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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Second Session of the Committee on
Development Information, Science and Technology (CODIST-II)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
02 – 05 May 2011

**REPORT
OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON
KNOWLEDGE, LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES
FOR DEVELOPMENT (CODI-KLIS)**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The first meeting of the Sub-Committee on Knowledge, Libraries and Information Services for Development (CODI-KLIS) of the Committee on Development Information (CODI) took place in Addis Ababa from 1 to 3 May 2007. It was preceded by a Regional Workshop on Information and Knowledge Management for Development, and a Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning from 29 to 30 April 2007, during which technical papers on how libraries, knowledge and information services can be used to improve the capacity of Members States to realize their development objectives, especially the Millennium Development Goals.

II. OPENING

2. The meeting was opened by South Africa, the Chair of the Working Group that recommended the creation of the Sub-Committee at CODI IV in 2005.

3. Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director of ECA's ICT and Science & Technology Division (ISTD) addressed the participants. She assured the body of ECA's commitment to the work and continued existence of the Sub-Committee.

III. ATTENDANCE

4. There were 120 participants, including delegates from 23 ECA Member States, and observers from African Union, inter-governmental organizations, and diverse African national institutions and the civil society.

5. There were participants from the following ECA Member States: Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

6. There were also participants from international, national, inter-governmental organizations and institutions, and the civil society including: Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; African Union, Ethiopia; Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Nigeria; Association Bibliothécaires, Senegal; Bayero University, Nigeria; British Council, Ethiopia; Burkina Faso Library Association, East African Community Secretariat, Tanzania; Egerton University, Kenya; Ethiopian Civil Service College; Ethiopian Economic Association; Ethiopian Development Research Institute; Ethiopian Management Institute; FAO Regional Office for Africa, Ghana; Financial and Fiscal Commission, South Africa; International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA); Jimma University, Ethiopia; Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), Kenya Library Association; Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana; National Bureau of Statistics, Tanzania; National Centre for Research, Sudan; National Planning Commission, Nigeria; National University of Lesotho; National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe; Niger Library Association; Nigerian Library Association; Salam Nurse's College, Ethiopia; Togo Library Association; University of Botswana; University of Buea, Cameroon; International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Ethiopia; University of Ghana; University of Jos, Nigeria; University of Nairobi, Kenya; University of Sierra Leone; University of South Africa (UNISA); University of Swaziland; University of the Western Cape, South Africa; University of Witwatersrand, South Africa; University of Zambia; World Food Programme (WFP), Ethiopia; and Zambia Library Association.

IV. ELECTIONS

7. The Bureau was elected as follows:

Chairperson: Botswana
First Vice-Chair: Ghana
Second Vice-Chair: Sudan
First Rapporteur: Democratic Republic of Congo
Second Rapporteur: Tanzania

V. AGENDA

8. It was suggested by South Africa that the proposed repositioning of ECA and how it will affect KLIS Sub-Committee be added on the agenda for discussion. The suggestion was supported by Nigeria and so it was included. The Agenda was then adopted.

VI. REPORTS

9. The Secretariat presented reports of its activities since CODI IV. It highlighted the impact and outcomes of the activities, and outlined the plans for future activities. The Secretariat was commended for carrying out such progressive activities. The reports were discussed and adopted on a motion by Ghana, which was seconded by Senegal.

VII. POLICY ISSUES AND ACTION PLAN: 2007-2009

10. For the next biennium, KLIS resolved to focus on pertinent activities to support the availability of development information. The Sub-Committee came up with an action plan for the development of strategy and programmes in Member States in its mandate areas. The action plan called on ECA, Member States and related stakeholders to take initiatives in their respective areas to:

- i) Create and strengthen national and public libraries, information services and networks as critical links in the knowledge economy. Specific actions should include:
 - a. To advise and support Government institutions to create favourable legal and institutional frameworks to create national libraries, public libraries and information services.
 - b. To advise governments on the allocation of adequate resources to strengthen national, public libraries and information services
 - c. To establish networks of national libraries, public libraries and information services in Africa.
 - d. To establish and strengthen national library and information service professional associations for advocacy and continuous education of their members to enable them to play an effective role in the knowledge economy.
 - e. To identify and strengthen model library and information centres of excellence and innovation in the provision of information in the knowledge economy.
- ii) To collaborate with national libraries in member states to carry out studies to assess the state of public libraries in their countries. Specific actions should include:

- a. Development of local content to support research and promote African culture and heritage.
 - b. To develop guidelines and structures to integrate local content, indigenous knowledge, culture and heritage materials into accessible and usable format for development.
 - c. To support Libraries and information services to identify stakeholders, such as researchers /developers of local content, in collecting, processing and disseminating information and knowledge in support of economic development.
- iii) Development of digital libraries and information services to enhance efficiency in access to information, knowledge and economic opportunities. Specific actions should include:
- a. To support libraries and information services to establish institutional repositories for use by the development sectors.
 - b. To build technical and human resource capacity to develop digital resources.
 - c. To educate users in the use of digital resources for economic empowerment and entrepreneurship.
 - d. To create conducive environments for access to digital resources.
- iv) Collaborate with stakeholders to facilitate dissemination of development information to the grassroots. Specific actions should include:
- a. To support the development and use of information centres at the grassroots
 - b. To establish communication networks with all the stakeholders in the dissemination of development information to the grassroots
 - c. To provide relevant development information for the grassroots
 - d. To train information professionals in the repackaging of appropriate development information for the grassroots.
 - e. To collaborate with university libraries in member States to establish mechanisms for the optimal utilization of resources of their libraries, in service to the wider communities.

VIII. REPORT OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT, INCORPORATING SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA COLLOQUIUM ON INFORMATION LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING FOR MEETING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

11. The above-mentioned event was held from 29th – 30th April 2007. It focused on learning as a means of empowerment for the achievement of MDGs. Presentations were made by experts on economic development, education, health, agriculture, library services, information management, gender and governance & citizenship. They dealt with action learning, action research, information literacy and lifelong learning imperatives in these development areas.

IX. KLIS IN THE REPOSITIONING OF ECA

12. Library and information services professionals in Africa received the creation of the Sub-Committee of Knowledge, Library and Information Services of CODI with excitement and hope. The large number

of participants at this meeting was linked to the fact that KLIS was on its own as opposed to the past when it was part of the ICT Sub-Committee.

13. The Sub-Committee noted the two over-arching Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee on Knowledge, Libraries and Information Services for Development (KLIS) in the ECA document E/ECA/CODI/4/9 titled “Report of the Fourth meeting of CODI” dated 28th April 2005, pages 2 & 3 that CODI-KLIS would be in charge of:

- a) “Proposing regional and sub-regional policy directions, in the field of Libraries and Information Services”; and
- b) “Assist Member States in identifying national objectives and evaluating the progress at the national level, in the field of Libraries and Information Service”

14. Further it was noted that the Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in its document ECA/COE/26/10, dated 1 March 2007, paragraph 21, page 4, under the heading Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology (CODIST) recommends that members of CODIST will include “experts from such fields as ICT, geo-information systems, *Libraries* and Science and Technology” to guide the work of subprogramme 4.”

15. We also appreciate and draw ECA’s attention to its recognition of the value of libraries and information services in development as indicated in its publications “*The Value of Library Services in Development*” (EC/ECA/DISD/CODI.3/1 6).

16. We also noted under the proposed CODIST document titled “ Review of the Intergovernmental Machinery of the Economic Commission of Africa for E/ECA/COE/26/10 dated 1st March 2007 page 4 Section 3 starting from line 5 that “ the committee would also address issues related to knowledge and information services that are key to move forward the African development agenda.”

17. We further noted His Excellency the Executive Secretary of ECA’s address at the Opening of CODIV on 1 May 2007 page 4, paragraph 7, lines 4-6 which stated that “Unfortunately the majority of libraries and information centres in Africa cannot effectively play their role as veritable and reliable sources of information due to inadequate funding, limited technology application, stunted training and development programmes and poor or no physical infrastructure.”

18. We reiterate that libraries and information services have played a central role in the economic growth of developed nations by providing access to information. These nations acknowledge this important role by continued support to enhance library and information services. For Africa to grow holistically as per the objective of ECA, we must embrace this fact and develop our libraries and library networks to serve all levels of our communities.

19. We recognize that the ECA has been restructured. Any re-integration of the new baby Sub-Committee KLIS, even before it begins to crawl, into the ICT Sub-Committee under the proposed CODIST, will not offer Library and Information Services a good framework to develop, given the evidence from the time when Libraries and Information Services was under ICT from CODI-I in 1999 through CODI IV in 2005.

20. We finally noted that the name of the proposed Committee - CODIST - puts emphasis on Development Information, which is provided by Geo-information Services, Libraries and Information

Services and research from Science and Technology. This fact makes these three Sub-Committees very necessary and their activities could be disseminated by ICT, among other modes.

21. In view of these observations, the KLIS Sub-Committee makes the following recommendations:

22. Recognizing the strategic role of library and information services in accomplishing ECA's mandate of harnessing and disseminating information for development, the Knowledge, Libraries and Information Services Sub-Committee (KLIS) should continue to exist as a distinct sub-committee of CODIST with the following Terms of Reference

- a. Raise awareness of the value libraries, knowledge and information in economic growth and human development;
- b. Promote the development of knowledge systems in member States;
- c. Identify and raise awareness about priority issues in information and knowledge policies and institutions;
- d. Examine and review progress made by member States in the area;
- e. Facilitate capacity building with regard to the development of KLIS-related systems and services for the information society and knowledge economy;
- f. Review recent and proven technical trends and status of knowledge and information practices in the global context;
- g. Recommend strategies on the utilization of new and proven technologies and methodologies to improve data collection, processing and mode of use for decision-making;
- h. Promote the development of best practices and standards in these fields;
- i. Develop and support the establishment of national, regional and global networks and partnerships, with the aim of facilitating integration and optimizing the use of resources;
- j. Identify, promote and support regional projects;
- k. Examine and provide principles regarding ownership, access to, custodial responsibilities and commercial aspects of knowledge and information for the promotion of transparency and exchange;
- l. Maintain liaison with and coordinate its activities with other CODI/CODIST subcommittees;
- m. Promote networking among institutions and practitioners in KLIS and generate synergy at the national level to facilitate their management and best use;
- n. Review of the ECA work programme in the area of KLIS; and
- o. Promote the development and improvement of KLIS national legislative framework in ECA Member States.

23. Recognizing:

- a) The importance of access to content appropriate to the economic development of Africa; and
- b) The difficulties experienced in locating and accessing content generated in Africa relevant to the economic development of the continent, further states and recommends:

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

24. To ECA:

- a) CODI-KLIS reiterates the decision, resolutions and recommendations of CODI-IV and therefore urges the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to put in place the necessary administrative and managerial structure to continue to support the activities of the Knowledge, Libraries and Information Services (KLIS) Sub-Committee under CODIST as a separate Sub-Committee.

- b) ECA, using the AVLIN initiative, and as a matter of urgency, should initiate appropriate capacity building activities towards the development of national repositories of information resources (content) generated in Member States.

To Member States:

25. Urges Member States:

- a) To establish National Councils on Library and Information Services to advise governments on the development of libraries and information services in member countries.
- b) To put in place appropriate and necessary legal and technical framework to support the development of national information repositories.
- c) To exploit the potential of Public Libraries in bridging the digital divide and building social inclusion by providing full and free Internet access to the community.
- d) To use the opportunity of MDGs to set up mechanisms and provide resources necessary for the establishment of information literacy and life-long learning policies for economic empowerment and well-being of both individuals and communities.

XI. ADOPTION OF REPORTED

26. This reported was adopted by the Sub-Committee on 3 May 2007, following a proposal by Malawi, which was seconded by Nigeria.

27. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AVLIN	African Virtual Library and Information Network
CODI	Committee on Development Information
CODI-KLIS	Subcommittee on Knowledge, Libraries and Information
CODIST	Committee on Development ICT, Science and Technology
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
ISTD	ICT and Science & Technology Division
KEBS	Kenya Bureau of Standards
KLIS	Subcommittee on Knowledge, Libraries and Information
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
UNISA	University of South Africa
WFP	World Food Programme

28. List of Participants

1. Ms. Azeb Abraham
InfoCentre
ILRI
P.O. Box 5689
Tel: +251 11 646 3215
Fax: +251 11 646 12 52
[E-mail: a.abraham@cgiar.org](mailto:a.abraham@cgiar.org)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2. Mr. Kassu Admassu
Associate Registrar
Addis Ababa University,
Science Library
P.O. Box 1176
Tel: +251 911 438695
[E-mail: kaffe_kassua@yahoo.com](mailto:kaffe_kassua@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
3. Prof. Lenrie O. Aina
Department of Library and Information
Studies
University of Botswana
P.O. Box 70154
Fax: +267 3185098
[E-mail: ainalo2000@yahoo.com](mailto:ainalo2000@yahoo.com)
Gaborone, Botswana
4. Dr. Stephen Akintunde
D/University Librarian
University of Jos
Tel: +234 803 703 1004
Fax: +234 73611932
[E-mail: s_akintunde@hotmail.com](mailto:s_akintunde@hotmail.com)
Jos, Nigeria
5. Prof. Anaba Alemna
University Librarian
University of Ghana
P.O. Box LG 74, Legon
Tel: +233 21 500093
Fax: +233 21 500094
Accra, Ghana
6. Mr. Fikreyohannes Alemu
Library & Documentation Head
Ethiopian Management Institute
P.O. Box 28866
Tel: +251 116 453600/ 911 467597
Fax: +251 116 453611
E-mail : 453611fikreey@yahoo.com
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
7. Mr. Filipe Rui Baloi
Official of Social Communication
Ministry of Agriculture of Mozambique
Tel: +258 21460137
Fax: +258 21460137
[E-mail: fbaloi@map.gov.mz](mailto:fbaloi@map.gov.mz)
filiperui2000@yahoo.com.br
Maputo, Mozambique
8. Mr. Ashenafi Biratu
Librarian
Law Library
Addis Ababa University
[E-mail: ashenafibiratu@yahoo.com](mailto:ashenafibiratu@yahoo.com)
ashenafi@lib.aau.edu.et
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
9. Ms. Marion Lonesome Ndhleyase
Chibambo
Senior Librarian
University of Swaziland
P/B 4,
Tel : +268 5184011 Ext. 2210
Fax : +268 5185276
E-mail : yonis@uniswacc.uniswa.sz
Kwaluseni, Swaziland

Durable et de la Coopération Internationale
Immeuble MEF, 8 rue Dr Guillet, B.P. 4010
Tel: +221 823 88 91
Fax: +221 823 14 37
[E-mail: mariediagne@hotmail.com](mailto:mariediagne@hotmail.com)

Dakar, Senegal

15. Mr. Babacar Buuba Diop

Maitre de Conférence à la Faculté des
Lettres et Sciences Humaines (FLSH)

Université Cheikh Anta Diop

[E-mail: buubadiop@yahoo.com](mailto:buubadiop@yahoo.com)

Dakar, Senegal

16. Mr. Lukman I. Diso

Sr.Lecturer & Head of Department

Bayero University

BUK P.M.B. 3011

Tel: +234 803 7053414

Fax: +234 803 7053414

[E-mail: lidisoq01@yahoo.com](mailto:lidisoq01@yahoo.com)

Kano, Nigeria

17. Dr. Clara Ladi Ejembi

Department of Community Medicine

Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital

Tel: +234 803 7175805

Fax: +234 69 55050

[E-mail: claraladiejembi@yahoo.com](mailto:claraladiejembi@yahoo.com)

Zaria, Nigeria

18. Dr. Joyce B. Endeley

Associate Professor (Agric. Extension and
Gender Studies),

Head of Dept, Women and Gender Studies,

Vice Dean i/c Student Affairs and Records

University of Buea, P.O. Box 63

Tel: +237 3322 134/ 7756100

Fax: +237 332 2272

[E-mail: joyceendeley@yahoo.com](mailto:joyceendeley@yahoo.com)

Buea, Cameroon

10. Mr. Justin Chisenga
Information Management Specialist
WAICENT Outreach Programme, FAO
Regional Office for Africa
Gamel Abdul Nasser Road,
P.O. Box GP 1628
Tel: +233 21 7010930/ 675000
Fax: +233 21 7010943
[E-mail: Justin.chisenga@fao.org](mailto:Justin.chisenga@fao.org)
Accra, Ghana
11. Mr. Edward J. Chonelwa
Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS)
P.O. Box 54974-00200
Tel: +254 725 115610
Fax: +254 20 609660
[E-mail: chonelwaj@kebs.org](mailto:chonelwaj@kebs.org)
Nairobi, Kenya
12. Mr. Garoma Daba
Librarian
Commission of the African Union
Tel: +251 11 551 1420
Fax: +251 11 551 8718
GaromaD@africa-union.org
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
13. Mr. Yaregal Demissie
Resource Center Officer
Basic Education Association in Ethiopia
P.O. Box 8710
Tel: +251 911 462434
[E-mail: ben@ethionet.et](mailto:ben@ethionet.et)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
14. Ms. Anne Marie Diop Diagne
Conservateur Documentaliste
Ministère du Plan, du Développement

19. Mr. Charles Endra
Deputy Director
National Library of Uganda
P.O. Box 4262
Tel: +256 41 233633
Fax: +256 41 348625
[E-mail: cjendra@nlu.go.ug](mailto:cjendra@nlu.go.ug)
Kampala, Uganda
20. Ms. Genet Engdawork
Librarian
National Archives and Library of Ethiopia
P.O. Box 30593
Tel: +251 911 422708
Fax: +251 115 52 6411
[E-mail: geneteng2002@yahoo.com](mailto:geneteng2002@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
21. Mr. Derib Erget
Librarian
Addis Ababa University Technology North
Library
P.O. Box 365
Tel: +251 11 111 1835
[E-mail: deribe2002@yahoo.com](mailto:deribe2002@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
22. Ms. Atsufui Gbikpi-Benissan
President
Togo Library Association
Tel: +228 2254843/ 9492976
[E-mail: bfgbikpi@hotmail.com](mailto:bfgbikpi@hotmail.com)
Lome, Togo
23. Mr. Rafea Ashamallah Ghobrial
Head of Information Services and Systems
National Centre for Research
P.O. Box 2404
Tel: +249 15504104
Fax: +249 183770701
[E-mail: rafaasham@yahoo.com](mailto:rafaasham@yahoo.com)
Khartoum, Sudan

24. Ms. Rosemary Gitachu
Chairperson
Kenya Library Association
P.O. Box 69939-00400
Tel: +254 733 732799
[E-mail: gitachur@yahoo.com](mailto:gitachur@yahoo.com)
Nairobi, Kenya
25. Dr. Lawrence A. Gojeh
Assistant Professor
Jimma University
PMB 378
Tel : +251 911 567414
E-mail : gojehla@yahoo.com
Jimma, Ethiopia
26. Ms. Genevieve Hart
Associate Professor/ Chairperson Library &
Information Science
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X1 7
Tel: +27 21 959 3623/ 2 137/ 5827
Fax: +27 21 959 3659
[E-mail: ghart@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ghart@uwc.ac.za)
Bellville, South Africa
27. Dr. Lawton Hikwa
Dean Faculty of Communication and
Information Science
National University of Science and
Technology
P.O. Box AC 939, Ascot
Tel: +263 9 282842/ 280377
Fax: +263 9 286803
[E-mail: lhikwa@nust.ac.zw](mailto:lhikwa@nust.ac.zw)
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

28. Mr. Epitace-Rahim Igirukwigomba
 Conseiller au Cabinet du Ministre de
 l'Information, de la communication et des
 relations avec le Parlement
 Ministry of Communication
 Tel: +257 79 933 102/ 22 224666
 E-mail: [epitace\(2yahoo.com\)](mailto:epitace(2yahoo.com))
 Bujumbura
 Burundi
29. Dr. Linus Ikpaahindi
 Director/ Chief Executive Officer
 National Library of Nigeria
 PMB 1, Garki
 Tel: +234 9 2346772/ 803 787 9593
 E-mail: [anaka2002\(2yahoo.co.uk\)](mailto:anaka2002(2yahoo.co.uk))
 Abuja
 Nigeria
30. Ms. Sarah Kagoda-Batuwa
 Principal Librarian
 East African Community Secretariat
 5th Floor, Kilimanjaro Wing,
 AICC Building,
 P.O. Box 1096
 Tel: +255 27 2504257
 Fax: +255 27 2504255
 E-mail: [sarah\(2eachq.org\)](mailto:sarah(2eachq.org))
 Arusha
 Tanzania
31. Mr. Nerisa
 Kamar Research
 Librarian, J.D Rockefeller
 Research Library (TEEAL) Egerton
 University P.O. Box 536
 Tel: +254 51 2217855
 Email: [eujdrlib\(2gmail.com\)](mailto:eujdrlib(2gmail.com)),
[eujdrlib\(2yahoo.com\)](mailto:eujdrlib(2yahoo.com)),
 Egerton, Kenya Ms. Christine W. Kanyengo

- Head, Medical Library
 University of Zambia, Medical Library
 P.O. Box 50110
 Tel: +260 1 250801/ 97 776506
 Fax: +260 1 250753
 E-mail: [ckanyengo\(2yahoo.com\)](mailto:ckanyengo(2yahoo.com))
 Lusaka
 Zambia
32. Mr. John Abdul Kargbo
 Institute of Library, Archives, and
 Information Studies
 University of Sierra Leone
 E-mail: [johnabdulkargbo\(2yahoo.com\)](mailto:johnabdulkargbo(2yahoo.com))
 Freetown
 Sierra Leone
33. Ms. Yigebashal Kassa
 Librarian/Public Information Assistant
 World Food Programme
 P.O. Box 6287
 Tel: +251 115 515188 Ex. 2366/ 911
 603066
 E-mail: [Yigebashal.Kassa\(2wfp.org\)](mailto:Yigebashal.Kassa(2wfp.org))
 Addis Ababa
 Ethiopia
35. Mr. Anthony Gobolo Kinyage
 IT/SA
 National Bureau of Statistics
 Dar-es-Salaam
 Tanzania
36. Mr. Lesiba Ledwaba
 National Library of South Africa
 E-mail: [Tshidi.Ramano\(2nlsa.ac.za\)](mailto:Tshidi.Ramano(2nlsa.ac.za))
 Johannesburg, South Africa

R.G.Pye Lane, Dept. Mail Bag
Tel: +220 422649 1/ 4228312
Fax: +220 4223776
E-mail: national.library@qanet.gm
Banjul, The Gambia

43. Mr. Gennetu Mellese

First Secretary.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Tel: +251 11 515 2925
Fax: +251 11 551 4300
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

44. Mr. Alemneh Moges

Head, Library and Information
Ethiopian Management Institute
P.O. Box 77
Tel: +251 911 649596
Fax: +251 114 338762
[E-mail: alemnehmoges@yahoo.com](mailto:alemnehmoges@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

45. Dr. Mantina Mohasi

Senior Lecturer and Coordinator for BEd
Programme
National University of Lesotho
Tel: +266 22 322 038
Fax: +266 22 310 433
[E-mail: hmlephoto@yahoo.com](mailto:hmlephoto@yahoo.com)
Maseru, Lesotho

46. Mr. Christopher S. Molem

Head, Department of Economics and
Management
University of Buea
P.O. Box 63
Tel: +237 3322134 Ext. 3110
Fax: +237 3322272
[E-mail: balayow@yahoo.com](mailto:balayow@yahoo.com)
Buea, Cameroon

37. Mr. Dereje Letybelu

Head Librarian and Information officer
Ethiopian Development Research Institute
P.O. Box 8270
Tel: +251 911 253840
Fax: +251 115 505588
[E-mail: d.letybelu@ethionet.et](mailto:d.letybelu@ethionet.et)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

38. Ms. Sisay Liramo

Librarian
Salam Nurse's College, P.O. Box 1038
Tel: +251 11 321 0918/ 9187 2989
[E-mail: worsis@yahoo.com](mailto:worsis@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

39. Mr. Salissou M. Abdou Mahaman

President, Niger Library Association
[E-mail: asnid_niger2001@yahoo.com](mailto:asnid_niger2001@yahoo.com)
Niamey, Niger

40. Dr. Buhle Mbambo-Thata

Executive Director
Library Services, UNISA
P.O. Box 392
Tel: +27 12 4293131/ 4293844
+27 12 4292925
[E-mail: mbambtb@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mbambtb@unisa.ac.za)
Pretoria, South Africa

41. Mr. Mamadou Mbodj

Chef de la division archives orales
Direction dea archives nationales du Senegal
Dakar, Senegal

42. Mr. Abdou Mbye

Director
The Gambia National Library

47. Mr. Chedza Molefe
Archivist
African Union Commission
P.O. Box 200189
Tel: +251 912 148340
[E-mail: cmolefe@yahoo.com](mailto:cmolefe@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
48. Ms. Marie M. Mpessa Mouangue
Director of Information, Documentation &
Diplomatic Records
Ministry of External Relations P.O. Box
1182
Tel: +237 220 5038/ 0133/ 1133
Fax: +237 220 5038
E-mail: mpessam@yahoo.fr
Yaounde, Cameroon
49. Ms. Mathetha Mukela
UN Collection
Librarian
E-mail : mamutukwa@yahoo.com
Maseru, Lesotho
50. Mr. Solomon Mulugeta
Legal Deposit Team Leader
National Archive and Library
[E-mail: raye_ngo@yahoo.com](mailto:raye_ngo@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
51. Ms. Josephine Ndayishimiye
Conseiller
Ministere de l'Education nationale et de la
culture
Tel : +257 79 49 1822/ 222 24022
E-Mail : ndajose2000@yahoo.fr
Bujumbura, Burundi
52. Mr. Djibril Ndiaye
Président
Association BibliothécairesBIT, 22, rue El
Hadji

A.A.Ndoye, BP 414
Tel: +221 8892989/ 5699941
Fax: +221 8236874
[E-mail: ndiayed@ilo.org](mailto:ndiayed@ilo.org)
djibril.ndiaye@gmail.com
Dakar
Senegal

53. Mr. Evanson Ndung'u
Principal Documentation & Information
Officer
Standards Information Resource Center,
Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS)
Kapiti Road,
P.O.Box 54974 - 00200, City Square
Tel: +254 20 605490/ 20 602350/ 20
6948000
Fax: +254 20 604031/ 20 609660
[E-mail: NdunguE@kebs.org](mailto:NdunguE@kebs.org)
Nairobi, Kenya

54. Mr. Benson Njobvu
Chairman
Zambia Library Association
P.O. Box 38636
Tel: +260 96729464
[E-mail: bensonnjobvu@hotmail.com](mailto:bensonnjobvu@hotmail.com)
Lusaka, Zambia

55. Mr. Gray Nyali
National Librarian
National Library Service
P.O. Box 30314
Tel: +265 1 773700
Fax : +265 1 771616
E-mail : gnyali@nlsmw.org
Lilongwe, Malawi

56. Mr. Jean-Marie Ntsongo
Bibliothèque de l'institut national de la
jeunesse
B.P. 14479
E-mail: ntsongo@yahoo.fr
Brazzaville, Congo

57. Ms. Victoria Okojie
President
Nigerian Library Association (NLA)
PMB 1, Garki GPO 900001,
c/o National Library of Nigeria
Headquarters
Tel: +234 803 334 8817
E-mail: vicokojie@yahoo.com
Abuja, Nigeria

58. Dr. Collins K. Osei
E-mail: Osei29.ckosei@yahoo.com
Accra, Ghana

59. Mr. S. C. Otenya
University Librarian
Egerton University
P.O. Box 536
E-mail: otenyal23@yahoo.com
Egerton, Kenya

60. Ms. Melinda Adelee Potgieter
Data and Information Manager
Financial & Fiscal Commission
Private Bag X69
Johannesburg, South Africa

61. Ms. Kay Helen Raseroka
IFLA Past President & Director of Libraries
University of Botswana
P/B U0390
Tel: +267 39 53972
Fax: +267 357291/ 356591
E-mail: raseroka@mopipi.ub.bw
Gaborone, Botswana

62. Mr. Innocent Rugambwa
Director, Library & Research
Parliament of Uganda
P.O. Box 7178
Tel: +256 41 4377241 ext. 241/ 772 454777
Fax: +256 41 235461
E-mail: irugambwa@parliament.go.ug
Kampala, Uganda

63. Mr. Ringim A. Salisu
Ministry of Information and Communication
Tel: + 2 3 4 8 0 3 6 3 6 1 9 6 6
E-mail: ringim_ahmed@yahoo.com
Abuja, Nigeria

64. Dr. Alinah K. Segobye
University Academic
University of Botswana
Tel: +267 355 2186/ 716 25018
Fax: +267 318 5098
E-mail: SEGOBYE@mopipi.ub.bw
Gaborone, Botswana

65. Ms. Roza Seyoum
Librarian
Ethiopian Economic Association
Tel: +251 11 416 2121
Fax: +251 11 416 0967
E-mail: rozasaron@yahoo.com
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

66. Ms. Rosemary M. Shafack
University Librarian
University of Buea
P.O. Box 63
Tel: +237 9698868
E-mail: roshafack@yahoo.com
Buea, Cameroon

67. Mr. Senbetu Shato

Deputy Librarian

Ethiopian Civil Service College

P.O. Box 5648

Tel: +251 11 662 5882/ 646 0032

Fax: +251 11 646 3016

[E-mail: senbetuu@yahoo.com](mailto:senbetuu@yahoo.com)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

68. Ms. Kidist Shawul

Librarian, Resource Center for Governance,
Democracy and Human Rights

African Union Commission

Tel: +251 11 5513822 ext 659

Fax: +251 11 5525856

[E-mail: kidists@africa-union.org](mailto:kidists@africa-union.org)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

69. Mr. Mollalign Shiferaw

Library Head

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tel: +251 911 317407

[Email: betselot_2005@yahoo.com](mailto:betselot_2005@yahoo.com)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

70. Ms. Selamawit Tadele

Situation Room Assistant

Commission of the African Union

P.O. Box 24955

Tel: +251 911 018654/ 11 123 2951

[E-mail: selamtad@yahoo.com](mailto:selamtad@yahoo.com)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

71. Mr. Desire D. B. Tengeneza

Professeur/ Librarian, President of National
Library Association, Ministere de
l'enseignement superieur et universitaire
B.P. 3182, Tel: +243 998133732

[E-mail: didierteng@yahoo.fr](mailto:didierteng@yahoo.fr)

Kinshasa, Congo D. R. Mr. Samuel Tessema

Head, Circulation (Library)

Addis Ababa University

Tel: +251 911 151701

[E-mail: smart_sammyf@yahoo.com](mailto:smart_sammyf@yahoo.com)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

71. Mr. Belayneh Tessera

Reference Library Team Leader

National Library of Ethiopia

Tel: +251 911 149933

[E-mail: belayneh982005@yahoo.com](mailto:belayneh982005@yahoo.com)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

72. Mr. John Tsebe

National Librarian of South Africa

National Library of SA

Tel: +27 12 4019717

Fax: +27 12 3267642

[E-mail: tshidi.ramano@nlsa.ac.za](mailto:tshidi.ramano@nlsa.ac.za)

Pretoria, South Africa

73. Mr. Demissew Tsigemelak

Assistant Head

Addis Ababa University, Faculty of Science
Library

P.O. Box 33468

Tel: +251 911 699931

[E-mail: demissewt@yahoo.com](mailto:demissewt@yahoo.com)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

74. Mr. Mengistu Tutu

Head Librarian

School of Medical Laboratory Technology

Library, Addis Ababa University

Tel: +251 911 672288/ 112 754669

[E-mail: mengistutu@yahoo.com](mailto:mengistutu@yahoo.com)

Addis Ababa

Ethiopia

75. Mr. Felix N. Ubogu

University Librarian

University of the Witwatersrand

Private Bag X1

Tel: +27 11 717 1901/ 836025123

Fax: +27 11 717 1946

[E-mail: ubogu.f@library.witz.ac.za](mailto:ubogu.f@library.witz.ac.za)

Johannesburg, South Africa

78. Ms. Jacinta Were
Governing Board Member
University of Nairobi
Tel: +254 720 853423
Fax: +254 20 245566
[E-mail: werej@yahoo.com](mailto:werej@yahoo.com),
jwere@uonbi.ac.k

Nairobi, Kenya

79. Mr. Ermias Woldearegay
Librarian
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural
Development
[E-mail: davenjeo@yahoo.com](mailto:davenjeo@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

80. Mr. Solomon Woldetsay
Head of Information Service
Ethiopian Civil Service
P.O. Box 5648
Tel: +251 911 488089; +251 11 646 3016
[E-mail: solo991@excite.com](mailto:solo991@excite.com)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

81. Ms. Amanda Wortmann
Manager: Library and KM Centre
Financial and Fiscal Commission
P/Bag X 69
Tel: +27 861 315 710
Fax: +27 11 388 7908
[E-mail: amanda@ffc.co.za](mailto:amanda@ffc.co.za)
Johannesburg
South Africa

82. Mr. Tesfaye Zelleke
Librarian
Ethiopian Parliament
[E-mail: Tesfayezelleke@yahoo.com](mailto:Tesfayezelleke@yahoo.com)
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

83. Ms. Ejigayehu Zewdie
Manager Information Resources
British Council
P.O. Box 1043
Tel: +251 911 401314
Fax: +251 155 9544
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia