plans/strategies/policies/action plans such as WSIS, AISI, NEPAD, ARAKPE, Lagos Plan of Action, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) of SADC, COMESA, and related AU initiatives.

## Section B: Conceptual framework of DI

1. Definition and elaboration of concepts introduced;
2. What is DI/ICT?
3. Why DI, need strong diagnosis of the situation in Africa?
4. What are the dimensions of DI?
5. What is the fundamental/core of DI?
6. Priority of DI for attainment of MDGs should come out;
7. Status of DI in Africa (Detailed Audit /Analysis, tied to MDGs);
8. Key actors in public and private sectors as well as civil society and international organizations, their roles and responsibilities;
9. Relevance of DI to stakeholders (i.e. private sector, employers, workers, and CSOs) should be discussed;
10. Macro aspects of DI (New economy; examples and key factors); and
11. Micro aspects of DI.

### **ICT producing;**

- Start the section with a list of ICT producing sectors;
- Provide one or two success stories in form of boxes;
- Improve Box 1 on p. 2...possibly include more than one example ICT using;
- E-Business: Mention E-banking and E-service;
- Community development;
- Include Box and elaborate e.g. give Senegal example, village handcrafts, community radios, multi-purpose community centres (Acacia);
- Tourism; Transport; (Separate the two elements. Put a paragraph on transport on its own); and
- Include more ICT using sectors; planning, marketing, education, security, environment, using GPS, boat and vehicle tracking, street guide, health, disaster preparedness and management, telecommunications, transport and aviation, finance, agriculture, water resources.

### **Efficiency and productivity:**

- Improve para. 7 on p.2 (Industrial competitiveness);

- Risk of job losses in the short term but there is necessity and benefits of conversion through training and transfer of personnel across sectors in the long term. It is the responsibility of the education system to provide basic skills, whereas firms should provide continuous and on-the-job training (PPP).

### **Knowledge/information management**

- Planning and programming;
- Database driven by GIS, KM, Economic intelligence, benchmarking, monitoring, returns) firms and government; and
- R & D for roll-out.

### **Scientific research and R & D**

- convergence between DI and globalization and scientific discoveries, create a virtuous circle (each element reinforcing the others) (ensure involvement of academia and research institutions).

### **Democracy and transparency**

- access to DI facilitates citizens involvement and participation, accountability, monitoring, transparent electoral processes facilitated.

## **Section C: How to make DI work for Development**

1. Key building blocks in mainstreaming DI and its role in enhancing the role of DI in the economy – general framework to include a discussion of WSIS, AISI, NICI, MAPS, RRSE, AFREF, RSDI, MDGs, AU Strategic Plan, NEPAD; expand on the following:
  - Strategies and political will for implementation - Need for an a comparative of national information infrastructure of African countries (matrix showing global information strategy, ICT, statistics, Geo-information, LIS,) (state of implementation, budget efforts, etc , flagship programmes, sustainability);
  - Regulatory framework, IP, Security - Para. 53 and para. 57 these require improvement, Protection of indigenous knowledge;
  - Information Dimension in Policy-making - Mainstream development information in all public policies (same as environment, social, and gender issues);
  - Cooperation and Regional Integration - Combine all about RI from various sections (RECs programmes);
  - Infrastructures - Para. 53 p. 12 (financing): Needs expansion to include issues such as high speed networks, incubators, etc..., Combine Para 53 and para. 131;
  - Access to information - How to reduce asymmetry of information, how to regulate information, Information as a public good where the public

has a right of access (Financing by Govt.)...noting that some information requires protection and need to take into account security aspects, Open source software and open access to libraries and information services, How to promote access to knowledge via internet, libraries, radio, TV, etc; Reduction of the cost of accessing information (computers, database, geo-data sets, literature, software ,internet connectivity, TV. Radio, etc), Timely provision of geo-information, specially national topographical database at appropriate scales;

- Use of information - Information literacy...expand para. 140, communication and packaging;
  - Content and applications - National/local content and national heritage issues;
  - Skills and HR, capacity building and utilisation - See. P. 12 and para. 71, para. 81,para. 130, Strengthen existing information-oriented schools, (IT, statistics, LIS, geo-information), Introduce information skills programme in curricula- expand para. 139;
  - Target groups (youth, Physically-challenged people) - Youth (re-enforce para. 35) Promote information use by youth through competitions at all levels, Physically-challenged people;
  - Gender and women empowerment - re-enforce para. 35.
2. Applications and examples of best practices in Africa and other parts of the world (box success stories where they exist) should be included;
  3. What are best country practices and policies (e.g. FOI Acts, SDI Acts, etc); and
  4. Challenges, including advocacy, funding, policy implementation and harmonization across the continent/sub region.

## Section D: Recommendations

In addition to recommendations already contained in the draft report, the following should be included and elaborated on to enrich the final technical publication;

1. Localise the implementation of MDGs and relevant DI strategies identified and implemented for each of them. This should take into consideration the existing development and cooperation protocols in the region;
2. Intensify education campaign (Awareness raising and advocacy) on Development information including policies, strategies and plans;
3. Ensure that standards and benchmarks for collecting, acquiring, processing, storing and disseminating of development information are developed and used;
4. Facilitate development of standards and best practices on DI in collaboration with international organizations;

5. Set up national bodies on DI to coordinate and harmonize activities in the sector. The committee should be made up of public authorities and key stakeholders;
6. Translate existing policies into actions on the ground, including the development of monitoring & evaluation mechanisms for policy implementation;
7. Strengthen institutions for development information, including capacity building, i.e. training, re-training and infrastructure; and
8. Strengthen DI aspects of higher learning institutions, including universities and polytechnics.

### **Information and Communication Technology**

1. Create an enabling environment for telecommunications industry that promotes sound competition and competitive pricing;
2. Address constrictive bandwidth issues at national and sub regional levels; and
3. Encourage entrepreneurship through appropriate incentives.

### **Statistics**

1. Make legislation on NSO and NSS relevant to current challenges, especially in relation to coordination of data collection across the whole spectrum of economic and social sectors;
2. Encourage creativity in the involvement of the private sector in the DI production, collection and use;
3. Reduce turn-around time for statistics collection, analysis and publishing; and
4. Promote Census@School programmes aimed at sensitization of the whole population on value and use of data collection.

### **Geo-information**

1. Develop appropriate SDI mechanisms for meeting rapidly changing geo-spatial realities, and promote investment on Geo spatial Databases;
2. Implement Mapping Africa Initiatives (use the documentation of the initiative as source);
3. Reorient geo-information to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities (Carbon trading, environmental degradation, location-based services etc.);
4. Improve budgetary allocation to Geoinformation collection and management;
5. Ensure national geoinformation departments are semi-autonomous;
6. Evolve policy on geoinformation collection and management;

7. Employ the use of geoinformation in actualizing MDGs (where are the poor, access, nature of their environment, resources available, suitable activities, infrastructure and developments, vulnerability (to hazards), needs assessment in the context of spatial contents of the environment etc, can all be considered simultaneously using appropriate geoinformation);
8. Involve experts in policy making and development of implementation and tracking mechanisms; and
9. Encourage GIS in schools programmes.

### **Libraries and Information Services (LIS)**

1. Reorient LIS to meet DI challenges, especially in meeting community needs related to MDGs;
2. Increase coverage of LIS to include all communities, and adapt services to meet local needs through greater outreach;
3. Engage in massive updating of information resources of all types and formats to meet the challenges of upgrading science and technological knowledge as well as lifelong learning needs geared towards individual empowerment;
4. Embark on capacity building in human resource, infrastructure, retraining and re-tooling of libraries and information centers across Africa;
5. Develop a culture of reading starting from an early age especially in schools;
6. Network university libraries nationally and across Africa to increase their collective capacities to deliver leading edge services expected of modern higher learning environment;
7. ECA Library should initiate a programme on dissemination of information on free e-resources (e.g. [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)) and network with African university libraries, including retraining;
8. ECA Library should be developed as a regional hub for knowledge networking and information sharing on DI; and
9. ECA should strengthen the Sub-Committee on Knowledge, Libraries and Information Services of its Committee on Development Information (CODI-KLIS) to enable it play a greater role in promoting access to information and knowledge for development, especially in view of the realities of knowledge-deficiency that hamper Africa's development efforts.

### **Section E: Framework of Action for the creation acquisition and use of DI in Member States.**

A framework of implementation should be detailed enough with deliverables to enable follow-through activities in member States.



## 7.0 Overall Recommendations on Preparation of the Report

45. The meeting recommended that the Secretariat should work with the rapporteurs in harmonizing the group discussions, prepare the draft report of the meeting and circulate it to participants by e-mail for comments. The report of the meeting should harmonise the thematic areas identified by the groups and isolate the areas in the technical publication needing improvement. Participants made a commitment to respond timeously.

46. For finalizing the technical publication, the experts agreed that once the draft report had been recast according to the recommendations of the meeting, it should be circulated for further comments.

## 8.0 Closure of the Meeting

47. In her closing remarks, the Chairperson thanked all the experts for the hard work in ensuring that the objectives of the meeting were met. She reminded the experts that their task was not yet complete, more work was needed to finalise the technical publication. The Chairperson expressed gratitude on the cooperation she had received throughout the meeting.

48. Mr. Moses Kachima of the Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council offered a vote of thanks on behalf of the experts. He thanked the Chairperson for her guidance during the meeting and for ensuring that the meeting progressed smoothly and remained focused. Mr. Kachima thanked ECA for organizing such a meeting and expressed hope that the outcome of the meeting would be shared with SADC, COMESA and the AU.

49. In closing, the Director of ECA-SA, Ms Jennifer Kargbo informed the meeting that the Office was building bridges and networks with experts in the sub region. She emphasized that invitation to the meeting was the beginning of professional partnerships with the ECA Office in Southern Africa. The Director informed participants that ECA would continue to call on their technical input until the publication was finalized and disseminated.

50. The Director concluded by assuring participants that the Secretariat would ensure that the draft report of the meeting was dispatched to all for comments before finalisation. She thanked the experts for their hard work and recommendations for completion of the study.

## Annex 1: List of Participants

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