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The Challenge to Africa of Globalization and the Information Age

*Proceedings of African Development
Forum 1999*

ECAC
339.9:004
ADF1-C4375
c.6

August 2000



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

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Or contact

ADP Secretariat

Economic Commission for Africa

P.O. Box 3001

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

E-mail: adp@uneca.org

Tel: 251-11-516033

Fax: 251-11-516033

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Or contact

ADF Secretariat
Economic Commission for Africa
P.O.Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-mail: adf@uneca.org
Tel.: 251-1-516513
Fax: 251-1-516563

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Acknowledgements

Organizing the first African Development Forum (ADF) took ECA into new territory where neither the Commission, let alone others, had been before. Both the idea and the process were new. ECA's objective was to bring Africa's top policymakers together to build an African-led, African-owned development agenda around key development issues.

I chose *'The Challenge to Africa of Globalization and the Information Age'* for the first ADF as a key millennium issue for Africa, an issue that had not attracted enough serious policy consideration by the majority of our countries. My idea was to create the environment for African policy and decision-makers, civil society and the private sector, to forge consensus on a common approach to accelerate Africa's progress into the global information age. The alternative to addressing the digital divide was to condemn the continent to further marginalization.

I am extremely grateful to my colleagues at ECA who rose to the challenge and brought the vision of the ADF to reality. They had the awesome task of setting the standard for the future of the ADF, and they delivered their assignment admirably. I'd like to single out Kate Wild, the overall co-ordinator of the ADF'99, who was seconded to ECA from the International Development Research Centre, Canada, for this assignment. IDRC has been a loyal and constant partner to the Commission in its work on information and development for more than two decades.

The Centre's secondment of Ms. Wild for this important undertaking was only the latest manifestation of a relationship that I consider to have established the standard of partnership that we at ECA are striving to promote with other development stakeholders. Ms. Wild worked with great vision to put together a first class programme and a vibrant Forum, which was a tremendous success. Indeed, it was a model for others to follow. I am extremely pleased that she is playing a lead role in the follow-up to ADF '99, working with African leaders, the private sector and donors to put concrete initiatives in place in the key areas identified by the Forum.

There is no question that ADF '99 met its objective, namely to initiate and galvanize a process that would ensure that Africa entered the global information age. That said, what was achieved with ADF '99 was not the work of any single individual. As such, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the entire team, in particular the Development Information Services Division (DISD). Under the leadership of Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane and with Nancy Hafkin heading the team to promote information technology for development, DISD worked tirelessly to make a success of the Forum.

K.Y. Amoako

Executive Secretary

List of Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank
ADF	African Development Forum
AISI	African Information Society Initiative
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
GIS	Geo-Information Systems
ICANN	Internet Corporation Assigned Names and Numbers
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
NICI	National Information and Communication Infrastructure Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PICTA	Partnership for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa
RASCOM	Regional African Satellite Communication System
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

The ADF process

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) convened the first African Development Forum from 24-28 October 1999 under the theme *"The Challenge to Africa of Globalization and the Information Age"*. It marked the beginning of a process led by ECA to position an African-driven development agenda reflecting a consensus among major partners and leading to specific programmes for implementation at national, subregional and regional levels. ADF was born out of the conviction that Africa cannot achieve sustainable development unless Africans themselves design and own their development policies, strategies and actions.

The issue of *"Globalization and the Information Age"* was chosen for the inaugural ADF because of the importance of defining African-owned and African-led strategies to join the global information economy. The major goal of ADF '99 was to develop and support African initiatives that are fundamental to the shaping of the African Information Age. ADF '99 provided the first occasion for a broad range of African policy-makers and practitioners to come together as a group to assess the opportunities, confront the challenges and develop a plan of action for Africa in the Information Age. It was the culmination of more than three years of activities to build an African Information Society and the occasion to set future directions for the African Information Society Initiative (AISI).

The Forum was unique because for the first time, it demonstrated how much was being done in Africa by Africans, in harnessing information and communication technologies (ICTs) towards development. Much was already underway, and yet it was not well known, even within Africa itself. Some of the most vibrant and innovative ICT applications for development occupied centre stage during the Forum.

I. Attendance

Some 950 participants attended the Forum from government, the private sector, civil society (including the academic sector and media), and bilateral and multilateral organizations¹. Participants ranged from community activists and technical experts to national and international policymakers, private entrepreneurs and Heads of State. Eighty-one per cent of participants came to the Forum from the Africa region, ten per cent from Europe, six per cent from North America and two per cent from elsewhere. Some 36 per cent were from the African public sector, fifteen per cent from NGOs, thirteen per cent from universities and research institutions, fifteen per cent from the private sector, and fifteen per cent from development agencies².

II. Opening Session³

Speakers

Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi

Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Louise Frechette

Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, Salim Ahmed Salim

Vice President of the African Development Bank, Ahmed Bahgat

Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the ECA, K. Y. Amoako

The opening plenary focused on the broad issues of the African development challenge. Speakers set the scene for the first African Development Forum by highlighting domestic private sector development, science and technology and good governance as key requirements for a progressing Africa. They emphasized the need for a new development paradigm for the continent, based on a vibrant domestic private sector, a strong State, cutting-edge policy analysis and good governance.

Delivering the opening statement at the Forum, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi noted that the ongoing process of globalization would be a major determinant of the destinies of African countries. In that context he warned: "*If present conditions remain unaltered and the trend we see continues, then being more enmeshed within the globalized economy would only mean that by force of circumstances, Africa would be made to stay on the margins of the global economy.*" Adding that such an eventuality would lead to the growth of such extra-legal business activities as drug trafficking, he said the challenge of Africa should also be viewed as the challenge of members of the global village in general.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi offered two proposals that would enable Africa to benefit from the globalized economy. First, it had to develop a vibrant domestic private sector. It appeared obvious, he stated, that "*unless the domestic private sector leads the way with enthusiasm and confidence, it is unlikely for foreign investment to take part in our economies with any degree of effectiveness*". Second, political stability and the rule of law could not be fostered without a clear role for a strong, robust State - a role not incompatible with the need for States to be legitimate and democratic.

¹ The full list of participants is attached as Annex VI.

² Ten per cent of participants listed their institutions as "other".

³ Full texts of all the major addresses at the Forum can be found at: <http://www.bellanet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm>.

The Ethiopian leader then criticized the orthodoxy of the economic prescriptions of international financial institutions, whose economic models had the effect of *"weakening the State and of ensuring its emasculation"*. A radical change in Africa's development paradigm was needed as a condition for meaningful growth and development on the continent. This would necessitate *"an overhaul of relations between the international financial institutions and the donor community on the one hand and Africa on the other"*.

In her brief remarks and speaking on the last United Nations Day of the twentieth century, Ms. Frechette noted that at a time when the world's population was about to reach 6 billion, nearly half of that number would enter the new millennium in abject poverty. Violence, brutality and discrimination as well as climate change were also threats to survival. In this context, the challenge was to make the next century *"more secure, more equitable and more human"*. Towards this end, the process of strengthening the United Nations needed to continue.

Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization for African Unity (OAU), emphasized the linkage between governance and sustainable economic development. *"Good governance and democracy or the respect for human rights cannot thrive on empty stomachs,"* he stressed. *"... Democracy must deliver on bread and butter issues; otherwise democratic transitions will be reversed and the continent will slide back into situations where the politics of poverty give rise to the poverty of politics..."*. While linkages between good governance and sustainable economic development might not necessarily be perfect guarantees for sustaining democracy and a culture of political tolerance, they were nevertheless *"important thresholds in creating acceptable African norms and behaviour"*.

Mr. Ahmed Bahgat, Vice President (Finance and Planning) of the African Development Bank (ADB) delivered a statement on behalf of ADB President Omar Kabbaj which focused on the prospects that information technology afforded African development and the role of the Bank in enabling Africa's entry into the global information society.

In his opening remarks, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and ECA Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako stressed that the most important issues facing Africa required a more ambitious approach to the policy process. Stressing the need for enhanced policy analysis and application in Africa, Mr. Amoako called for alliances and networking, as *"no policy centre is big enough to know the whole picture"*. Policy experience must be shared, across sectors and across the boundaries of academia and policy circles. Successful experience must be marketed. And Africa must have *"its own answers, its own policy dynamics ... as is the case of every other region"*.

Policy analysis, noted Mr. Amoako, was a *"growing business"*, involving leaders in all sectors. As such, ADF represented *"the diverse, rapidly growing policy community of Africa"*. The ADF, a mechanism with distinct style and operations, was *"...an [ambitious] attempt... to organize the African policy community, working in alliance, starting with the national experience and ending with national actions, and, over time, covering some of the most fundamental challenges facing Africa's policymakers."*

III. Keynote Presentations on the ADF Process and the Information Age in Africa

The opening plenary on 25 October featured keynote presentations underlining the development opportunities of the Information Age in Africa.

Speakers

Louise Frechette, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

Noah Samara, CEO, Worldspace Corporation

K.Y. Amako, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA

Leonard Robinson, President and CEO, National Summit on Africa

Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Louise Frechette, said that while *"knowledge is the new global asset, the very premise of progress"*, in harnessing ICTs for development we must beware of creating a digital divide between the information rich and the information poor. She stressed that information and communication technologies were not a luxury, but rather a tool for economic and social development. Ms. Frechette noted that despite the opportunities offered by globalization, hundreds of millions of people were living in desperate poverty, while countries most in need of trade and investment were being bypassed. *"Many people experience globalization not as an agent of progress, but as a disruptive force capable of destroying jobs and traditions in the blink of an eye,"* she warned. *"So even as we welcome the good that globalization has brought and can bring in the future, we must also lament the ills that too often come with it. Our challenge is, therefore, to make globalization work better in producing equitable growth."*

Ms. Frechette identified the spread of ITCs as *"perhaps the most important force spurring globalization along"*. These ICTs were *"a tremendous force for integrating people and nations into the global economy. They can promote openness and transparency, leaving polluters and dictators fewer places to hide."*

Ms. Frechette spelled out the tremendous power of information as *"the new global asset, the new business capital, the very premise of progress"*. She envisioned the promise of ICTs for closing the rural-urban gap, alleviating natural disasters, promoting open societies and good governance, telemedicine, distance learning, and the integration of women into the workforce. Yet, she noted, access was crucial.

"The world's population has just passed the six billion mark. Five out of those six billion live in developing countries. For many of them, the great scientific and technical achievements of our era might as well be taking place on another planet. Half the world's people have never made or received a telephone call. We may well be adding a new divide to the already well entrenched one between rich and poor: a digital divide between the information-rich and the information-poor."

Ms. Frechette said she remained optimistic because *"Africa is receiving huge benefits even though the Information Age is so very young"*. The Information Age was moving in the right direction for Africa – with sharply escalating applications coming at sharply reduced cost. She promised that the United Nations would play its part in promoting ICTs for development. *"The mission of the United Nations is to ensure that any era is one in which the social and humanitarian goals of the world's people are met. The good news is that the power of information has already shown what it can do for human well being: for human rights, for human development, for human freedom and security. But we have a long way to go before we can pronounce ourselves satisfied."*

Major reforms to vast problems including conflict, corruption, debt and disease were being implemented in Africa, she said, and carried hope for favourable change and growth throughout the continent. The prospects would depend on the way Africans themselves respond to the challenges of globalization and the information era. Critical to this was the need to build an understanding of the speed

of globalization, the tools associated with it, the rules in place to manage it – and those that are lacking, as well as the key actors that would ultimately determine its course and fate.

The Deputy Secretary-General stressed that while many ills could be associated with the process of globalization, the challenge was to harness its benefits for better, equitable growth. The spread of ICTs was a tremendous force for the integration of people and the economy. Knowledge was a global asset and a fundamental premise for progress. ICTs afforded a critical link between development and peace.

She said that one could be optimistic about the future of Africa because of the proven benefits of ICTs. The benefits have been felt in the spread of cellular telephone technology, in initiatives such as HealthNet, linking doctors and researchers in Africa and abroad, and in initiatives linking the field offices of African NGOs and their counterparts around the world. This optimism was also grounded in the power of ICTs to extend education and foster a culture of peace.

The United Nations system, she said, would continue to do its part particularly through the work of ECA and UNDP. However, these efforts were often performed in disjointed way, and the ADF was designed to remedy this situation. The ADF provided a forum to bring partners together. The challenge was for Africa to craft its own links to the global information economy, she concluded.

Mr. Noah Samara, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of WorldSpace Corporation, told participants that information affluence was *"the need for every need . . . the sine qua non to development"*, adding, *"Information is the predicate to everything we know. It is ubiquitous. It is the building block behind human DNA, the chair you are sitting on, the building you are in, the car you drive"*.

Asserting that information was behind wealth as ignorance was behind poverty, Mr. Samara lamented the gap between rich and poor, asserting that it had been made starker by the power of ICTs. While these technologies had liberated lives, created stock markets and improved economies, they had only touched a fraction of the world's population.

Worse than the hardware scarcity, said Mr. Samara, was the scarcity of information, which *"directly undermines the ability of a nation to not only keep its citizens informed and educated, but to simply keep them alive. Eleven million people will die of AIDS this year in sub-Saharan Africa. Forty million children will be orphaned. Either one of those numbers, by any definition, represents the population of an entire country. This is the horror we do not really comprehend,"* he said.

The urgent imperative of our time for the African continent was the creation of an information-affluent African society. Over the past 15 years, the industrialized world had shifted its focus from connecting people to connecting nodes of information that people could universally access, share and grow. Focus on convergence technologies had brought information affluence, unprecedented benefit and wealth resulting from net media.

In contrast, the developing world had focused on teledensity with emphasis on telephony rather than universal access to the Internet. Accordingly, the progress in teledensity had not yielded the corresponding benefits and wealth which information affluence had created for the industrialized world. Indeed, the information gap between nations was growing and threatened to explode into an irreparable gulf between rich and poor nations.

Mr. Samara explained that it was in part the desire to stem HIV/AIDS that motivated him to start WorldSpace Corporation, which is promoting digital radio as a cost-effective system for the dissemination of a variety of information across the Africa region. In 1998 WorldSpace launched the first satellite specifically to cover Africa. The company plans to launch similar satellites over Asia and Latin America.

After ten years of work, receivers were now being distributed across Africa to receive information through dedicated satellite services. More than sixty channels were broadcasting directly to a new generation of receivers with capacity for multi-media content. The service would carry entertainment and

information, and content addressing women's issues, environmental initiatives, health information and distance education.

Mr. Samara proposed that the participants at ADF should focus their collective energies on establishing five million Internet terminals in five million villages and neighbourhoods over the next five years. He stressed the assertion of Margaret Mead, to "*never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*"

ECA Executive Secretary, K.Y. Amoako, spelt out his vision of an African renaissance, of an Africa that would be far more dynamic and characterized by marked, if uneven, progress. "*We will be more like Asia than we have admitted: We will have our tigers and we will have our disappointments,*" he said. "*Overall, in the decades ahead, we will live in a predominantly urban Africa, an Africa of business, media and science, an Africa in which governance is more localized and more shared with civil society. This will be an Africa of significant gains in social well being, particularly as science comes to our rescue to cope with health and environmental crises. In sum, we can vision an Africa in which the great majority of people are better off and in which Africa as a whole is far more significant to the rest of the world.*"

The new possibilities for advancement afforded by science and technology offered a sound basis for this optimistic vision, Mr. Amoako added. "*In the twentieth century we were intelligent observers of nature. In the twenty-first century we will be dangers of nature. In the twentieth century nations depended upon natural resources for wealth. In the twenty-first century, wealth will depend upon the ability to master the three revolutions of physics, information intelligence, biomolecular science, and the ways they converge.*"

Mr. Amoako predicted that in the years ahead, vast improvements in artificial intelligence would be accompanied by far greater use of human intelligence. There would be a shift in education from rote learning to development of real understanding. Education would be a lifelong affair, starting in the first year and lasting through old age. Far more human brain capacity would be cultivated and used than in the past.

Intelligent public policies, Mr. Amoako stressed, were critical to effecting the shift from simple agriculture and simple manufacturing to information-based economies that employ innovation and technologically advanced applications. Such policies should be goal focused, carefully monitored, long-term and intelligently led. They should address education, with the focus on qualitative gain, and, in particular, science and technology.

Referring to former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, who was buried the week before the Forum, Mr. Amoako said: "*To all of us in Mwalimu's heritage, linkage and solidarity within the continent is at least as important as linkage with the global economy. Satellite broadcasting and filling in the information grid across our continent, will enormously further regional and subregional unity.*"

Mr. Leonard Robinson, President and CEO of the National Summit on Africa, a U.S.A.-based NGO initiative aimed at advancing the relationship between the U.S.A and Africa, made the last keynote presentation. He explained that the Summit's mission was to involve Americans and Africans residing in the United States in a process to educate Americans about Africa and to produce a national plan of action on what United States policy towards Africa should be in the next millennium. The Summit's motto was "Africa Matters" with the emphasis that it should matter in the formulation and application of American foreign policy.

Mr. Robinson said that in the past decade, many African nations had made impressive strides to embrace and implement more open and democratic societies. It was imperative that this progress be supported by meaningful and appropriate partnerships with other nations, especially the United States of America.

The Summit would take place in Washington D.C. in February 2000, with some 6000 people expected to deliberate on foreign policy action plans in the areas of peace and security, democracy and human

rights, education and culture, sustainable development and economic development. The principal reason that the National Summit on Africa was represented at the ADF was to solicit participants' views and perspectives on the Summit process.

Panel Presentation: Progress towards the African Information Age

Chair: Zéphirin Diabré, Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

Presenter: Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director, Development Information Services Division (DISD), ECA

Panel:

H.E. Justin Malewezi, Vice President of Malawi

Ingo Fehrmann, Vice President, Middle East and Africa, Siemens AG

Robert Valantin, Senior Advisor, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada

Yaovi Hounkponou, Director, Benin Press Agency

Objective:

The aim of this plenary session was to set the scene for the rest of the work of the conference by:

- Briefing participants on the African Information Society Initiative (AISI);
- Stressing the importance of national information and communication infrastructure (NICI) policy processes;
- Introducing the four themes of the Forum.

Panel chair Zéphirin Diabré of UNDP provided a brief overview of some UNDP initiatives such as NetAid (www.netaid.org), an alliance between two private sector corporations, Cisco and KPMG, and UNDP's Internet Initiative for Africa, as mechanisms for harnessing ICTs for globalization in the Information Age. He also endorsed the goals of the Forum and affirmed that UNDP was committed and ready to participate actively in bringing about an African Information Age.

Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane summarized the activities of the AISI⁴, which provided the context for the ADF '99 over the past three years and detailed plans and strategies for the future. She underscored the need to move from the global vision and universal model to designing and implementing flexible and workable plans at the national level. She also urged sensitivity to the gender dimension, full participation of youth, a strong role for the media and the academic community, involvement of the African Diaspora and of African "think-tank" institutions, as well as establishment of public/private sector partnerships.

She outlined these areas of direction for AISI in the coming years:

National strategies: National information and communication technology policies and plans, which of necessity vary from country to country, were being developed in line with national development agendas in consultation with key stakeholders. Sensitization, identification and prioritization of needs, and the

⁴ Her presentation was based on Forum document E/ECA/ADF/99/9, "Introduction to Globalization and the Information Age" which is available at <http://www.bellanet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm>.

identification of core sector application were ongoing. Since no universal model existed, it was important that policies be flexible and should include a comprehensive vision and an integrated strategy.

Themes: The theme of the conference and its sub-themes had been selected in consultation with a number of experts in the field. ECA would develop work programme activities around each of the sub-themes over the coming three years.

Partnerships: ECA had been working very actively on the international front to effect coordination that would avoid duplication of efforts and multiply synergies. In the coming three years, it would increase its partnership efforts at the national level, to ensure inclusion of the private sector, academic institutions and the African Diaspora in the preparation of ICT plans.

Impact evaluation: This was an area in which no formal system yet existed and much work needed to be done to measure the impact of ICTs on development. New indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, needed to be developed so that AISI implementation could be measured.

H.E. Justin Malewezi of Malawi agreed that government had an important, enabling role to play in building a national information technology policy framework and infrastructure, and in extending popular access, especially in public and academic institutions. He acknowledged the role that ICTs were playing in Southern Africa in fostering regional integration, public policy development and public interaction, and he supported the establishment of telecentres and other types of shared computer and expertise pools.

He urged that tariffs on telecommunications equipment be removed, as Ghana had done, and noted that, since levels of Internet access in Africa were as low as 2 per cent, traditional communications such as radio, television, telephone, print media in local languages and even all-weather roads should not be neglected. Among the suggestions he made were to tackle infrastructure first, followed by addressing tariff reduction, government support for improved access in academic institutions, setting up multipurpose telecentres, the establishment of a comprehensive legal framework with regulatory mechanisms in place and the need to ensure international collaboration with COMTEL, ITU and RASCOM.

Mr. Ingo Fehrmann of Siemens pointed out that Internet access in Africa cost seven times more than in the U.S. Despite this, and in light of declining costs, access offered unlimited opportunities to public and private sectors for revenues and profits, besides such sectoral benefits as distance learning and telemedicine. As a starting point, customer groups and centres of competence needed to be identified and expanded. He said that Africa should consider the option of bulk buying of knocked-down/stripped PCs, continued liberalization of telecommunications, increased use of wireless technologies and a move away from laying landlines. The possibility of using power lines for connectivity should be considered particularly for rollout to smaller, remote communities.

IDRC's Robert Valantin said that there had been initial scepticism around the ability of ICTs to leverage development, but this had changed since the early 1980s. The subsequent trend had been towards increased south-south information flows, the explosion of Internet usage, the formation of partnerships such as the Partnership for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa (PICTA), increased private sector investment and real two-way flow of information. The 1996 Information Society and Development Conference held in South Africa was a watershed where Africa began to take on a significant role in information society initiatives. He raised some questions on the ability of ICTs to be transformational, their relevance to grassroots groups, the niches that Africa has yet to find, and the need for Africa to make the necessary commitment. He noted that technology capability was even more unequally distributed globally than capital. Africa needed reduced transmission costs but much capital could come from the private sector, given incentives and a positive regulatory environment. He said that ICT access and use was not just a matter of efficiency gains but of an information technology revolution that was demanding attitudinal and technological transformation to face the new millennium.

Mr. Yaovi Houkponou of Benin said Africa's information gap could be utilized positively in terms of applying research findings, developing appropriate content⁵ and accessing resources. Its late arrival on the scene could be a positive force to create new attitudes and perspectives, overcome obstacles and create new markets and employment opportunities.

In the discussion that followed, the need to train and retain human resources was noted, given the shortage of trained personnel and the brain drain problem in Africa. It was suggested that the brain drain could become a "brain gain" if the expertise and other resources among Africans abroad, including Diaspora Africans, could be tapped. Government/private sector/civil society partnerships were advanced as a means to solve the financial constraints. Another key recommendation was that the World Bank and other aid institutions should change existing policies and help Africa gain ICT infrastructural capacity. The monopolistic control of many African governments over information technology policy, infrastructure and services was seen as a stranglehold on the industry. Tariffs in Africa were some of the highest in the world, and liberalization and privatization were urged.

⁵ Readers are directed to the exhaustive inventory of African origin content on the Internet that ECA catalogued for the Forum. See Forum document E/ECA/ADF/99/2, "Africa on the Internet: an annotated guide to African Websites", available at <http://www.bellanet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm>

IV. Parallel Sessions

The Forum split into parallel sessions on the afternoon of 25 October as a starting point for discussion on the four themes that had been identified as key to progress towards an information society in Africa. Presentations on each of the themes were followed by comments from panel members and discussion from the floor. The four themes were:

- **Globalization and the Information Economy: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa**
- **Strengthening Africa's information infrastructure**
- **Information and communication technologies for improved governance**
- **Democratizing access to the information society**

Globalization and the Information Economy: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa

Chair: Mary Chinery-Hesse, Deputy Director General, International Labour Office (ILO)

Presenters⁶:

Catherine Nyaki Adeya, United Nations University Institute for New Technologies (Maastricht)

Derrick Cogburn, University of Michigan, School of Information; Global Information Infrastructure Commission, USA

Panel:

Alan Gelb, Chief Economist, Africa Region, World Bank

Gertrude Akapelwa-Ehueni, Special Assistant to the Director, African Development Bank

Mohamed Mahdi, Chief Executive Officer, Cyberknowledge Systems, South Africa

Chris Slade, Vice President, Public and Industry Sector Development, Oracle

The aim of this presentation was to:

- Define the information economy
- Identify the elements present in Africa
- Describe the constraints facing Africa
- Identify Africa's opportunities to exploit the global information economy to benefit its own development

It was noted that the information economy and society are driven by the global interrelationships of information and communication technologies with economic, political, social and cultural forces. Given Africa's infrastructure gap, various global, regional and national responses were urged. Creative public and private sector partnerships could develop the information structure in the region, stimulate knowledge,

⁶ The document for this presentation was "Globalization and the Information Economy: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa" (E/ECA/ADF/99/7). Copies can be obtained on the Internet at: <http://www.bellanet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm> or can be requested from ECA/DISD at P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; fax: +251 1 51 05 12.

education and learning, promote electronic commerce and market-access components, master teleworking and accelerate capacity building.

Mr. Alan Gelb of the World Bank urged the financing of ICT infrastructure and more support to science and technology in Africa, because technology capability was even more unequally distributed than capital. He pointed out that in the emerging framework of global governance, the interests of small countries were not being represented properly, as seen in such World Trade Organization (WTO) issues as intellectual property rights. Collaborating African countries should identify and assist major operators continent-wide. Subregional arrangements should be explored for investment, technical training and reduced costs. National frameworks needed a positive, enabling regulatory environment, public/private sector partnerships and focus on the centres of competence. African training institutions should do more to further indigenous knowledge and accelerate the research process.

Ms. Gertrude Akapelwa-Ehueni of ADB pointed to the need for public policy development as well as infrastructure and awareness building. Stakeholders, both public and private, had limited awareness and understanding of ICT requirements and uses. However with improved awareness and connectivity, Africa had much to gain and much to contribute in the way of business, information dissemination and web content development especially in the arts, culture and entertainment.

Mr. Mohammed Mahdi of Cyberknowledge Systems stated that a monumental effort was needed to break free from the vicious cycles of widening information and infrastructural gaps, to a new "virtuous" cycle. ICTs were forcing new ways of thinking, reorganizing business operations and creating new businesses and new jobs. In the information economy paradigm, players needed to realize that the picture was not one of decreasing returns but one of increasing gains.

Oracle's Chris Slade noted that the average middle-aged person in Africa might well find the new information technologies perplexing and more of a global plague. Those who made the leap into the new mode of thinking and operating needed costly equipment and link ups, capacity building, markets, competitive pricing and correct timing. Skills available in the African Diaspora could assist in this process. Representatives of various sectors of the economy should approach lagging governments to encourage and stimulate policy and technology supply.

The debate on this theme stressed that digitalization was part of Africa's future but profits should not be put before people, or the interests of a few before the interest of the majority. Government's role as regulator and enabler was noted. Skeptics were urged to look at positive opportunities instead of obstacles. Attitudinal changes, policy development and collaboration among governments and between government and private sector were necessary for kick-starting infrastructural development and such innovative ICT uses as distance education and literacy campaigns.

ICTs for Improved Governance

Chair: Effat El-Shooky, RITSEC, Egypt

Presenters⁷:

Bhavya Lal, Senior Policy Analyst, Abt Associates, USA

Salomao Manhica, Office of the Prime Minister, Mozambique

Panel:

Pascal Baba Coulibaly, Chief of the Cabinet, Office of the President, Mali

⁷ The document for this presentation was "Information and Communication Technologies for Improved Governance in Africa" (E/ECA/ADF/99/6. Copies can be obtained on the Internet at <http://www.bellatnet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm>

David Pulkol, Deputy Director, UNICEF, Kenya

Najat Rochdi, Advisor to the Minister of Post and Information Technologies, Morocco

Dominique Hounkonnou, Benin

The aim of this presentation was to:

- Describe experiences of using ICTs in governance from a global perspective, using African examples;
- Sketch future visions and scenarios for ICT in governance in Africa;
- Identify lessons learned and approaches to be explored in Africa; and
- Define the policy and technology requirements for applying ICTs to improved governance in Africa.

This session looked at current issues facing African countries in adapting ICTs to enhance governance in poverty reduction, providing basic human needs, improving public administration, and enhancing democratization.

Barriers to the use of ICT in governance included lack of infrastructure, technical skills, and finance, as well as the elements of risk, and suspicion. The theme paper proposed that ICTs for improved governance could support four areas:

- Poverty reduction
- Meeting basic human needs
- Improving public administration
- Enhancing democratization.

Mr. Pascal Baba Coulibaly talked of the many challenges to improved governance in Africa. He asserted that radio was an effective information technology for most of Africa. Content could be produced locally and could focus on agriculture and other needs, including medical and community news. He called on governments to support the community radio movement.

Mr. Najat Rochdi said that good governance was more of an approach than a set of activities. Morocco was using ICTs to support the transformation of the country in fighting against poverty and marginalization, build an economy based on information and knowledge, develop human capital and modernize the administration. Universal access, she hoped, would bring development to all. ICTs were tools that could integrate, support economic growth, and bring people together so long as there were leaders with strong political will to use these systems in support of good governance.

Mr. Dominique Hounkonnou said that the 'contents' were more important than the 'container'. and stressed that management of the State should be removed as much as possible from political considerations. Governments must learn to listen to the citizens and act through local extension workers. International cooperation partners should not be so rigid. He also warned that if politicians governed only from global perspectives, then local values would be eroded.

Mr. Effat El Shooky described the Egyptian Cabinet Decision Support Centre that has implemented many projects in information technology as well as supporting policy development. Projects were in the areas of debt management, unemployment, subsidies and human resource development.

Participants asserted the need for Africa to succeed in using ICTs to consolidate and expand on successes and to address failures, after decades of civil war, corruption, endemic diseases and other negative moments in recent history. ICTs, it was said, constituted a diverse and powerful set of technological tools and resources used for the communication, creation, dissemination, storage and management of information. They comprised hardware, software, media and delivery systems, as well as

training and support, and also encompassed a great range of rapidly evolving technologies, not all of which are sophisticated, cutting edge or expensive.

ICTs could greatly enhance governance. They could help reduce poverty through distance education, which would help in creating a more skilled work force. Through the improvement of the quality of healthcare and educational opportunities, they could provide basic services. In managing the burden of foreign debt and revitalizing local economies, ICTs could improve public administration. They could also enhance democratization and accountability through "open" online government.

Some of the challenges to the use of ICTs for governance were identified as poor electricity infrastructure, telecommunications and local supplies of information technology goods; technical issues such as the high costs of financing ICTs; and lack of adequate political support and awareness among senior policymakers. These barriers were worse in Africa than in other regions of the world, due to lack of physical access, illiteracy and the persistence of other negative factors. The session concluded by affirming that Africa had a better chance of benefiting from the integration of ICTs into governance if the "ICT tail" did not wag the "governance dog".

Strengthening Africa's Information Infrastructure

Chair: Hamadoun I. Touré, Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, International Telecommunication Union

Presenter⁸: Michael Jensen, independent consultant

Panel:

John Mahama, Minister of Communications, Ghana

Khedija Hamouda Ghariani, Director, Tunisian Internet Agency, Tunisia

Koos Bekker, Managing Director, Naspers, South Africa

B. Casimir Leke, Regional African Satellite Communication System

This session aimed to:

- Highlight policies and strategies that have enabled some countries to move faster to extend infrastructure for broadcasting, telecommunications and Internet access
- Provide a regional status report
- Identify subregional issues and strategies

The theme paper defined information infrastructure to include telecommunications, broadcast, computer hardware and software, the Internet and related human resources. The presentation stressed the relatively long planning horizon that characterized infrastructure development and the substantial investment needed to bring teledensities substantially above their current levels and to ensure that growth did not occur mainly in urban areas leaving rural areas underserved. Michael Jensen described new developments promoting fast infrastructure growth but noted that the potential benefits of the spread of Internet access were limited by the high cost of local or long distance line usage, scarcity of intraregional links for traffic and relatively high subscription costs. These factors were being countered in some countries by special tariffs and the declining costs of new technology.

⁸ The document for this presentation was "Policies and Strategies for Accelerating Africa's Information Infrastructure Development" (E/ECA/ADF/99/5). Copies can be obtained on the Internet at <http://www.bellatnet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm>.

The main factors contributing to accelerating information infrastructure development included liberalization, support for regulatory authorities, development of public access centres, the introduction of smart cards, government sponsorship of content and service development and expansion of the digital capacity of networks. In addition, broader regional and national collaboration potentially leading to bulk purchasing of capacity, capacity building initiatives and innovative financing could help to achieve economies of scale and reduction of costs to users. Barriers included high license fees for new entrants, slow licensing procedures, high import duties, and failure to address high call charges. Political stability was a major element in attracting the necessary investment from foreign infrastructure developers.

Panelists introduced several more important considerations for the African region's infrastructure development. Minister Mahama emphasized the difficulties of liberalizing, privatizing and developing regulatory expertise simultaneously. He stressed the importance of the histories of the move from state monopoly to liberalization in different African countries and the great need to guard against unbalanced development. Key factors for policymakers were service affordability, ensuring that technologies were appropriate to the specific needs of a country, creating demand where it is not developed and sustaining market development through the creation of a 'level playing field' for all the operators. Two other important factors were the creation of a vision and clear targets for operators, and measurement of progress using indicators relevant to an African approach to information infrastructure development.

Ms. Khedija Ghariani offered an overview of the history of Internet development from 1989. She stressed particularly the fact that *'good intentions are not enough'*; there was also a need for strong political will. The Tunisian government had sought to develop the national Internet rather than to emphasize international connections. Efforts had been directed at the development of content for public service applications, public Internet access centres and domestic initiatives to develop electronic commerce from as early as 1997. The illustration provided a good example of how African countries needed to develop their own solutions and approaches and to adapt models introduced from external sources.

Mr. Koos Bekker argued against a number of myths that he said characterized thinking in Africa about infrastructure development. The myths were that:

- African countries need a strategic plan to develop the Internet. He argued that the USA has no plan and that the greatest need was to develop a positive environment.
- There are insufficient public funds. He argued that a conducive regulatory framework was necessary but that private financing could provide the basis for Internet development.
- Developing and using the Internet is complex. He suggested that, in fact, it is very simple.
- African countries are powerless to alter current global market conditions. He argued that the use of electronic commerce and the Internet enabled a major reduction in the isolation of African traders.

Mr. Bekker emphasized the need for African countries to promote their entrepreneurs and to share information about successful initiatives. He offered three main recommendations for action:

- Liberalize fixed line operators in order to encourage lower prices;
- Ensure regulatory transparency as a means of combating corruption in licensing processes and recognize the major strides that have been made to achieve a high degree of transparency; and
- Reduce and ultimately remove internal trade barriers within the African region.

Mr. B. C. Leke of RASCOM described the measures that led to development of the first dedicated satellite for Africa. These encompassed an integrated set of services (e.g. Internet, voice telecoms, television and radio broadcast). The basic goal was to provide direct intraregional links for traffic, to complement public telecommunication operator services, and to provide services for rural areas through innovative modes of financing. One option to cover the high costs of terminals was to persuade development agencies to provide soft loans to telecoms operators to buy the terminals.

Discussion focused on the need to:

- Seek clarification about the different satellite initiatives; and about the actual costs of infrastructure development and the problems in developing intraregional traffic handling arrangements;
- Build an African regional telecommunication market;
- Feasibility studies of regional plans;
- Build regional cooperation to implement and plan; and
- Note the analogy of the European Union's measures to create a harmonized telecommunications market since the 1980s.

There was also emphasis on involving the private sector in speeding the introduction of information technology. However, the private sector in many African countries did not have a strong enough base and, it was noted, was not really prepared to embark upon technological ventures for markets too small and ill equipped in skills to justify the investment and risks.

Despite the obstacles that were indicated, the consensus of the participants was that Africa could not stay out of the Information Age, whatever the hurdles that had to be overcome. Infrastructure development had to be regarded as a 'win-win' situation for all.

Democratizing Access to the Information Society

Chair: Shuller Habenzu, Director, Zamnet, Zambia

Presenter⁹: Aida Opoku-Mensah, Ford Foundation, Nigeria

Panel:

Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECA

Anriette Esterhuysen, Executive Director, Sangonet, South Africa

Arnaldo Valenti Nhavato, Minister of Education, Mozambique

Ernest Wilson, Director, Centre for International Development and Conflict Resolution, University of Maryland, USA

The aim of this presentation was to:

- Provide an overview of how Africa is meeting ICT needs of different social sector: women, youth, rural and urban poor;
- Present opportunities for expanding access through applications that meet social needs: food, health, education, access to income, and governance;
- Bring out challenges for access, use and content; and
- Point out successes in extending access, in Africa and elsewhere.

⁹ The document for this presentation was *Democratizing Access to the Information Society* (E/ECA/ADF/99/4). Copies can be obtained on the Internet at <http://www.bellanet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm>.

The presenter said, "*as people's rights to communicate are enhanced . . . so too will the African citizen feel they have a sense of ownership of the African information society.*" Aida Opoku-Mensah assessed the issues surrounding the democratization of access to the information society in Africa and attempted to offer strategies for harnessing information and communication technologies in support of development initiatives with particular emphasis on access for rural communities. Panel members pointed out the need for political will to democratize access and for commitment to freedom of information. The Minister from Mozambique underlined the political will that his country has demonstrated in implementing community access, school networking and information policy programmes.

For democratization of access to be meaningful, it was asserted, people needed the opportunity to speak out and change their lives, and not just to become consumers on the Internet. It was emphasized that education could not be bypassed - it was still essential in people's ability to communicate, using new or old technologies. Questions of culture and language were also central to access: people needed to be able to communicate in a language and culture familiar to them. Thus, access remained closely linked to content. With regard to the question of growing global inequality, it was pointed out that new technologies were being introduced within this context. The way to reduce the gap was not to bring in more technology but rather to open up to greater democracy and access to the technology.

Discussions focused on the right to communicate as being central to the issue of access to the information society. There was consensus on the need for visionary governments to drive and lead the quantum leap into the Information Age as well as visionary leadership in civil society and the private sector. It was said that policies are still being developed behind closed doors, with little or no popular participation in their formulation, and that increased effective participation in policy-making institutions such as WTO was imperative. Despite the political will in many African countries to increase universal access toward benefiting the social sector, the requisite resources necessary to make it a reality remained a fundamental challenge.

There was consensus on the following issues:

- Access to the information society is increasingly bottom-up and demand-driven;
- The information revolution is not primarily about technology, but is essentially political and institutional;
- Reducing the increasing technological and knowledge gap is only possible by opening the rules of the game and increasing democracy to enable civil society participation in defining the policies;
- The expertise being developed by African youth needs to be harnessed; and
- Money or technology will not lead Africa into the future; it needs visionary leadership with constituencies that support that vision, at all levels of government, civil society and the private sector that will make access possible;
- There is need to look at democratic best practices that have resulted in increased access.

The issue of profiling failures as learning experiences was raised, particularly in light of mushrooming telecentres. It was felt that democratizing access must be based on a combination of different types of technologies.

V. Breakout Groups

In order to allow for in-depth discussion of the four conference themes (information economy, governance, infrastructure and democratization of access), the Forum split into breakout groups corresponding to each of the theme areas. There were four sessions on each of the themes, for a total of 16 breakout sessions. The reports are presented here by theme.

Breakout sessions on Theme 1:

Globalization and the Information Economy: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa

1. Indicators for the information economy and their relevance to Africa

A presentation and moderated discussion on global collaborative initiatives and their application to measuring development impact in Africa.

Chairs: Heather Hudson, Acacia, International Development Research Centre, Canada; and
Peter Benjamin, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

2. Global, regional, subregional and national frameworks and approaches to stimulate the growth of the African information economy

Presentations and moderated discussion on the global framework with examples of concrete national approaches.

Chair: Ernest Wilson, Director, Center for International Development and Conflict Management,
University of Maryland (USA)

Presenters:

E-commerce under GATS: African perspectives— Abdoulaye Ndiaye, Senegal

Towards an electronic commerce policy for South Africa—Dillo Lehlokoe, Department of Communications, South Africa

Egyptian e-commerce initiatives, Sherif Hashem, IDSC, Egypt

Towards an African information society: a challenge for regional economic organizations— Willie Jackson, Cameroon

Fighting inegalitarian influences of globalization and information technology: policy approaches in Botswana and Zimbabwe— Rubin Patterson, University of Maryland, USA

3. Creating information industries in Africa: software development, open-source, infrastructure requirements, and employment creation

Presentation, panel and moderated discussion.

Chair: Rui Fernandez, Chief Executive Officer, Mozambique Telecom

Presenter: Mavis Ampah Sintim-Misa, Chief Executive Officer, Spectrum International, Ghana

Panel:

Kebour Ghenna, Chief Executive Officer, Infotec, Ethiopia

Marc Mortier, Vice President, Middle East and Africa, Siemens AG

Assane Diallo, Regional Project Coordinator, INDAFTEL, International Telecommunication Union

Jacques Rostenne, Perwit, Canada

Andile Ngcaba, Director-General, Department of Communications, South Africa

4. Knowledge, education and learning to strengthen the information economy

Presentation, panel and moderated discussion.

Chair: Paulos Nyirenda, National Coordinator, National Research Council of Malawi

Presenter: Clement Dzidonu, Chief Executive Officer, INIIT, Ghana

Panel:

Adei Danish, Managing Director, Standard Data, Egypt

Ken Lohento, President, ORIDEV, Benin

Mactar Seck, National Industrial Council, Senegal

Prof. Olalere Ajayi, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

In the session on *indicators*, various indicators and benchmarks for setting goals and measuring progress in Africa were presented. The number of lines had to be supplemented with indications on where these lines were located, how they were being used and by whom. Affordability, reliability, sustainability, quality of services, urban/rural access and availability through public institutions were more relevant to Africa. Progress measures should move from the internationally proposed benchmarks toward the country's own benchmarks. Many indicators such as teledensity, which stressed individual access and which worked well in Western economies, did not apply well in Africa because access in Africa was not as individually based as in the West but was more institution based, with community access through public institutions, telecentres, community centres, schools, libraries, post offices, clinics and NGOs.

Development indicators relevant to Africa included degree of public policy development and degree of liberalization or regulation. Design and evaluation indicators measured success and failure in terms of technical performance, number of users, types of users and socio-economic benefits. Level of privatisation, involvement of the private sector and the existence of public/private partnerships for ICT development were also relevant indicators in Africa.

The usefulness of census data and Geo-Information Systems (GIS) in planning telecentre projects as part of integrated rural development was detailed. Major national mapping and household surveys were tools to plan and select locations, to pinpoint areas where the service was in demand and where people

could afford to use it. Sustainability was seriously affected if telecentres were located in areas that did not use them or could not afford them. High tariffs charged by tax-hungry governments discouraged rather than promoted access, and pricing of installation and usage was an indicator that ranked high in the African context, as was the regulatory environment and the degree of liberalization.

Among the observations at this session were:

- The need to put in place mechanisms and organizational structures to gather information on the information economy;
- African governments need reliable statistical indicators to facilitate the process of planning the information economy and monitoring its impact and performance;
- Local content development and material in different languages is important for the growth of the African information society;
- There is a great need to focus on goals such as universal access before universal service, and to recognize the difference between African countries in areas such as community usage of telephones and televisions;
- Priority should be given to infrastructure development in rural areas and focus given to access at schools and educational organizations.

The session on stimulating *the growth of the African information economy* noted the importance of analysing policies and approaches with regard to globalization and the information economy. The example of the South African Electronic Commerce Debate was presented, stressing the importance of the consultative process and describing progress towards a Green Paper. The experience was described of presenting e-commerce 500 km from Dakar to a group of largely illiterate farmers, who showed surprising insight into the potential for e-commerce for provide pricing information.

It was pointed out that for Africa to join the information economy, it needed to:

- Combine economies of scale with competition;
- Encourage subregional cooperation with the development of subregional centres of excellence;
- Establish stable frameworks for investment;
- Make its case in international forums for equitable participation in globalization;

The following issues were noted:

- The need to establish a mechanism for cooperation and coordination in the area of electronic commerce among African countries (noting the crucial role of African governments, the private sector and the regional economic communities);
- Limited awareness at all levels in Africa of the relevance of ICTs compounded by language barriers, lack of skilled personnel, and high illiteracy rates;
- The need for African countries to define their priorities and deal with urgent issues such as the brain drain by focusing on skills development and the role of the private sector in professional training;
- The need for donor support to scientific and technological training in Africa;
- The ever growing gap between Africa and the rest of the world in information economy development;
- The need for cooperative and subregional approaches to increase Africa's competitiveness;
- While there is a need for legal frameworks to ensure security and to protect privacy and intellectual property, care must be taken not to over-regulate; and

- Governments must create the enabling environment for private sector participation in the information economy.

Among the issues emerging from *Creating information industries in Africa* the session noted:

- In human resource development, African countries need to transform their educational delivery systems to accommodate the new educational paradigms made possible by these technologies; and
- African governments can solicit the private sector and NGO community to assist them in this endeavour.

Breakout sessions on theme 2:

ICTs for improved governance

1. Improving understanding between ICT experts and government managers

Alternative approaches to resolving the gap in ICT knowledge and providing decision support; panel and moderated discussion

Chair: Bhavya Lal, Abt Associates, U.S.A

Panel:

Alpha Mohamed Kallo, Assistant to the Minister, Ministry of Economics and Finance, Guinea

Norwood Langley, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Planning, Liberia

Venancio Massingue, Vice Rector, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique

Raafat Radwan, Chairman, Information Decision Support Center, Egypt

2. Facilitating citizen participation in the governance process through the use of ICTs: national case studies

Chair: Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECA

Presentations:

Urban information on the Internet, Dakar—Mamadou Gaye, Director, SIUP, Senegal

National information policy process in Mozambique—Salomao Manhica, Prime Minister's Office, Mozambique

Global vision for planning sectoral development, Najat Rochdi, Advisor to the Minister of Post and Information Technologies, Morocco

Parliamentary network on new technologies—Mamadou Diop, Network President, Senegal

3. Lessons learned in ICT applications in governance

Panel to discuss lessons learned on design and implementation of ICTs in the environment, agriculture, trade and public administration sectors

Chair: Dominique Hounkonnou, Benin

Presentations:

The Environmental Information and Management System on Internet (SISEI), Benin—Sylvain Adokpo-Migan, Chief, SISEI, Benin

Trade Point, Senegal—Ibrahima Diagne, Director

Information support for agricultural research in Ghana, GAINS – Clement Entsua-Mensah, Director, INSTI, CSIR, Ghana

4. The challenge and opportunities of ICTs in the health sector

Health information and communication, new technologies for health education, medical informatics, telemedicine, and impact on costs.

Chair: Lishan Adam, ECA

Presentations:

Health information and communications: challenges and opportunities (HealthNet)—Leela McCullough, Information Director, SatelLife, USA

Medical informatics for Africa—Hamish Fraser, New England Medical Centre, USA

Effects of ICTs on maternal health in Uganda—Maria Musoke, Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, U.K

Health Informatics Project: Cooperation between Nigeria and Finland—H. A. Soriyan

The main objective of the sessions on this theme was to examine current issues facing African countries in adapting ICTs to enhance the process through which institutions, businesses and citizen groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences.

Discussions noted that ICTs could be used:

- As a means towards poverty reduction by creating a more skilled workforce, providing basic human needs by improving the quality of healthcare;
- To provide educational opportunities, planning for basic service delivery and improving agricultural productivity and commerce;
- To improve public administration and enhance democratization through informed decision making, with particular attention to the information needs of new parliamentarians in many countries;
- As a means to facilitate better post-conflict reconstruction and administration; and
- To revitalize civic institutions, enhance public debate and promote interaction between government and citizens.

Successes and failures around the world and in Africa with respect to using ICTs in a variety of governance-related areas were taken into account. Ghana's efforts to apply ICTs to reducing poverty and improving governance were pointed out as a success story.

An urban information system allows free Internet access to people in a Dakar neighbourhood, with special services that make it easier for residents to communicate with local government agencies. It also generates local content. Another programme using ICTs to improve governance also originated in Dakar. Designed to improve the quality of parliamentary debate on ICT policy, it educated members of the Senegalese Parliament about the implications of ICT for development and opened possibilities for members of parliament to access information on other subjects. The importance of creating awareness about ICT policies among the elected representatives of the people was underscored.

Additionally, members of parliaments in different African countries communicating with each other electronically provided a major opportunity to further regional cooperation and promote African unity. Mozambique's process to develop a national information strategy was described. Throughout the emphasis was on the strategy belonging not simply to the Government but to all citizens of the country.

Discussions centered on the need to:

- Develop applications and management systems that are geared toward the management of distance learning programmes, health and agriculture;
- Since health needs were greatest in rural areas, it was urgent to develop ICT applications that facilitate primary health care, with particular attention to indigenous knowledge that could be captured and disseminated using the new technologies; and
- Develop more pilot projects in the identified areas.

It was pointed out that ICTs are not an end in itself. Rather, they are means and tools that offer opportunities to improve governance, communication and management.

Breakout sessions on Theme 3:

Strengthening Africa's Information Infrastructure

1. ***Policy and regulatory changes to accelerate the extension of infrastructure:***
Workshop for in-depth discussion of key elements in the theme paper

Co-chairs:

Brahima Sanou, Representative, ITU, Ethiopia

Kerry McNamara, World Bank Institute

2. ***Investment and financing:***
Workshop for in-depth discussion of key elements in the theme paper

Chair: Muriuki Mureithi, Summit Strategies, Kenya

3. ***Capacity building and human resource development to extend rollout and use of infrastructure***

Chair: Gerald Mpiysi, Director, Information Systems, Office of the Vice President, Rwanda

Presenter: Nii Quaynor, Managing Director, Network Computer Systems, Ltd., Ghana

Panel:

Steve Mworio, Computer Corporation of Tanzania

Robin Mansell, University of Sussex, United Kingdom

Chris Slade, Vice President, Public and Industry Sector Development, Oracle

Tina James, South Africa Information Technology Industry Strategy

4. Internet governance and new mechanisms for managing Africa's information infrastructure

Chair: Tarik Kamel, Internet Society of Egypt

Presenter: Pierre Dandjinou, United Nations Development Programme, Benin

The infrastructure breakout sessions discussed policy and regulation, financing infrastructure development, capacity building and human resource development, Internet governance and new mechanisms for managing African's information infrastructure. They noted that strategic choices were needed on privatization and liberalization: how and when they should take place, not whether.

On policy and regulation, the following was noted:

- The general role of government is to create the right environment for effective infrastructure investment and deployment in the national interest;
- Policy regulation should be tailored to the country's specific needs and situations;
- An independent regulator is essential, though it might remain part of government.
- To have effective policy and regulation in place before privatization and liberalization, it is important to build the capacity of governments and regulators to negotiate effectively with investors and others and ensure that technologies proposed by investors are appropriate for all, not just for investors.

It was proposed that:

- There should be exchanges of experience and practices in setting up effective regulatory regimes within Africa, and south-to-south (Asia, Latin America) and possibly north-to-south (between Europe and the USA and Africa);
- There should be harmonization of regulation in a number of areas to assist trans-regional initiatives such as RASCOM, as well as to attract capital;
- The Southern Africa Development Conference regulatory model might be a useful starting point.

On financing infrastructure development, governments were urged to establish investment funds at the national regional and subregional levels as follows:

- Use investment funds to subsidize or support rural service;
- Create an African Investment Bank that grants loans to private sector investors with capital on reasonable terms;
- Invest in human capacity to build, operate, maintain and use the infrastructure and services;
- Develop indigenous skills to adapt, install, and customize networks to the needs and priorities of rural users; and
- Focus investment to ensure that Africa is a producer and not just a user of ICT.

On capacity building and human resource development, the main issue highlighted was the lack of human resources in ICT. To remedy this, participants focused on the need to raise awareness of this at all levels of decision-makers and users, to increase literacy and general awareness and to mobilize existing institutions that already have skilled individuals.

On Internet governance and new mechanisms for managing African's information infrastructure, the key strategic issue was for Africans to participate in all levels of Internet governance. It was suggested that Africans in the Diaspora could play a key role in this. The following issues were raised:

- Internet governance is not only a technical issue, but an issue of core economic and social policy;
- Entrepreneurs should be involved in Internet governance issues; and
- Countries could buy (not rent) their Internet protocol (IP) addresses to prevent subsequent changes to telecommunications carriers disrupting Internet naming procedures.

Breakout sessions on Theme 4:

Democratizing Access to the information society

ICT support for primary and secondary education; school networking and distance-learning tools. Panel and moderated discussion: African cases of application of ICTs to education; exploration of conditions for successful partnerships

Chair: Wawa Ngege, Sustainable Development Network Programme Coordinator, Cameroon

Panel:

SchoolNet South Africa— Vis Naidoo, Department of Education, and Denis Brandjes, SchoolNet South Africa

Private sector contributions— Jean-Yves Besnier, Nortel Networks, France

SchoolNet Mozambique— Generosa Cossa

World Ghana— Samuel Eshun, Country Coordinator

Extending access: programmes, projects, and models

Chair: Aida Opoku-Mensah, Ford Foundation, Lagos

Panel:

Toiles d'Elles— Marie-Helene Mottin-Sylla, SYNFEV, Senegal

Integrated Regional Information Network— Ben Parker, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Case studies from gender and youth focus groups

Integrating new and old technologies to facilitate local exchange of communication and information

Chair: Venancio Massingue, University Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique

Panel:

Rural radio links in Mali— Jean-Pierre Ilboudo, Food and Agriculture Organization

ANAIS Network, West Africa— Amadou Top, OSIRIS, Senegal

Womensnet Community Radio— Sonja Boezak, Womensnet Information Coordinator, South Africa

Community applications

Panel presentations and discussion on different telecentre models

Chair: Gaston Zongo, Director, Acacia, International Development Research Centre, Canada

Presenters:

Rosslyn learning project (adult basic education)— Glen Jordan, South Africa

The cooperative approach— Marlee Norton, National Telephone Cooperative Association, USA

Telecentres: the Egyptian experience— Sherif Hashem, Cairo University, IDSC, Egypt

Discussions on this theme noted that the Information Age required a fundamental shift in thinking about the methodology of education and especially its delivery systems. Emphasis was placed on lifelong learning and distance education that could bring high-quality education anywhere. Particular emphasis was placed on the growing school networking movement in Africa. This was promoting Internet-related activities in classrooms and school libraries as a way to build knowledge societies based on new ways of learning and was helping African children to become both consumers and producers of information content. One breakout session focused on schoolnets developing in several countries and on the World Bank WorldLinks programme. The involvement of the private sector in these efforts was noted.

In extending access, participants heard examples of electronic information networks with content targeted at francophone women in Africa, of United Nations efforts to "*focus on the forgotten*" by bringing humanitarian and relief information to those who were most affected by it and of efforts to develop websites for African children and to encourage contacts and collaboration among the youth worldwide. Several innovative examples were presented of linking old technologies with the new to maximize information dissemination and exchange and to reach people in their cultural and linguistic contexts.

Various models of community-based multipurpose centres (telecentres) were analysed with a view to showcasing sustainable management models. Discussions focused on a number of difficulties in actualizing partnership frameworks to run telecentres. Infrastructural challenges in rural centres were pointed out, with emphasis placed on innovative intermediate and or appropriate technologies to circumvent the lack of electricity and telephone lines.

The need to ensure community ownership was underscored, as was the importance of developing applications to meet community needs. Throughout, the need for affordable public access to information services was noted, as well as the need for competent technological support for users and for an enabling environment to encourage creation of local content.

Strategies for Policy Research and Action: A Role for African Think Tanks

Convened by the World Bank Institute

Chair: Joseph Abbey, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Analysis, Ghana

Panel:

Shola Taylor, African Telecommunications Policy Think Tank, UK

Banji Oyeyinka, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Nigeria

Sharif Kemal, Director, Regional Information Technology Institute, Egypt

The panel of participants from leading African policy research and analysis institutions aimed to discuss the emergence of ICTs as they have affected the institutional role in the development process. It also

sought to explore key areas for future programme activity. The panel focused attention on specific needs for policy analysis and advice and on the potential for partnerships with government, NGOs and the private sector.

The panel highlighted a number of initiatives that brought African Think Tanks together through e-mail discussions and web dissemination of courses, programmes, tools and models for use by the public and by policymakers. The group addressed research and educational collaboration across Africa. They dealt with topics such as the need for identification of think tanks, capacity building (especially using the Internet), a priority research agenda, networking and distance learning. They emphasized the need to develop institutional capacity to train policymakers, analysts and researchers on the role and use of ICTs in development. The overwhelming challenge of sifting through the numerous types of technologies and information available on the Internet was noted as well as the need to increase the capacity of researchers and those involved in Think Tanks to use ICTs effectively.

Among the key activities that participants proposed for Think Tanks were:

- Increase appropriate and timely advice to governments involved in the liberalization process;
- Provide advice to governments on making informed decisions in WTO negotiations;
- Increase interaction among networks across the continent and establish a networking mechanism for information exchange and cooperation among African community telecentre operators and practitioners;
- Develop qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure ICT impact on development;
- Assess the technological capabilities of countries (ITU said that it had a project underway to create an inventory of technology in Africa); and
- Help open up government to greater popular participation by using ICTs to alert the public about key policy debates

Workshop on introducing electronic commerce to small business

Facilitator:

Jacques Rostenne, Perwit, Canada

Jacques Rostenne of Perwit, Canada facilitated this workshop, stimulating participants with the challenge of finding practical ways to use the web from Africa to make money. E-commerce was defined as electronic trading of services and products on the web.

He offered concrete suggestions on what African entrepreneurs could do immediately despite inadequate infrastructure and lack of electronic banking and credit card facilities. Mr. Rostenne suggested that African start-ups could market products and services especially to the African Diaspora market and could develop teleservices. He pointed out that the Diaspora market might be easier to attract, more trusting and appreciative, as its members knew the situation prevailing in Africa. The example of www.ethiogift.com was noted. The company had built a viable business e-trading in traditional products to the Ethiopian Diaspora.

Among possibilities for teleservice development he noted the preparation of architectural plans and support services, transcription of manuscripts, editing, translation and accounting and the establishment of call centres. He urged participants to start immediately before someone else implemented their ideas.

Poster sessions:

Poster sessions allowed a fixed time and space for individual exhibitors to interact with participants on their products and services. Among the poster sessions were:

African Content on the Internet:

- An overview of African Internet sites
- UNESCO's Top 50
- Projects in support of content creation
- Indigenous knowledge
- Womensnet website
- African electronic mailing lists

Applications

- School networking
- Tele-health
- Small business support

Panel on ICTs and the media

Chair: Peter daCosta, Senior Communication Adviser, ECA, Ethiopia

Panel:

James Deane, Director, Panos Institute, UK

Bruce Girard, comunica.org, The Netherlands

Rashied Galant, Media Institute for Southern Africa, Namibia

Olufemi Ajayi, UNESCO, Nigeria

The panel of experts examined how media integration with ICTs could promote a more diverse and pluralist media environment and how conventional media could operate as a gateway to the Internet for people who do not have access.

The session focused on sharing experiences on the use of ICTs by the media. It was noted that the media finds itself within the context of a global media industry that is shaping media all over the world. African media struggles to survive in the face of media conglomerates that shape the content that is further rebroadcast or repackaged for national audiences. The result of this domination is decreased local content and analysis.

Presentations focused on the threat of the global media context, the advantages of using a combination of technologies (Internet, e-mail and broadcasting among others), the dilemma faced by traditional forms of media in the face of the convergence of new technologies and the use of low-cost technologies for wide dissemination of daily development analysis. Examples were drawn from Ecuador (Radio Pulsar), Nigerian Print Media and Sabanews, a radio news product in Zimbabwe.

Discussions noted that:

- The threat currently faced by the decreasing local content should be reversed by building the capacity of the media to generate, produce and disseminate local information;
- The advent of new technologies poses no threat to print or broadcast media because convergence of different forms of media helps to disseminate to different audiences;
- In the face of constant struggles with government control over the right to communicate, the media must engage in self-regulation; and
- Journalists should negotiate better remuneration terms in light of the sales generated through rebroadcast.

Workshop on planning resources for the success of ICT investments

Moderator: Bhavya Lal, Abt Associates Inc.

Presenter: Elizabeth Arriaza, Abt Associates Inc.

Panel:

Sherif Hashem, Information Decision Support Centre, Egypt and Cairo University

David Pulkol, Deputy Director UNICEF Nairobi

The objectives of the workshop were to discuss how decisions on selecting and funding ICT projects are made and how they can be made better, as well as to present tools that could help policymakers make more rational decisions.

The participants agreed that most decisions were generally made in an *ad hoc* manner. The value of having information to justify decisions was underscored. The case of the use of decision support tools in Egypt was presented.

Some of the constraints in decision-making in government were described:

- Complex governance environment, including competing priorities, the risk-averse nature of politicians, divided authority over decisions, multiple stakeholders including lobbies and special-interest groups, limitations of annual budgeting processes and highly regulated procurement processes;
- A plethora of projects vs. paucity of funds; and
- Technical complexities that sometimes get lost in the final assessment due lack of technical expertise among decision-makers

The moderator suggested that an analytical, evidence-based framework could help to align ICT decisions with strategic priorities, make decision-making more transparent and accountable, justify decisions to constituents, make decisions fair and equitable and monitor ongoing projects.

Participants concluded that there is great need for more and better organized information for policymakers, on which to base decisions and that there is value to using computer-based decision support tools. Participants felt that Africans must try to look elsewhere to see what has been done and adapt it to the African context. Models must be kept as simple as possible, although it was important to consider capacity building and financing issues. They also emphasized that it is important to keep the greater context of decision-making processes in mind. Decision Support Systems could be a part of the picture but were not the entire solution. Lack of information alone should not prevent informed decisions from being made, but rather encourage policymakers to begin collecting useful information.

Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA): vision and mission

Sue Rhee, Coordinator, ITCA, ECA

During the Forum in Addis Ababa, ECA launched the Information Technology Centre for Africa, with three objectives. First, the ITCA would promote awareness of ICTs as a competitive necessity for Africa's well being through an exhibition centre that would run as a partnership between ECA and the private sector, to display a variety of information and communication technologies that could accelerate African development.

Second, TCA would also be an on-site learning facility for training managers and others in ICT-related applications. The Training Centre would provide a series of workshops and seminars to increase awareness of the importance of ICT and to teach technical skills.

The third component of ITCA was a Service Centre that would facilitate virtual distance education programmes offered in partnership with other institutions for targeted critical beneficiary groups. ITCA aimed to support African countries in meeting the challenges of the Information Age through exploitation of ICTs to accelerate economic and social development. More information on ITCA is available from its website: <http://www.un.org/Depts/eca/tca>.

VI. Interim Assessment from Participants

Feedback and reflection from the focus and theme groups

Chair: Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECA

A unique dimension of the conference was the formation of "focus groups," addressing the needs of youth and gender, the private sector, the African Diaspora and academic think tanks. These focus groups brought groups of people together to discuss issues specific to their focus areas and to report to the conference. The gender and youth focus groups reported to plenary on their specific needs and on the challenges and opportunities that they had identified in the previous sessions. The African Diaspora focus group provided a first assessment of how best to strengthen links across regions. The groups representing the private sector and African think tanks reported their initial assessment of opportunities for stimulating African progress towards the Information Age.

Coordinators of the groups were:

Youth	Heba Ramzy, RITSEC, Egypt
Gender:	Anriette Esterhuysen, Association for Progressive Communication Women's Programme
Private Sector:	Derrick Cogburn, Global Information Infrastructure Commission and University of Michigan (USA)
African Diaspora:	Raymond Akwule, George Mason University (USA)
Think Tanks:	Joseph Abbey, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Analysis, Ghana

Gender Group

The Gender Group expressed its pleasure at being able to participate in the Forum, due to the importance of its theme. *Globalization and the Information Age* had the potential to be an important means for African women to improve their status and, at the same time, to further their participation in the economy and society. Thus, involvement in these issues was vital. The Group noted the under-representation in the numbers of women present at the Forum as well as on panels and in plenary session presentations.

It presented in-depth reflections on each of the four Forum sub-themes. They urged women's participation in information industries, especially e-commerce for small and medium scale enterprises. Overall, it felt that mastery of ICTs could greatly help to empower women. The need to educate girls and young women in the scientific and technical fields was underscored. Within governance, it reported that the gender aspect of citizenship required more examination. Telehealth initiatives were thought to be productive areas for pursuit, as they could greatly improve women's health. It was noted that women's concerns should be a part of ITC infrastructure development, particularly in the areas of human resource development, investment, content development and policy. The Group suggested that ICT tools such as discussion lists should be used to continue the work of the focus groups in networks after the Forum.

Youth Group

The youth group largely consisted of young people from all over Africa, who were participating in the Forum. This Group underlined the importance to attend to the needs and listen to the perspectives of the largest proportion of Africa's population and tomorrow's leaders.

The Youth Group stressed its understanding of the impact that ICTs have on every aspect of life. It noted that people's readiness to change and adapt to new technologies would determine the rate and nature of the impact. Thus, the youth's dynamism and openness to change made them particularly apt to accept and profit from ICTs. It was noted that few of the presentations made thus far at the Forum had stressed the role that youth could and would play in moving Africa into the Information Age. Numerous projects underway in the region that focused on youth were outlined. The detrimental impact of the lack of information on African youth was underlined, for example, ignorance of health issues, drugs and crime, and the importance of ICTs in overcoming this lack of information. The youth felt that new technologies could be used to unleash creativity and innovation among young people to prepare them for critical roles in global society. They urged more ICT training for young people and the development of Internet portals with strategic information that youth needed. They also stressed the need for collaboration among African youth to exchange ideas and experiences and to help them develop the analytical skills they would need for the knowledge societies of the twenty-first century.

The Group felt that ICTs and the Internet could promote collaborative projects through youth networking. For the future, they looked to the Internet for information, especially career information, and information that young people could use to participate actively in governance and business. Employment opportunities for young people in information services and industries should also be fostered.

African Diaspora Group

The group explained that it defined and comprised two types of African Diaspora:

- The neo-Diaspora of new emigrants from Africa with one foot in Africa and the other outside the continent; and
- The old Diaspora of African population groups originating from Africa largely through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and who are now African-Americans, West Indians from the Caribbean, Latin Americans, Europeans, etc.

The Group noted that the challenge to the Diaspora was to transform the brain drain facing Africa into a "brain gain", and this was possible because of the unique opportunity offered by ICTs. As ICTs offer unprecedented solutions to time and distance constraints, the Diaspora could "come home" through cyberspace.

The Group suggested the following ways in which the Diaspora formed "*capital*":

- **Social capital:** Sharing the same vision with Africans residing on the continent, the Diaspora was aware of the socio-economic conditions of other Africans and was ready to support the continent.
- **Capital investment:** Opportunities existed for the Diaspora to be the clients and facilitators of African e-commerce and also to invest in ICT services at the community level, particularly through telecentres, to democratize access and promote two-way communication between the Diaspora and Africa.
- **Intellectual capital:** Exchange of information and know-how between the Diaspora and the continent would be a two-way process, whereby the Diaspora keeps in touch with its origins and the continent gets expert advice and services from the Diaspora. The Diaspora should be

informed of specific investment opportunities, and governments should put in place relevant policies and suitable enabling environments. Even the physical return of Diaspora individuals and groups should be envisaged, to supplement existing skills in African countries.

- **Political capital:** The Diaspora could ensure that African interests are well represented in emigration countries, for example, through the USA-based National Summit on Africa conference and process. Furthermore, African interests could be supported by the Diaspora in such forums as World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, and Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) meetings.

Private Sector Group

The Private Sector Group comprised members from the international private sector, the African formal private sector, and African micro, small- and medium-scale and informal sector enterprises. They focused on collaboration within the private sector, global infrastructure development in the region, electronic commerce and its potential for African businesses, and education, learning and training to develop a knowledgeable work force.

The Group was particularly concerned about the need for the African private sector to engage in dialogue with the public sector, national, regionally and globally. It noted that it would like to see an African private sector network.

It supported the advent of a competitive telecommunications environment and telecommunications regulatory reform. They wanted to see sources of venture capital for African businesses, as well as flexibility in African Development Bank and International Finance Corporation requirements for private sector financing.

Think Tank Group

The representatives of the Think Tanks felt that they could play a significant role in stimulating African progress towards the Information Age. ICTs could help them do their work more cost effectively. They could use the Internet to identify international expertise, particularly from the African Diaspora, as well as distance learning to access material not available locally. A priority research agenda should include development of qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure ICT impact on development and identification of the role and areas in which State participation could contribute to the development and use of ICTs. They felt that networking among Think Tanks would help to promote regional cooperation and collaboration among African countries. They also felt that they could contribute to improved governance in Africa by using ICTs to alert the public about key policy debates.

The rapporteurs from the theme areas reported to the session on key opportunities and constraints identified in the initial presentations, debates and group discussions. Their reports have been reflected in the reports on theme presentations and breakout sessions by theme (above).

Exploring the Way Forward: National and Subregional Scenarios

National information and communication policies, plans and infrastructure: shaping the African information society

This panel assessed progress in planning national information and communication infrastructure (NICI) plans, policies and strategies to address national development needs.

Chair: H.E. James Jonah, Minister of Finance, Development and Economic Planning, Sierra Leone

Presenters:

Makane Faye, Regional Advisor, ECA

Lishan Adam, Regional Advisor, ECA

Alioune Camara, Programme Officer, International Development Research Centre

Panel:

Joachim Tankoano, Office of the Prime Minister, Burkina Faso

H.E. Ben Amathila, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Namibia

H.E. Jerry Gana, Minister of Cooperation and Integration, Nigeria

Gaston Bushayija, National Bank of Rwanda

ECA stressed that its work on NICIs emanated from the African Information Society Initiative of the ECA Conference of Ministers.¹⁰ ECA and IDRC had worked with 22 African countries to develop ICT plans. Information policy development was an iterative process that involved planning, implementation and evaluation, driven by national priorities and including the participation of all stakeholders. The State had a key role in developing and implementing NICIs. The key challenge was the ability of governments to mobilize resources both through integration of ICT plans into national development priorities and through presentation of innovative projects to development aid agencies. Although NICIs appeared to focus on infrastructure, it was stressed that the societal dimension, - human resource development, equitable access and a focus on quality of life-, was equally if not more important.

Burkina Faso explained that its plan, which it has been working on for three years, faced such national challenges as resource limitations, poverty and declining social services in health and education. The plan was addressing these challenges by improving access to communications by rural people, establishing community communication centres, creating a national Internet backbone and improving ICT applications in administration for better governance. Human resource development was a key element of the plan.

Namibia has organized two workshops on the NICI process. The main areas included a national ICT policy, a national ICT resource centre, deployment of telecentres and improving human resource capacity. The Plan has been endorsed by Namibia's Parliament. Among its overall aims were an integrated policy by 2001 and telecentres in every region by 2004.

Nigeria reported that it had launched its National Communication Policy in October 1999. Implementation of the policy would increase telephone service from one to four million lines, end the public telecommunications monopoly, develop information content and extend services to rural areas. It focused on the creation of an enabling environment to stimulate private sector investment. Nigeria was also planning to develop an integrated national information system, bringing together various existing databanks.

Rwanda began its national information and communication strategy in 1998, with support provided by ECA and the United States Agency for International Development. In Rwanda, there has been sustained high-level support for the NICI process. Among its national goals was the use of ICTs to modernize government. Senegal described a development strategy that included Multipurpose Community Centres. It called for an African forum on e-commerce.

¹⁰ This presentation was based on Forum document E/ECA/ADF/99/8, "The Process of Developing National Information and Communications Infrastructure (NICI) in Africa" and is supported by E/ECA/ADF99/1, "African Country Profiles: National Information and Communication Infrastructure." Both are available at <http://www.bellatnet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm>

The Government of Japan commended ECA for its work in this area and indicated that it had been providing resources to ECA's trust fund since 1994. It was prepared to discuss financial commitment for application of ICTs in the Africa region.

Among the points that arose from the discussion were:

- The need for the exchange of best practices in planning, design and implementation of NICIs throughout Africa, to reduce duplication of efforts. Such exchange could also promote regional integration.
- The need for an information base on NICI development in Africa that gathers, analyses and disseminates information on strategies, plans, progress, challenges and insights into NICI development.
- The importance of sectoral application of ICTs in national information and communication infrastructure development, with particular emphasis on health, education and electronic commerce. The organization of forums on these applications was urged.
- Implementation of national plans should entail innovative projects for which donor and private sector funding is needed.
- National information and communication infrastructure plans should build in research and development and evaluation components.
- The need for mobilization of resources for implementation of NICI plans. ECA in collaboration with development aid agencies could facilitate this by establishing a multilateral ICT fund for Africa. Such a fund should also involve the private sector, including the hardware and software manufacturers.
- African countries that have not initiated NICI plans should start the process in the year 2000.

Role of development agencies and the private sector in the NICI process: The Response from Donors

Development agencies responded through this panel and outlined their own perspectives and opportunities for technical and financial support.

Chair: Aida Opoku-Mensah, Ford Foundation

Panel:

Mohammed Muhsin, The World Bank

Keith Brown, Deputy Administrator, USAID

Gaston Zongo, IDRC

Eva Lokko, UNDP

David Woolnough, DIFD

Amos Tincani, European Union

David Balson, Bellanet International

The donor community at ADF showed a tremendous amount of good will and promised continued support for ICT-related projects and programmes. Donors made brief presentations on ICT projects they have supported, ranging from providing basic connectivity, building capacity around e-commerce and provision of advice to governments in WTO negotiations. They were also interested in ICTs for development projects that considered issues such as poverty alleviation and private sector development.

With respect to NICI plans, the donors assured the session that they would continue to fund projects and programmes, so long as they were demand-driven. Partnership with the private sector was underscored, as was the importance of including a human resource capacity component in the national plans.

Among the specific presentations:

The World Bank noted that it had provided a billion dollars for information technology-related projects, \$100-200 million of which had gone to Africa. Projects included the Global Distance Learning Project, the African Virtual University and WorldLinks. They stressed the need for capacity building among policy-makers.

USAID said Africans must develop national ICT plans which reflect their own challenges and priorities rather than relying on outside solutions. They stressed the need for regional co-operation and noted that they were promoting e-commerce in the SADC region where several e-commerce partnerships between the USA and African countries have been established. IDRC described the Acacia Project, that focuses on transforming poor communities through utilization of ITCs.

The European Commission said that it had ICT funding and support available but had not yet received any requests for such help from African countries. If African countries wished to secure EU funding in this area, they needed to make it a stated priority. EU noted that it had helped several countries to liberalize telecommunications and that it was ready to support NGOs to undertake ICT training in Africa and to establish telecentres.

UNDP noted that its African Internet Initiative now covered 15 sub-Saharan countries. It was ready to support the establishment of gateways, regional and subregional hubs to bring down the cost of connectivity in the region, as well as the establishment of points of presence and a whole range of pilot projects.

The session underscored the following:

- The need to establish independent regulators and to ensure that plans are complemented by inter-regional synergies;
- Efforts should be increased to ensure that programmes cut across sectoral ministries;
- There is still a great deal of sensitization needed to bring the donor community to full awareness of the importance of Africa entering the Information Age;
- The importance of learning from best practices to avoid repeating errors; and
- The donor community should coordinate its activities better in order to optimize and maximize the potential for ICT growth in Africa.

Private sector panel: assessment of the potential for joint action on the national plans and programmes

Chair: Derrick Cogburn

Panel:

Alain Oumar Ba, CompuServe-Gabon

Thomas Chesney, Sun Microsystems

Mustapha Hlil, Oracle Corporation

Teodros Lemma, WorldSpace Corporation

Nii Quaynor, National Computer Systems, Ghana

Jacques Rostenne, Perwit International

Erin Walsh, Cisco Systems

Issues covered in this session included:

- Flexible financing systems for the private sector;
- The role of the private sector in NICI development;
- Creating employment opportunities in the information economy;
- Private sector consortia for funding ICTs; and
- Global promotion of the knowledge economy through private sector initiatives

The Private Sector Panel stressed the need to create an enabling environment for the involvement of the private sector in ICT planning. The private sector could contribute its expertise to the planning process. The panel recommended the creation of a fund to facilitate NICI development. WorldSpace said that it was establishing a project-funding group. Representatives from Cisco, Sun and Oracle reported on their training and education initiatives across Africa and elsewhere in the world. In discussion, it was suggested that the private sector should contribute to generic skills training in ICTs. Participants felt that the multinational private sector should be involved not only in pilot projects but also in setting up cutting-edge technology laboratories on ICTs in Africa.

Address by H.E. President of the Republic of Mali Alpha Oumar Konaré

Introduced to the Forum by the ECA Executive Secretary, and briefed on the previous day's activities and recommendations by Dr. James Jonah, Minister of Finance, Development and Economic Planning of Sierra Leone, the President of the Republic of Mali, H.E. Alpha Oumar Konaré, expressed his pleasure at hearing such fruitful discussions on highly technical issues. He acknowledged that the information revolution was of enormous importance to Africa's development.

President Konaré stressed the usefulness of ICTs as an information gateway into the future, with specific national and sectoral impact in such areas as information for enhanced decision making, public interaction with policymakers, democratization and decentralization, health care, educational programmes, and new opportunities and modalities in trade and commerce. He nonetheless warned the Forum that ICTs used externally derived models that needed adaptation to best serve Africa's information needs and cultural realities. He advised that efforts should be made to create models suitable for African culture and capacity. Referring to the enormous dilemma facing African planners and decision makers in promoting costly ICT availability and use, he pointed out that in Mali it might take the equivalent of eight years' salary to buy a computer, an amount that could send 20 or more children to school.

Affirming, that Africa had to be a part of the changes fostered by the new Information Age, President Konaré urged that Africans should not passively undergo the transition, but should contribute actively and play their part. They should use ICTs to advance African cultural pride and civilization which stressed respect for nature and the environment, ethical behaviour, consensus seeking, respect for elders and solidarity with neighbours in a collective quest for survival and sustainable development.

The Malian Head of State underscored that development should not be reduced to economic growth alone, but should also promote cultural integrity and solidarity, social justice and humanism. ICTs should be developed and used with specific benefits for the people in mind, incorporating indigenous knowledge

and know how. ICTs should not confuse the people, especially the youth, by eroding their cultural identity and replacing it with lifestyles of waste, excessive consumption, and lack of moral and spiritual values. He said that the knowledge base inherited from colonialism offered too much profit seeking and separation from the spiritual. Sometimes, it had also strangled local know how and initiative and replaced it with cultural mimicry.

President Konaré also stressed the need for true partnership with developed countries and donor agencies to ensure that Africa did not fall too far behind, as there could literally be no globalization without Africa's presence. Partners should understand this and help to find modalities to secure what was needed. Collaboration between African countries was also necessary, as this would share expertise, reduce costs and shorten time and distance. Community telecentres were effective in extending popular access but technical aspects such as equipment maintenance needed more attention. In the world of education, he noted that teachers had to be trained to use ICTs in the classroom and be provided with the required equipment. Emphasizing the regional role of ICTs, he noted that African regional integration was an "*edifice not yet constructed*", and ICTs could help to speed up the process through communication and pooling of intellectual, technical and information resources.

ICTs could be a source of rehabilitation of African people and culture, sparking regeneration - or they could be a *recipe for confusion*. He asserted that there could be no development if culture and tradition were ignored or taken out of the picture, to the detriment of future generations. ICTs should help to solve problems more efficiently, channelling positive energy into using them with honour, dignity and integrity as human beings, as well as with accountability to future generations.

President Konaré informed the Forum of the Bamako 2000 Conference that he was organizing in February 2000 on ICT usage, where a critical assessment would be made of the needs, roles of various actors, concrete measures and projects, including the enhanced participation of women. He anticipated a Bamako Declaration that would guide policy development and planning. He also stressed that follow up on these issues would be possible at the Global Knowledge II Conference to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in March 2000.

Information marketplace

The information marketplace was an open space where countries, particularly those developing NICI plans, worked in groups to explore opportunities for support in discussion with regional organizations, donors and the private sector. Some 80 persons attended. Participants expressed their appreciation to ECA and IDRC for their assistance to African member States in developing these plans and recommended that NICI plans become an integral part of the overall ICT policy process of African countries. ECA and IDRC had been working with only some 22 countries and participants requested that the number be expanded so that more countries could join in.

In addition to the donor assistance pledged to support this process at the ADF, participants requested ECA to assist them in resource mobilization for both the development of plans and for their implementation. They also suggested the establishment of a regional start up fund to assist African countries in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating ICT plans and policies.

Use and development of information and communication technologies to promote learning, teaching, and research in African universities

This panel featured presentations and discussion on development of ICTs and applications at the tertiary level in Africa to facilitate scientific research and networking, provide support to students and strengthen administration.

Chair: Professor Raymond Akwule, George Mason University, USA

Panel:

Stanley Moyo, University of Zimbabwe

J.M. Mwenechanya, Mclink Consultancy, Zambia

Venancio Massingue, Vice Rector, University Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique

Olalere Ajayi, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

Fulvio Postogna, International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste

African universities needed information technology to survive, said Prof. Olalere Ajayi of Nigeria's Obafemi Awolowo University and Chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee to the Forum. Hardware costs dropped by half, he noted, when students learned to assemble computers.

Universities in Africa were critical to the information revolution and the information revolution was critical to universities for the following reasons:

- The ICT revolution is knowledge based. Sustaining ICTs in Africa required the involvement of universities. Universities would train the personnel to implement and maintain ICTs in all sectors.
- ICT can help alleviate the problems of ever-declining university resources by providing access to information and by allowing researchers to be in touch with one another via email and other ICT-mediated mechanisms.
- Distance education can improve the quality and reach of African universities at relatively low cost.

The experience of the African Virtual University (AVU) being implemented in 16 anglophone countries was presented. At the outset, AVU was focusing on computer science, computer engineering, and electrical engineering courses broadcast by live satellite transmission with interactivity possible through phone, fax, and e-mail.

It was noted that Obafemi Awolowo University of Nigeria is engaged in a pilot project using VSAT and Internet technologies with the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Italy to facilitate scientific communication and diminish the isolation of scientists in the south. Another project between the two institutions focuses on training trainers.

The process of and lessons learned from "wiring up" the University of Zambia (UNZA) was described. With funding from the Dutch Government, UNZA established a campus-wide fibre optic backbone with connections and Internet access to every building and office in the university. At the same time, with support from the World Bank, the university established Zambia's first Internet Service Provider—ZAMNET that has subsequently become a commercial company.

The session recommended the establishment of programmes of study in ICT policy and management at African universities and research institutions.

The lessons drawn at this session included:

- Linkages with institutions in more advanced countries can be used to good effect, but local information technology capacity is essential;
- ICT projects in universities must have a long-term perspective because universities change slowly;
- Institutional stability is essential for continuity and sustained progress; and
- Universities need effective strategies for continuous information technology development

Discussion focused on the following points:

- ICT-Scan (a project led by IDRC's Acacia initiative) wants to partner with African universities and research institutions on evaluation of ICT projects;
- The important role of libraries and ensuring their access to new technologies. Librarians need training so that they can help users access relevant materials from the Internet;
- The need for content on the Internet relevant to Africa;
- Three distance-learning initiatives were described from the floor—one in Egypt, which is a regional activity focusing on degree and non-degree programmes; one based in Ethiopia, to train 17,000 teachers regionally through distance education; and one in Senegal in the area of telemedicine; and
- The potential of assistance to universities from the African community living in the Diaspora. Presently this was coming from individuals as well as from associations of African intellectuals in the U.S.A and Europe.

The Chair concluded by saying that any university in Africa not fully connected to the Internet in the next two years should be closed down because it would no longer be able to satisfy the objective of its establishment.

Enabling Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE) to Access and Use E-Commerce

Chair and presenter: Katherine Ichoya, Women in Business, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Lusaka

Panel:

Gisele Yitamben, Association de soutien à la femme entrepreneur, Douala

William Mbonigaba, G-77 Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Kampala

Nigel Motts, IDRC, Johannesburg

Ida Wanendeya, Private Sector Foundation, Kampala

Rapporteur: Nigel Motts

The panel, convened by IDRC, represented chambers of commerce, business, research organizations, and development agencies. It defined e-commerce and discussed its problems and potential in the Africa region. The session heard presentations about sensitization of business women in West and Central Africa to the potential of e-commerce, about efforts to help businesses in Uganda enter e-commerce, about the difficulties in sensitizing associations of Chambers of Commerce to the new media and about successful, profitable telecentres in a transborder area of south eastern Africa. The discussion centred on certification problems, banking problems (lack of awareness of the banking sector of the requirements for e-commerce) and the need to develop business models for African MSEs. It was noted that the Government of Egypt is supporting the development of e-commerce. Participants urged the encouragement of African MSEs in e-commerce in value-added services and products, with an emphasis on the formation of MSEs into cooperatives to do e-business. The session underlined:

- The specific needs of businesses run by women;
- The need for an enabling environment that promotes the removal of barriers to MSE entry into e-commerce (e.g. in encryption and certificate services);
- ICTs are an enabler but not a substitute for traditional business practices;
- The need for coordination among African countries to develop an African position on e-commerce in WTO negotiations; and

- The need to build awareness among African decision makers on e-commerce.

The session adopted Biz2BizNet, a proposal support to e-commerce initiatives of MSEs in Africa. Such businesses could profit from using ICTs in the management of their businesses as well as using them to generate new economic activities and services.

VII. Defining the Way Forward: Recommendations and Conclusions

At the final session of ADF, K.Y.Amoako, Executive Secretary of ECA, reiterated that ADF was a process designed to deepen consensus building on a vital development challenge. The session featured the Rapporteurs of the theme and focus groups on the podium and opened with a moving presentation by the Youth Focus Group summing up their experiences and hopes.

Chair: Heba Ramzy of RITSEC, Egypt

Panel:

Sara Menker, Ethiopia
Dennis Brandjes, South Africa
Adama Sankhare, Senegal
Frank Mukama, Rwanda

Youth saw the need for an information society that would allow them increased use of ICTs, and said they were ready to grasp opportunities of the Information Age so that they could compete globally. The youth group identified a number of concerns they shared as the future working population and leaders in Africa. They wanted to use ICTs to build their knowledge base as well as to promote collaborative projects through youth networking. They were also very committed to creating African content, to which they felt they could bring the perspective of African culture.

They also hoped for employment opportunities for young people in information services and industries. They wanted the leaders present to listen to their ideas on what kind of education, including both technical and analytic skills, they needed to participate fully in the development of their countries and to hold their own amongst the youth of the world.

The SchoolNet programme in South Africa, the Mount Kenya Telecommunications Project, and Egypt's 21st Century Clubs were cited as illustrative examples of the types of ICT projects that appropriately involved the youth as managers and as users of the knowledge base demanded in the new millennium. During the course of the Forum the Youth Focus Group had developed a website and a discussion list, and they planned to stay in contact through e-mail.

In summary, the youth wanted"

- Access to ICTs for all youth in Africa;
- Local and regional content development;
- Youth forums (virtual and physical); and
- Establishing SchoolNet Africa as a continent-wide initiative

Floor interventions lauded the performance and presence of youth at the Forum, and endorsed their energy, enthusiasm and creativity. They were urged to remember their cultural heritage and responsibilities and not to succumb to the cultural disequilibrium that could arise with penetration of ICTs. The youth responded that change was unavoidable, but ICTs should be seen as positive, giving new perspectives and opportunities to their lives. In Tunisia, it was noted, young people who had previously been without jobs now managed some 400 cybercafes. Governments, private sectors and NGOs were urged to trust the youth, involve them, and support their start-up programmes in business with credit and

training and advisory services, despite their lack of experience. ECA's Executive Secretary pledged his support to Africa's youth.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Brahima Sanou, Chief of the ITU Regional Office for Africa, spoke on behalf of Hamadou Toure, Director of the ITU Bureau for Telecommunications Development. ITU was working towards the convening of a World Conference on the Information Society, but its date and venue had not yet been established. He elaborated on ITU's Valletta Plan of Action for Least Developed Countries. Since most LDCs were in Africa, in effect, this constituted an ITU special programme for Africa. It concentrated on regulatory and legislative reform, new forms of infrastructure building including Internet, rural development and universal access, economic aspects of communications development, participation of the private sector in telecommunications development and development of necessary human resources. He stressed ITU's commitment to the Afritel project for the development of telecommunication industries in Africa.

Global Knowledge Partnership

Philip Karp, Manager of Knowledge Products and Outreach, World Bank Institute

Stephan Roman, Director of Global Information Services, the British Council

Rinalia Abdul Rahim, National Information Technology Council, Malaysia

Formed to organize the first Global Knowledge Conference held in Toronto in 1997, the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) had subsequently grown to include some 60 organizations (including international organizations, national governments, the private sector and NGOs) committed to sharing knowledge, experiences and resources in joint activities aimed at using knowledge and ICTs to improve people's lives. From the beginning, ECA had been a key African partner in the GKP, and ADF '99 was the major African feeder event to the second Global Knowledge Conference (GKII) to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 7-10 March 2000. The GKII Conference would comprise a Forum, Knowledge Fair and the Action Summit of the Partnership. The themes of GKII, which were access, empowerment and governance, were congruent with those of ADF '99. The GKP representatives stressed that GKP was committed to ensuring that the key messages of ADF would be incorporated into the Malaysia conference. Details were provided on Malaysia's use of ICTs for development since 1994, as a major route towards building a knowledge-based economy and society.

Rapporteur Presentation

Representing the team of Forum rapporteurs, Prof. Clement Dzidonu presented the in-session report of the Forum, the text of which appears below as *Annex II: The Way Forward*.

ECA follow up to ADF '99

Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane presented ECA's views on the accomplishments of ADF '99 and detailed how ECA would follow up the ADF '99 conference. She acknowledged the following among the accomplishments of ADF:

- Enlarged dialogue among all the actors four years after AISI;
- Substantive exchange of experience and information on the state of use of ICTs in Africa;
- Genuine expression of the will to work towards an African information society; and

- Conviction that the information society could become real in Africa.

The recommendations of the Forum, she said, would be turned into concrete plans of action for implementation at national, subregional and regional levels through exercises undertaken jointly with all stakeholders. Using the areas of emphasis that she had outlined at the opening of ADF, she noted that:

- **On NICIs**, ECA would help reinforce and consolidate the efforts of member States to develop NICIs plans with the involvement of all stakeholders;
- **On the themes of the conference**, ECA would work to develop action plans in each of the theme areas;
- **On partnership**, ECA would reinforce its coordination of donor and executing agency activities to promote the use of ICTs to accelerate development in Africa. It would work with partners to mobilise funds for this on behalf of member States; and
- **On evaluation**, ECA would work with its partners to develop ways and means of measuring the impact of ICTs on African development, of learning from this and to share the results of the evaluation. This would include ECA's work with IDRC and other partners on the development of ICT-Scan.

ECA would do its best to develop mechanisms to follow up on the results and recommendations of the ADF. She concluded by saying, *"We here are representatives of all the stakeholders involved in the process. The success of the Forum the process- is in all our hands."*

Closing Remarks by the Executive Secretary of the ECA

Mr. Amoako thanked all those who had worked to put together ADF '99. He highlighted some of the main points of the Forum:

- *First, the promise of ICT. It is immense. It has profound ramifications in education, commerce, bringing our societies and nations closer together, and relating us to the world.*
- *Second, it is not a panacea. While it requires lots of human and financial investment, there are partners willing to share the load. There are proven approaches, and there are new and unproven ones. So the policy and investment approaches will present decision-makers with the need to make profound choices on the path to development. Choices not only need to be made, but to be intelligently guided in their implementation.*
- *Third, we learned a lot about content as well as hardware. Content in health, in education, in e-commerce, in cultures for peace, in linkages of civil society, business and so many other topics. There is surely African content, but, as President Konaré so wisely underscored, we must be true to ourselves. We must produce as well as consume.*
- *Fourth, I am struck by how urgent it is becoming for Africa's leaders to understand what is at stake in decisions being made outside of Africa, and how vital it is that we be prepared with regional positions and collective force to fend for our interests in the global decision arenas.*
- *Fifth, I am impressed with how new forms of communication and information management can aid in democratizing society. Particularly with new ideas on the enabling and liberalizing roles of government, there is every possibility, if we are wise, that the Information Society will develop a very broad base. That is why I am so pleased that we explored together the widespread involvement of youth, of women, of poor, of rural populations as well as of the elites whose access to ICT is not in question. There are implications, of course, in how ICT is managed. And all those implications must include the broadest possible spectrum of African society into the creation and management of ICT systems.*
- *Sixth, I must say how impressed I am with the level of talent at this Forum. We have here leaders in so many fields, who dearly are the hope of tomorrow's Africa. I heard very little about how we are only in this for profit, or only in this for hardware. There was a broad, informed and often passionate desire to really make a real difference*

in Africa's development with the aid of ICT. Our work together is a chance to help hasten the day when the intelligent ICT community has more of a role in shaping society.

He stressed that the ADF process is meant to reflect on a regional basis the kind of consensus building and broad policy consultation that has been practiced at the community and national level. The basic concept of the Forum was how to improve the process of policy creation so that it also imbeds within it the process of policy consensus.

He announced the ADF 2000 would be on the leadership challenge to Africa of HIV/AIDS. It would aim to raise the level of attention of senior levels of government and the private sector to the issue, and it would give special attention to the best practices in managing the challenges that the disease presented to society.

Mr. Amoako emphasized that ICTs would become a crosscutting feature of all ECA programmes and of future ADFs. He closed by thanking all the participants for being part of the ADF process.

Annex I: Conference Evaluation

An evaluation of ADF '99 was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire (in English and in French) distributed to participants on the last day of the Forum. Some 116 valid questionnaires were returned, comprising 12 per cent of the participants who had attended the Forum either at one point or throughout. However, the number of questionnaires returned as a percentage of those who attended throughout was probably much higher, as the first two sessions (Sunday evening and Monday morning) were marked by a high level of official representation from embassies and heads of agencies and organizations. The number who attended throughout is estimated at 650; the questionnaires returned as a percentage of these form 18%.

The general areas in which the evaluation attempted to elicit responses were identification of participants in terms of Forum target audiences, relevance of conference programme, outcomes and perceived impacts, achievement of objectives, quality of conference documentation, content, conference organization and structure, conference facilities, conference learning and lessons learned for future gatherings.

Question one: name

Forty-six per cent of respondents gave their names (it was an optional field). This is a standard rate of response, with most people preferring to submit evaluation questionnaires anonymously.

Question two: gender

The gender of respondents was 80% male and 20% female. This percentage lends substantiation to the concerns of the Gender Focus Group that women were under-represented both as participants and as presenters and chairs at the Forum. It also reflects the concern that women's access to and use of ICTs is limited in the Africa region. Despite the fact that the three main officers organizing the Conference were themselves women and well aware of the gender challenges in using ICTs in developing countries, it proved difficult to secure a creditable proportion of female participants.

Question three: Coming to conference from?

Regions of origin	No.	%
Africa	94	81%
North America	7	6%
African Diaspora	1	1%
Europe	12	10%
Asia	1	1%
Elsewhere	1	1%
Total	116	100%

Eighty-one per cent of questionnaire respondents came to the Forum from Africa, seven per cent from North America, twelve per cent from Europe, one per cent from Asia and one per cent from elsewhere. The surprising figure was that only one per cent came from the African Diaspora. This latter is an under-representation of this group in the questionnaire respondents or else a lack of self identification of this

group (who perhaps identified themselves as coming to the conference from North America or Europe), as a survey of the list of participants indicates that at least three per cent of participants were from the Diaspora. The predominance of African participants validates the aim of the Forum as an African venue to develop an African-led development agenda.

Question four: institutional origins

Composition of participants

Participant group	% of participants
African public sector	36
Non-governmental organizations	15
Universities and research institutions	13
Private sector	15
Development agencies	15
Other	7
Total	100

Participants were asked what type of institution they represented or work with. The results indicate that those who attended were well distributed among the public sector, NGOs, research, policy and training institutions, the private sector and development agencies. Some 36 per cent were from the African public sector, fifteen from NGOs, thirteen per cent from universities and research institutions, fifteen per cent from the private sector, and fifteen per cent from development agencies. Six per cent listed their institution as "other". Among those who classified themselves as "other" were a labour union representative, a participant from the media, two participants from subregional and regional organizations, a high school student (from the Youth Focus Group) and an independent expert.

Analysis of closed-ended questionnaire responses

On the questionnaire, participants were asked to rate various aspects of the conference on a scale of 1 to 5 (with one being the lowest rating and 5 the highest). Other closed-ended questions were on a three-range scale. In the following analysis, open-ended questions are identified as such.

Question five: relevance of the Forum

Participants were asked to what extent they found the conference relevant to their organization's or institution's needs. The Forum received very high marks on relevance of the Conference theme. Seventy-nine per cent found it very relevant; nearly twenty per cent found it "somewhat relevant", while less than one per cent deemed it "not relevant." Thus, ninety-nine per cent of respondents found the conference either somewhat or very relevant to their work.

Question six: issues focus

Participants were asked about the extent to which the conference focused on issues they hoped would be addressed. On a five-point scale, eighty-four per cent of respondents rated the issues focus as either high (25.9 per cent) or high medium (57.8) per cent. Only 4.3 per cent gave a low or low medium reading. Twelve per cent of respondents rated the issues focus as a 3, or medium. The overwhelming percentage of those responding with the two highest ratings indicates that the issues focus of the conference was very good.

Question seven: time allocation

Participants were asked whether they felt the conference had allocated adequate time for constructive discussions. Responses were more divided on this question. While 48.3 per cent gave the highest two ratings (4 and 5), nearly a third (thirty-one per cent) rated the time allocation for constructive discussions as medium, while 20.7 per cent gave the two lowest ratings. The division of responses on this issue indicates that greater efforts should have been made to allocate more time to floor discussions.

Question eight: achievement of objectives

The questionnaire asked whether the conference had achieved the objectives that the participants understood when they decided to attend. Three-fifths (60.4%) of respondents gave the highest or second highest rating on this response. An additional 28% responded in the medium range. Only nine per cent responded in the two lower quintiles. Responses indicate that participants felt that the conference achieved its objectives, as they understood them.

Question nine: help in identifying policy options

Participants were asked to what extent the conference helped them identify suitable policy options for their countries. Nearly ninety per cent (89.3%) of respondents answered in the top three categories, with sixty-six per cent rating the conference 4 out of 5 on this question. Only nine per cent replied in the two lower quintiles. However, some eleven per cent did not reply to the question, perhaps because they felt they were not involved in identifying policy options for their country. The conference appears to have been successful in assisting participants in identifying policy options.

Question ten: promotion of exchange of experiences

The questionnaire asked to what extent the conference promoted exchange of lessons and experiences. The conference received very favourable ratings on this question. More than three-quarters of respondents (77.5%) responded with the two highest ratings. An additional fourteen per cent gave the conference a medium rating in this regard. Eight per cent responded with the two lowest ratings.

Question eleven: lead to follow up activities (Closed and open-ended question)

Participants were asked whether the conference led them to consider any follow-up activities, whether from sessions or contacts made at the Forum. Ninety-seven per cent of those who responded said that they would follow up their participation in the conference, while only three per cent said they had not considered any follow up. This appears to be an extraordinarily high positive response rate and an important indicator of the success of the conference.

Some of those who responded positively to this question did not detail the areas that they intended to follow up; however, among this group, respondents showed their enthusiasm for follow up in their non-specific comments, noting that they found "lots" to follow up on and that they would "definitely do so." Many others cited specific areas in which they intended to become involved or further their present involvement, including:

- Using ICTs for education (nine responses), with particular mention of SchoolNet and distance education;
- National information and communication infrastructure plans (NICIs), (nine respondents);
- Telecentres (eight respondents);
- Information economy, especially e-commerce (six respondents);
- General national Information Society activities (cited by four respondents);
- Replicating ADF '99 at the national level (two respondents);

- Telemedicine and telehealth (two respondents);
- Gender issues of ICTs (two respondents);
- Youth issues of ICTs (two respondents);
- Liberalization of telecommunications and regulatory reform (two respondents);
- Implementing ADF recommendations at national level;
- Setting up national training courses on areas highlighted at the Forum;
- Labour and ICT issues;
- Internet governance;
- African negotiation positions on ICT issues in international forums;
- Capacity building;
- Programme of action on ICTs for the disabled in Africa;
- Websites and content development; and
- ICT policy and regulatory reform.

Others cited modalities and ways in which they intended to get involved:

- Networking and follow up of contacts made at the conference (eight cases);
- Seeking partnerships with those present at the Forum for projects and initiatives (five cases);
- Private business development;
- Seeking intra-African partnerships;
- Research;
- Contacts with exhibitors;
- Contacts with projects presented.

One participant requested conference organizers to take the lead in follow-up to the conference and to inform the participants of opportunities in which they could get involved.

Question twelve: ideas to enhance Africa's economic development

Participants were asked to what extent the conference provided ideas on enhancing Africa's development. Eighty-nine per cent of respondents answered in the three highest ranges, with forty-one per cent giving the high medium rating (4). Eight per cent responded with the two lowest ratings, indicating that they did not get ideas on enhancing African economic development from this conference. It appears from these results that the conference succeeded in providing ideas for enhancing Africa's economic development.

Question thirteen: quality of conference facilities

Those who filled in the questionnaire were asked how they rated the conference facilities. Eighty-seven per cent of respondents answered in the top two quintiles, with fifty-two per cent giving the highest possible rating. This validates ECA's view that its Conference Centre is a major advantage to the organization.

Questions fourteen (a) and (b): use of cybercafe

Participants were asked whether they had used the facilities of the cybercafe. Forty-two per cent responded that they did, while fifty-seven per cent did not. Of those that used it, ninety-four per cent rated it a 4 or 5.

It must be borne in mind that the programme was tightly packed, with little time available for getting to the cybercafe, which would account for less than half of the participants using it. However, the response and approval of service rates were sufficiently high to warrant the provision of such a facility for future ADFs.

Question fifteen: visit to exhibition

Participants were asked whether they visited the exhibition. Ninety-six per cent said that they had done so. This is an exceedingly high visit rate, and it validates conference organizers' decision to locate the coffee breaks and receptions in the exhibit area to encourage exhibit viewing. Such a high response rate can also be used by future conference organizers to attract exhibitors and to justify exhibition fees.

Question sixteen: interest in exhibition

The questionnaire asked respondents how interesting and useful they found the exhibition. The ratings on this question were also quite high. Nearly three-quarters (73.3%) of those who visited the exhibition rated it in the two highest categories. A further twenty per cent gave it a medium (three) rating. Only four per cent found it to be not useful (the two lowest ratings).

Question seventeen: receipt of conference documents

Respondents were asked whether they received the conference documents. Eighty-five per cent responded that they had received the conference documents. Obviously, conference organisers would have wished for a one hundred per cent positive return on this item. The difficulty arose in the numbers who attended the conference versus those who had registered to attend. One week before the conference, some three hundred persons had registered to attend. As 650 copies of the documents had been printed, that should have been sufficient. However, as the final numbers of those attending reached 950, it was not. Throughout the week of the conference, ECA printing staff worked overtime to try to reprint as many of the documents as possible and get them to participants.

Question eighteen: quality of documents

Participants were asked to evaluate the quality of the conference documentation. This question received very positive responses. Eighty-five per cent of respondents gave the two highest ratings (4 and 5) to this question. An additional ten per cent gave a medium rating, while only five per cent rated the documentation as being of low or low medium quality. Eleven per cent did not respond, probably corresponding to those who had not received the documents.

Question nineteen: conference logistics

The questionnaire asked how effective participants found the conference logistics. Forty per cent awarded the logistics a high medium rating, while twenty-five per cent gave the highest possible rating and an additional twenty-three per cent gave a medium rating. Thus, eighty-eight per cent gave positive (medium to highest) ratings on this element. This is gratifying to conference organisers who feared that the last minute unexpected surge in attendance would play havoc with conference logistics. It appears that the bottlenecks that occurred were either relatively transparent to conference participants or that they overlooked them in comparison with other aspects on the conference.

Question twenty: best liked aspects of the conference (open-ended question)

Participants were asked which aspect(s) of the conference they liked most. Being an open-ended question, there was a wide diversity of response to this question. Many people answered with comments about the participants. The most frequent response was that the quality of the participants gave them excellent opportunities for networking (cited sixteen times) and sharing of experiences (six times). Two cited the importance of their contacts with partners. Other specific comments on participants included the large attendance and their high degree of spirit and engagement both in sessions and in corridor

meetings. Respondents commented positively on the presence of the African Diaspora, on the quality of the resource persons, on the substantial presence of both the public and the private sector, on the presence of NGOs and, as a result of the previous, on the variety of points of view presented.

Others identified the subject matter as the aspect of the conference that they liked best. Four commended the overall choice of conference theme (globalization and the Information Age in Africa), while five liked best the choice of sub-themes (infrastructure, information economy, democratization of access and ICTs for governance). Three grouped these together and said that the choice of theme, sub-themes and breakout topics was the best part of the conference. Several persons commented that presentations on the sub-themes were the best aspects for them (and each sub-theme got at least two such comments each). Other topics featured at the conference which received "best aspect of conference rating" were: ICTs and health, ICTs and education, content development, African Diaspora, partnership, distance education, e-commerce and telecentres.

Five commended the substantive aspects of the conference overall- referring to the wealth of documentation, well-prepared documentation (four citations) and the in-depth coverage of the issues presented.

Some six comments related to the conference organization overall, referring to the way that they were received. One participant said that "the reception, efficiency and availability of the conference staff and other ECA staff" were the best aspects for him. Another said, "the generosity throughout: reception, coffee breaks, meals, documentation, complete availability [of staff to help participants]. These were things that you don't find elsewhere, even in Europe or the U.S.A."

Others made their "best" awards to programme aspects of the conference, with five regarding the keynote addresses as the best aspect, two citing the address of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi; one, President Konaré and one, ECA Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako. Four others commended the plenary sessions as the best aspect. One respondent commented on the open discussion that took place at plenaries, particularly at the closing. Further on programme aspects, some six respondents commended the overall way in which the programme was organized, fifteen (a remarkable number) said that the organization of breakout sessions was the conference's best aspect. Ten said that it was the organization of and presentation by focus groups, with three references each to the youth and gender groups. Other more general comments were "interesting sessions", and "well presented papers". Two respondents commented positively on the "interactive" nature of discussions.

Others commented on the logistical aspects of the conference: overall organization received 5 comments, the cybercafe 3; "accueil" (reception); 5; coffee breaks, 2; availability of documentation and excellent equipment in working order. The overall conference environment received one comment, and conference facilities in general another. The simultaneous interpretation was also commended.

Question twenty-one: least liked aspects of the conference (open-ended question)

Participants were asked which aspect(s) of the conference they liked least. While 92 per cent of respondents answered the previous question on what aspect of the conference they liked best, only seventy-one per cent responded to this question of what they liked least about the conference and five per cent of these replied "nothing". Thus, thirty-four per cent of respondents did not find anything they "liked least." The significantly lower percentage of respondents to the "liked least" question seems to indicate a reasonably high level of satisfaction of participants with the conference.

The "liked least" responses can be divided into issues of programme and content, session management and conference logistics.

On programme and content:

- The most frequently cited element was timing (thirteen citations), including:

- insufficient time for discussion at plenaries and at breakout sessions;
 - too many intervenants per programme session;
 - too much time spent in plenaries and plenary speeches too long, and too general and sometimes too political (four respondents);
 - insufficient time for networking;
 - coffee breaks too long;¹¹
 - Need for improved skills of chairs- for better time management (including starting time of sessions), better summations and selection of recommendations; and
 - Desire for improved contributions to discussion. Six respondents cited lengthy and sometimes irrelevant contributions to discussion and dislike for what some participants called "*commercial*" and "*posturing*"- countries and agencies, presenting lengthy and uncritical accounts of their activities and accomplishments.
- One respondent felt that the theme papers were not sufficiently action oriented
 - On logistics of conference organization, the following were cited as "*least liked*" aspects of the conference:
 - delays in payment of Daily Subsistence Allowance (ten respondents)
 - late delivery of conference documents (six respondents)¹²
 - Registration (three respondents)
 - One respondent each cited these aspects of conference organization as least liked:
 - insufficient protocol for ministers;
 - performance of one interpreter;
 - rooms too heavily air conditioned;
 - "the dinner" (possibly a reference to the sponsored dinner on 25 October);
 - too many participants resulting in groups too large for good discussions;
 - transport; and
 - lodging
 - One respondent cited overall logistics and organization of the Conference as the aspect he liked least.

Conference organizers take very seriously the critiques that appeared several times (regarding payment of Daily Subsistence Allowance to sponsored participants, registration and late delivery of documents). The late delivery of documents (resulting in part from underestimation of the number of participants and insufficient copies being printed) and will discuss these in depth with the ECA administration and the organizers of ADF 2000.

Question twenty-two: most useful conference sessions (Open-ended question)

Respondents were asked which conference sessions they found most useful. Responses were quite striking in that respondents mentioned virtually every session (with the exception of the information marketplace), including the launching of the ITCA. Ten respondents said that they rated "all" the sessions

¹¹ The latter two comments show the different perceptions of different participants. While one participant found coffee breaks too long, another found that there were insufficient opportunities for networking (presumably the coffee breaks being the prime opportunity for same).

¹² At the same time, three respondents commended ECA for making the documents available on the Web.

as "most useful." Nine respondents found the plenaries most useful, with several participants citing the Monday morning plenary as the best among the plenaries. More than five respondents each selected each of the sub-theme presentations as most useful, but overall the most highly rated was that on democratization of access (eight respondents) followed by that on infrastructure (seven responses).

Respondents in general did not refer to specific sessions so much as specific topics, but those sessions/topics that recorded more responses as "most useful" than others were:

- The e-commerce workshop (eleven responses);
- The e-commerce for MSEs breakout (eight responses);
- Telecentres (eight responses);
- ICTs and African universities (seven responses);
- NICI plans (six responses);
- Distance learning and education (four responses);
- The Media and ICTs session received three commendations as "most useful; and"
- The focus groups on youth, gender and the private sector also received three responses each.

Although not strictly sessions, one response called "*corridor sessions*" most useful, and another found the conference documentation and the exhibit to meet this criterion. Two disgruntled participants said that none of the sessions stood out as most useful.

The above distribution indicates that virtually all of the programme sessions hit the mark with some of the participants.

Question twenty-three: least useful conference sessions (open-ended question)

Respondents were asked which conference sessions they found least useful. While 85 per cent of evaluation questionnaire respondents replied to the previous question on "*most useful*" conference sessions, only 40 per cent replied to question twenty-three on the "*least useful*" conference sessions, which seems to indicate that most participants found most sessions useful. Among the 40 per cent who replied, five respondents said that they found "*none*" of the sessions "*least useful*." Thus, only 41 respondents (thirty-five per cent of those submitting questionnaires) rated any of the sessions as *least useful*. The session that received the highest number of responses as *least useful* was the information marketplace (five responses).

The irony of the responses to the "*least useful*" question is that many of the responses were the same as those received to the "*most useful*" question. The e-commerce workshop and session on e-commerce agenda for MSEs was the subject of widely varying opinions. While appearing above as the most commended of sessions, at the same time three respondents found the e-commerce workshop "least useful" while one respondent gave this rating to the e-commerce agenda session. Plenaries were highly rated above, but three respondents found the plenary sessions among the least useful. Five respondents labelled the "*political*" sessions as the least useful, but did not further identify which sessions they regarded as the political ones.

Other sessions mentioned in the responses to this question were the governance theme presentation (two responses), the private sector focus group (two responses), the Think Tank plenary, and the poster exhibit session. One respondent found all the sessions on youth, gender and governance "*least useful*" because "*once the other issues are resolved, these areas will be taken care of automatically*." While not a specific session, one reply to this question cited chairs that indulged in overly long session introductions as least useful. Another found that the focus group meetings were not useful because they had no pre-set agenda.

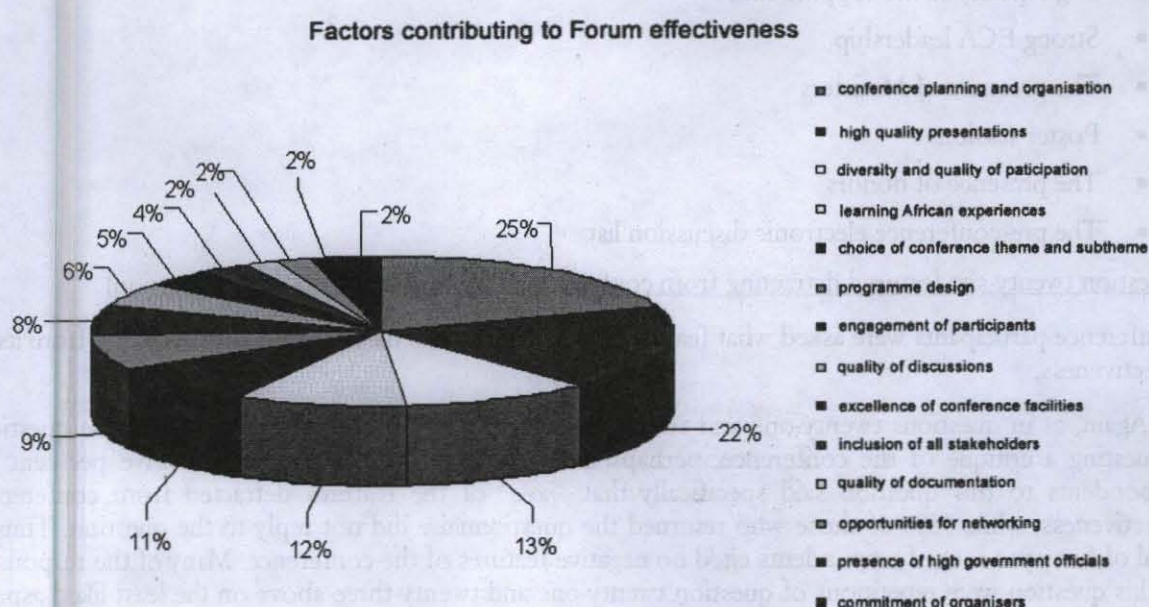
Question twenty-four: overall effectiveness of the conference

Asked to give an overall effectiveness rating to the conference, two thirds of respondents replied in the two highest categories, while an additional twenty per cent gave a medium rating. Eight per cent replied in the low and low medium ranges.

Question twenty-five: effective conference features (open-ended question)

Conference participants were asked what features of the conference they regarded as contributing to its effectiveness. (Seventy-three per cent of those who filled in the questionnaire responded to this question).¹³

Despite the open-ended nature of the question, several responses were commonly cited.



Twenty-one respondents (twenty-five per cent of respondents) singled out the conference planning and organization as contributing to its effectiveness. Nineteen respondents (twenty-three per cent of respondents) uniquely mentioned the high level of conference presenters. Eleven respondents cited the diversity and quality of participants, while another three found commendable the bringing in of stakeholder groups. Ten respondents praised the sharing of African experiences in the use of ICTs. Nine felt that the selection of the overall conference theme and its sub-themes (another four respondents) had made the conference effective. Seven respondents noted the high level of interest and engagement of participants. As to the nature of the presentations, some five respondents said that they supported strongly the organization of the programme by introduction of issues at plenary session and then breakout into smaller groups to discuss specific aspects of the larger topic. Five respondents underlined the high level of discussion as an effective conference feature. Four replies mentioned the excellence of the conference facilities, with one more specific reference to the use of technology at conference sessions.

¹³ Per centages in the pie chart exceed 100% because participants could give more than one response to this question.

Three respondents noted the importance of programme design, with three more responding particularly positively to the parallel or breakout sessions.

Features of the conference that received two specific citations included: quality of conference documentation, refreshment breaks (lunch and coffee breaks), the interactive and participatory nature of the conference, opportunities for networking and the commitment of the organizers, and the presence of high level government officials.

The following conference features were also mentioned (one response each) as contributing to conference effectiveness:

- Provisions for ad hoc caucuses
- The cybercafe
- A well-run information desk
- High quality of the support staff
- Strong ECA leadership
- The presence of Ministers
- Poster sessions
- The presence of donors
- The pre-conference electronic discussion list

Question twenty-six: featured detracting from conference effectiveness (open-ended question)

Conference participants were asked what features of the conference they regarded as detracting from its effectiveness.

Again, as in questions twenty-one and twenty-three, many respondents did not answer the question requesting a critique of the conference, perhaps indicating their satisfaction with it. Five per cent of respondents to this question said specifically that "none" of the features detracted from conference effectiveness, while 35% of those who returned the questionnaire did not reply to the question. Thus a total of forty per cent of respondents cited no negative features of the conference. Many of the responses to this question were repetitions of question twenty-one and twenty-three above on the least liked aspect of the conference and the least useful conference sessions.

Of the sixty per cent who did reply to this question, comments were divided between the areas of programme organization, with a major subset here dealing with time management issues and with substance of the programme, logistics and participants.

Programme organization

Many of the comments on programme organization reflected the feeling that the programme was "too rich", with too much content. Six respondents said that there were too many themes, while another six said that there were too many breakouts. Some of this latter group felt that some of the topics of the breakouts could have been combined. Several of those who made these comments about too many breakouts said that they felt frustrated because they were unable to choose easily between parallel sessions all of which interested them. As in question twenty-three above, two respondents complained about "too many political speeches." One participant found the format of the programme "too rigid." Another respondent said that presenters needed to make more use of information technology in their presentations.

In the area of time management, a total of thirty respondents commented on this aspect (forty-three per cent of those who replied to this question), indicating that it was a very significant area for concern. Although the comments were phrased in diverse ways, the thrust of most was that they wanted more time

to discuss and to have more meaningful discussions. This in itself underlines the high degree of engagement of participants at the Forum. Their comments pointed out various aspects of inadequate time management that prevented them from having fruitful discussion time. The most general comment was that sessions started late because of participants arriving late (six mentions). Five participants complained of lengthy and repetitive statements from the floor. Five participants said that there were too many panelists at each session to be effective and to allow for sufficient discussion time. Two others cited poor time management of sessions by chairpersons. One participant said that the whole programme was too long, exhausting participants.

On the content and substance of the programme, one respondent complained of lack of case studies. Another said that there was too much focus on high tech solutions, where he felt that rural and poor communities needed low tech ones. Two respondents felt that there was insufficient information provided about possibilities for funding and support. With regard to management of individual sessions, two respondents felt that the chair and presenters were not synchronized in some sessions: they did not seem to be on the same topic. Two participants criticized session chairs for failing to draw out concrete recommendations from their sessions. A further two respondents felt that there should have been closer adherence to the themes and sub-themes of the conference in breakout sessions. Two respondents called for more geographical distribution in the origin of presenters (feeling that there were too many presenters from Egypt, Senegal and South Africa). Two other respondents complained of lack of substance in presentations - one said that abstract discussions of development were not meaningful, while the other said that some presentations lack substance. One respondent said that conference proceedings were not well communicated (ECA needed to make greater efforts to inform participants that each day's proceedings were summarized on the website and distributed to the conference site and to the media both at the forum and outside in print press releases almost as soon as the day's sessions concluded).

About half the responses to this question dealt with *logistics* of the conference organization. Ten respondents said the delay in payment of per diem, in registration and in distribution of documents detracted from conference effectiveness. They noted that delays in these three areas kept delegates from the sessions and thereby directly detracted from conference effectiveness. Three respondents mentioned unreliable transport to/from the Hilton Hotel as a problem area. Two respondents said that they needed more information before arrival in Addis Ababa (again ECA needed to make greater efforts to inform participants about the conference website which contained a full array of pre-conference information).

Other areas that received one comment each were:

- Poor quality of the public address system;
- Poor interpretation (from French to English) on the last day, and poor volume in its receipt;
- Late receipt of travel authorizations;
- Need for improvement in quality of Power Point presentations (calling for improvement both by presenters in making their presentations legible and by the Conference Centre in providing better transmission facilities); and
- Time consuming nature of protocol issues.

Regarding the number and composition of *participants*, one respondent said that the large number of participants detracted from the effectiveness of the conference and prevented good discussion. Another felt that ECA should restrict participants to those with power to make decisions, saying, "*ECA should target those in the public or private sector whose decisions make things happen or not.*"

Question twenty-seven: suggestions for improvement of ADF 2000 (open-ended question)

The last question was an open-ended one, requesting suggestions to ECA to improve ADF 2000. Participants contributed a huge variety of constructive responses to this question, indicating belief in the

ADF concept and genuine desire for subsequent forums to succeed further. A very high level of respondents answered this question - eighty-four per cent.

Several respondents made suggestions for topics of future ADFs. These included:

- Regional economic integration (cited three times);
- NGOs and their relations with the private and public sectors;
- Conflict resolution;
- Culture and indigenous knowledge for development;
- Poverty alleviation;
- Rural infrastructure development; and
- Control of capital flight;

One respondent made no suggestion for a particular topic, but recommended that ECA "*choose practical topics.*" Several respondents felt that the topic of ADF '99 had not been exhausted and recommended future sessions or additional conferences on these aspects of the 1999 topic:

- ICTs and agriculture, including agricultural information systems
- Telecommunications
- Post-ADF country achievements
- The disabled in the Information Age
- E-commerce
- WTO negotiations and the Information Age in Africa

Other suggestions related to areas of possible improvement of programme organization and of overall logistics of the conference.

With regard to programme organization, the most frequent suggestion was for *strict time management*, with fifteen responses centering on this issue. Related points made in this regard were to "*limit interventions and presentations by politicians*" (two responses), allow more time for discussions (two responses), and either shorten the agenda or lengthen the time period of the Forum. Breakout groups, they said, should not be so large as to inhibit discussion. Two respondents also urged a decrease in the number of parallel sessions at any one time so that participants had an opportunity to attend more sessions in which they were interested. With regard to time allocation, three participants asked that *more leisure time* be built in to the Forum so that they could visit Addis Ababa; two respondents wanted *more time for networking* built into the programme.

One respondent said that he wanted to see the following features in the programme:

- Action-oriented presentations, not literature reviews;
- Case studies;
- More hands-on demonstration presentations;
- More on training and trade aspects of any topic; and
- Respondents urged continuation of the focus group feature of the programme.

Some five respondents focused on the need to build follow up mechanisms and commitment into the Forum programme. They said that there should be explicit follow up mechanisms for each Forum, including mechanisms for national level follow up. Organizers should try to secure commitment from the participants to take part in follow up.

One participant noted that the selection of chairpersons was a critical success factor of the Forum. Good chairs made a significant difference. Each chair should take on the responsibility of securing tangible outcomes and a limited number of concrete proposals from his/her session. Chairs should also try to convene their panels in advance to make their sessions better coordinated and organized. Another participant suggested that country delegations should prepare and bring to the conference (but not necessarily present) country reports.

With regard to *participants*, some respondents (three) said that the overall number of participants should be reduced, while others said that more should be invited per country. There was a strong recommendation (five respondents) to continue to invite all stakeholders, with particular mention made of women, youth, NGOs, labour unions, civil society in general, and the private sector, including the domestic private sector. Four respondents each urged more participation from civil society and the private sector, while one said that participants should be limited to the public sector and high government officials because their attendance makes a difference. At the same time, another urged that more technical participants be invited.

On *logistics*, as in earlier questions, participants emphasized the need for improved procedures for registration and securing of badges, for payment of per diem and for distribution of documents. Some five respondents asked for the documents in advance, with the possibility of downloading them from the conference website (they noted that the invitations should say that the documents could be secured this way). They wanted more information on conference logistics both at the conference and in advance of their travel to Addis Ababa (again the use of the website to post this information should be included in the invitations). They urged ADF 2000 organizers to get the invitations out early and to let participants know as soon as possible whether they were sponsored or not.

Three participants urged that conference organizers involve the Embassies in Addis Ababa early in the preparation of ADF 2000.

Respondents asked for the continuation of the cybercafe, and three respondents hoped for the introduction of some kind of conference messaging system so that participants could contact each other more easily during the Forum.

Some additional logistics features that were requested (one respondent on each):

- A map of Addis Ababa in the documents package
- On-site child care
- Trying to lodge together participants from the same country so that they could have more contact with each other
- Photocopying for participants, as paying service¹⁴
- Sufficient bags and documents for all
- Less lavish meals in view of the surrounding poverty and famine

Some respondents used the opportunity of this question to commend the organizers on ADF'99 and to encourage the efforts to continue. Among the specific comments were: "Good job, please continue this effort." "We need more follow up to this conference- there's still lots to discuss." "Sincere thanks to DISD/ECA for wonderful organization and their efforts on behalf of African development." "Keep it up." "Well done."

¹⁴ This was available to ADF '99 participants in the UNCC Business Centre, and participants were informed of it in the "Information for Participants" document.

Summary

The evaluation results indicate strongly that the Forum achieved its objectives to be an African venue to develop an African-led development agenda. Participants gave very high marks to the Forum for helping them identify policy options and for giving them ideas on enhancing African economic development. The percentage of those who said that they would follow up the Forum with actions and initiatives in their countries was overwhelming. The respondents also rated very highly the theme of the Forum for relevance to their development concerns.

On organization of the conference, they commended ECA for excellent programme design and participant selection. Respondents were particularly pleased with the diversity and quality of participants and the inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholder groups, including development partners, which gave them rich possibilities for networking. Efforts, however, need to be increased to ensure gender balance to make the African Development Forum truly representative of stakeholders in African development. While respondents responded very favourably to the plenary/breakout mode of organization and commended the high quality of presentations, they were anxious for more and better opportunities for discussion that could be made possible by having fewer presentations per session and better moderation by chairs. The quality of conference documentation received high acclaim. There was universal praise for the conference facilities, with high approval for the exhibit and cybercafe as features that should become a regular part of future ADFs. The aspects of Forum logistics that came in for heavy criticism were per diem payments, registration (delays in receiving badges) and delays in receiving documents. Future ADF organizers must remedy these latter areas in order to ensure that they do not detract from the overall Forum experience, to which participants gave positive approval.

Annex II: The Way Forward to a People-Centred African Information Society¹⁵

1. Overall principles

1.1 *The 64,000 people challenge*

In 2010, the population of Africa will be 1,150 million, almost half more than in 1996 when the African Information Society Initiative was launched. Over the following four decades, it will almost double again, and Africa will still be the second most populous continent in the world.

It is in that world that Africa will be a full player, culturally, economically, politically and ecologically. It is of that world that all our peoples, women, men and children, will be global citizens just as they will be full citizens of their communities, their nations, their regions and our continent.

In the twenty-first century we shall live in predominately information and knowledge-based societies, which will have achieved our goals of social and economic development, including full education, proper food security, decent health, genuine gender equity and respect for cultural pluralism, and will continue to meet them. Africa will have met, for example, the challenges of tripling educational opportunities, for all generations, of ensuring water supply and of quadrupling food supply. It is to attain and sustain these goals that we are committed to building an African Information Society.

1.2 *The inclusive information and communication infrastructure*

Rapid change is underway in information and communications technologies (ICTs), notably in the convergence of computer information technology and longer established media such as television and radio. Since any sustainable development effort can only succeed if it is rooted in existing knowledge and best practice, the spread of ICTs will inevitably make use of existing media, and in the African context these will in particular focus upon radio.

The speed of development and convergence in ICTs make the need more imperative to unleash the energies of all African people to shape their own world. We have organized our societies and economies in such a way that we are government, the private commercial and financial sector, the academic and research community and civil society. The latter ranges from traditional and indigenous organs, through established bodies such as voluntary societies and trade unions, to new and emerging forces such as community-based organizations. We must, more than ever, share our commonalties and pool our specialties.

We are faced with the need for massive investments, not only financial, but also social and cultural. No one sector has a monopoly of capital, be it social, financial, intellectual or political. Our approaches and our achievements must be inclusive; our point of departure is the fundamental right to communicate and to participate in society. This requires equity of access to and use of ICTs. At present, some people are more distant, unacceptably so, than others from the opportunities of ICTs, notably many women, many young people, the disabled and many rural and marginal urban communities.

¹⁵ This is the in-session report of the Forum that was presented on 28 October.

2. The ways forward

The issues around the establishment and management of the African Information Society form a complex, multi-dimensional web. For example, there can be no sustainable infrastructure without adequate education, or reliable energy supply. There can be no adequate education for all, or sufficient redistribution of limited energy resources, without widespread use of ICTs. There can be no widespread use of ICTs without an enabling environment that empowers the distant to come closer to opportunity, there can be no enabling environment without optimal governance, and this can only be achieved in an information society.

Where are the key points on the circle, to make the circle virtuous? Resources will come primarily from within Africa, and complemented by support and input from outside (whether in terms, for example, of foreign capital, or Diaspora-mobilized know-how). But is it not also a question of re-organizing resources and priorities? And what synergies await us, for example, in blending the soaring decentralized networks of women-centred savings and credit funds with the investment needs of emerging e-enterprises, in the framework of rejuvenated financial institutions and approaches? And how do we approach those points: at what level?

2.1 In the global context, the NICI is the key

The fundament of the African Information Society is the development and consolidation of National Information and Communication Infrastructure policies and plans (NICIs), which will be the cornerstone of Africa's response to the challenges of globalization. It is the national level that provides the platform for making strategic choices as to the most appropriate modalities for decisions on, for example, regulation, infrastructural priorities and service distribution.

Some strategic activities will be implemented at subregional or regional level, or indeed at local level. It is often at the supra-national level that activities should best be implemented, such as several countries sharing access to global gateways. Similarly, regional mechanisms for the exchange, even concertation, of experiences and programmes can provide the most appropriate channel for Africa to play an active part in global forums. But without well-equipped and properly functioning NICIs at the national level, which can also benefit from mutual contacts, there can be no African Information Society. The development of NICIs is an ongoing process which stakeholder can sustain consensus on progress towards the African Information Society. The success of NICI efforts to date has been based on the inclusionary nature of the process, including as many stakeholders as possible. This needs to be continued, with efforts made to ensure that the private sector is involved.

Among the specific measures that could enhance the establishment of NICIs would be a regional mechanism for sharing information at regional and national level on capacity building in NICI development. This could make use of IDRC's ICT-Scan initiative.

2.2 Actions to be developed

The various sectors participating in the ADF have taken full advantage of the opportunities provided for the elaboration of further action plans within and between sectors, at various levels. These reflect the depth and sincerity of the commitment of the players at ADF, and they are listed in some detail in the following section.

In addition, there are three key foci on which cooperative programmes and partnerships could unlock great strategic progress, namely in the areas of regulation, financing and education.

2.3 Common approaches and tools

In each area of work there must be activities that enable capacity building and skill development among all the stakeholders and the various institutions. There must be systems to monitor, review and, if

necessary, correct the extent to which certain commonly agreed goals are actually met within an activity: these must include the integration of women on the basis of full equity, and thus, where necessary, the adaptation of certain activities and practices to allow for this. There is an ongoing, essential role for the research community, which should also be actively engaged in developing and controlling viable indicators for measuring needs, performance and the impact of each activity. Similarly, the skills and knowledge of the Diaspora and civil society bodies, including community-based organizations, in particular in outreach and needs response, must be mobilized.

2.4 Policy and Regulation:

Policies and regulations should create an environment that is conducive to innovation, competition and both inward and local investment. It is important to ensure that such investment meets national developmental needs at all levels and of all sectors. There is a need for strengthening and consolidating regulatory bodies that are inclusive in nature. They must be autonomous of government and operators and actively involve all stakeholders, including consumer and user communities, and balance their diverse interests. Such bodies operate at the national level and will always have national specificity. Cooperation at subregional and regional level is an essential part of the policy and regulatory framework.

The recent and present experiences in some subregions, such as southern Africa, could provide useful models for replication or emulation. Additionally, the recent emergence of continent-wide bodies for coordination between media regulatory bodies could provide a useful point of reference for any initiatives in the ICT area. Programmes in this area could provide the platform for ensuring that Africa takes a proactive stance in advancing its interests in forums such as the WTO, ITU, ICANN and AFRINIC.

2.5 Finance:

The process of investment in leading edge uses and access to ICTs will only be unleashed if new models of finance and financial instruments, such as risk analysis, can be further developed. This is in particular essential in enabling adequate investment in such areas as e-MSEs (e.g. e-commerce in services, telecentres and cybrcafés, and MSEs set up by young entrepreneurs) so that financiers can be assured about perceived risks, and the MSEs remain viable and increasingly accessible to 'the e-distant'.

This process can be advanced by the establishment of task forces and pilot projects to work on new financial models and to examine investment models for emerging initiatives in education and telecommunications.

Furthermore, global private sector investment in research and development should be mobilized in cooperation with local companies and local research institutions.

2.6 Education

The need for more widespread education and life-long learning is paramount in development strategies, and ICTs have a key role to play in the delivery of services to the education sector, as well as in direct education such as in distance learning. This includes the applications considered by SchoolNet and similar initiatives, telecentres, and women's and youth groups. In particular, emphasis must be given to the special circumstances, needs and demands of specific groups hitherto often excluded from educational opportunities, such as young women. An African level task force on Distance Education will make significant contributions to this.

3. Session recommendations

3.1 Globalization and the Information Economy

To join the information economy and to address barriers to e-commerce in Africa, participants felt that Africa must :

- Combine economies of scale with competition;
- Improve local skills to cope with the brain drain problem;
- Encourage sub-regional cooperation;
- Establish a stable framework for investment; and
- Develop capacity to present and defend African positions in global forums, such as the WTO.

They felt that governments needed to develop reliable statistical indicators to facilitate the process of planning the information economy and monitoring impact and performance. Governments needed clear information economy strategies in partnership with the private sector. They felt that the global multinational private sector could create partnerships with African SMEs.

3.2 Information and communication technologies for improved governance

Participants felt that ICTS for improved governance could support four areas especially: reducing poverty; meeting basic human needs; improving public administration; and enhancing democratization.

Their recommendations in this area were to:

- Develop applications that fit priority areas for development including job creation, agricultural information systems, human resource development and health;
- Establish good communication channels between decision makers and professionals;
- Design systems for capturing indigenous knowledge;
- Promote information and resources sharing among African countries through joint pilot projects, replications of best practices and the establishment of regional and sub-regional frameworks.

3.3 Strengthening Africa's information infrastructure

Participants showed commitment to follow up actions related to policy and infrastructure development. They felt that policies and regulations should create an environment conducive to innovation, competition and investment. There was a need to strengthen autonomous regulatory bodies that actively involve all stakeholders and balance diverse interests.

Specific recommendations included:

- Mobilizing local investment for ICTs and networks at all levels from global corporations to communities;
- Capacity building for inclusive and effective policy formulation and regulation;
- Creation of new and expansion of existing African investment funds for rural and subregional development;
- Subregional cooperation on equipment selection, procurement, and deployment and related areas; and
- Enhanced African participation in Internet governance at regional and international levels.

3.4 Democratizing access to the information society

Participants felt that school networking and distance learning were essential to broadening access to the information society. They also recommended:

- Promotion and protection of indigenous knowledge through ICTs;
- Using intermediaries such as information brokers to broaden access;
- Integrating old and new information technologies;

- Facilitating cooperative, public access to ICTs;
- Developing methodologies for selecting telecentre locations; and
- Developing web page creation and design schools, which could provide the basis for services exported to developed countries.

3.5 Stakeholder focus groups

The stakeholder groups stressed a number of areas for follow up. The Youth Group recommended an on-line youth forum, the development of an African Youth Action Plan through National Youth Forums, collaboration of African youth with youth elsewhere in the South and African content development, with emphasis on youth.

For ICTs to be an empowering tool for development, the Gender Group said that it was essential for women to participate effectively in ICT decision-making processes, including NICI development and that ICTs applications, products and services should be designed to meet the specific needs of African women. They also wanted ICTs used to strengthen women's entrepreneurship and for women entrepreneurs to engage actively in the information economy. They also recommended education and training in science and technology for young African women. Additionally, they noted, ICTs could be used to enhance African women's capacity to speak out and support one another. The Group also advocated the establishment of mechanisms to guarantee gender equity in ICT planning, projects and programmes as well as research on the impact of ICTs on women and their struggle for equality.

The African Diaspora Group was eager to have African governments welcome their participation and support in meeting strategic goals. They felt this could happen through the creation of an enabling environment and incentives for investment and trade. They voiced their intention to create a virtual forum of African experts in the Diaspora to advise African decision makers and indicated that they would explore modalities of using Diaspora expertise to support Africa's interests in global forums such as ITU, WTO and ICANN. They thought that they could be useful in mobilizing support for African ICT development efforts in Europe and North America.

The academic Think Tank Group recommended the development of institutional capacity for training policymakers, analysts and researchers on the role and the use of ICTs in development. At the regional level, they wanted to see the development of methodologies for impact assessment of national policies relating to ICTs and other policy issues, with a view to promoting transparency and accountability in governance and regional cooperation.

The Private Sector Group felt that dialogue and debate within the African private sector and the global private sector was needed in order to enhance Africa's effectiveness in global forums. They advocated setting targets for creating employment in the information economy, focusing on intangible goods and services. To make this successful, the knowledge, education and training required for the information economy need to be redefined. They felt that new instruments were needed to support the capital needs of the African private sector, including venture capital funds and the restructuring of available financing from the regional and international financial institutions. They also wanted to see mechanisms developed to enable private sector participation in the NICI planning process, including a focus on the legal and regulatory framework required for the information economy.

4. Initiatives emerging from the ADF process

4.1 African Distance Learning Programme

A task force for the African Distance Learning Programme (ADLP) has been organized. Provisionally the task force will include participation by Egypt, South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia and other interested countries. The programme aims at using ICTs for the provision of distance learning in Africa.

The group recommends the drafting of a conceptual framework for the ADLP for completion by mid December 1999. This will include digital systems design, content design, communication and networking and local training and support facilities.

4.2 African Information Society Youth Network

Participants from the Youth Focus Group and others formed the African Information Society Youth Network, as a way to extend the Youth Focus Group beyond the Forum itself and become part of the African Information Society Initiative. The Network was preparing for a role at the Global Knowledge Conference in Kuala Lumpur and for a youth ICT journal, a website and a youth consultative forum to build Information Age momentum in Africa.

4.3 Alliance for African Business

In order to promote African private sector collaboration, the Alliance for African Business (AAB) was formed, coordinated by the Global Information Infrastructure Commission-Africa. It aims to maintain a website, knowledge management portals, archived mailing lists and to use web-based collaborative tools to promote dialogue and debate within the African and global private sector. One objective is to enhance Africa's ability to utilize effectively its access to the mechanisms of global governance.

4.4 Beijing+5 Women's Networking Activities

An electronic discussion forum has been formed to focus on the impact of ICTs on women in Africa (to be launched at the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women in Addis in November 1999)

4.5 Biz2BizNet

A group of some 70 representatives of companies, business associations, and chambers of commerce involved in ICT and development for micro and small enterprises agreed to launch a Biz2Biz network initiative committed to advancing the interests of micro and small enterprises in Africa. They recognized the ways in which such businesses could profit from ICTs for the management of their businesses as well as the new economic activities and services that the technologies could help them generate. The aims of the initiative are to establish virtual communication links between such enterprises in the Africa region in order to widen their global market opportunities, act as a broker for sourcing opportunities and promote shared access to training programmes.

4.6 Diaspora

The Diaspora Group will create a database of Diaspora groups already active and working for Africa's development as a means to linking needs to sources of support. The Diaspora Group will oversee the production of a special journal edition devoted to the various ways that the Diaspora can harness ICTs to promote Africa's development; an edited book on the same theme; and an online journal. The group will also develop a distance-learning system that intellectualizes indigenous knowledge and gets it to people in rural parts of Africa. It intends to initiate a project to link Diaspora groups with their communities in Africa using multipurpose telecentres.

4.7 Gaia: Global Access Information Agency

This project defined at ADF will reduce the price of Information Age services for end users in Africa. It is based on: recycling computers from developed countries; the development and use of 'copy left'/free software; and the training and the connection of end users. The initiative will be promoted by a coalition of ADF participants from several countries who are coming together to implement the initiative.

4.8 Malawi ADF National Plan of Action

The Vice President of Malawi, Right Honourable Justin Malewezi formed a Committee from among the delegates of his country to integrate the fundamental issues raised at this conference into a national plan of action. This Committee includes government, the private sector and think tanks.

4.9 NGOnet Africa: Civil Society ICT Network Initiative

NGO representatives at ADF created NGOnet Africa, an African-led information sharing and dissemination initiative for African civil society organizations. The initiative seeks to engage civil society organizations in Africa (non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations) in advocacy and the promotion of awareness towards broad-based stakeholder engagement in the promotion of ICT for African development. They stressed the need for civil society organizations to be involved in advocating equitable ICT policy in Africa at a global level, including at WTO negotiations. They urged African Governments to recognize the universal right to communications. The long-term result could be stronger African civil society voices in debates on information, communication and development issues in the region- a necessary prerequisite for effective policy reform.

A planning group was constituted at ADF and Chestrad International (Nigeria) identified as an interim-coordinating secretariat, with Woyaa providing electronic support.

4.10 Schoolnet Africa

A working group has been established to move forward the implementation of Schoolnet Africa, a continent wide initiative aimed at producing an African generation of critical thinkers who will play a major role in the global information society. The working group agreed to meet within 6 months to review a concrete programme of action.

4.11 Telecentre Network

People from 6 African countries agreed to build a network of telecentre operators and supporters to develop a manual, computer recycling strategies, identify e-commerce opportunities at community level, improve services for disabled people and share evaluation methodologies and outcomes.

Annex III: Exhibition

ADF '99 provided exhibition space to the private sector, governments and civil society to demonstrate products, services and applications that promote and extend the information society in Africa. The exhibition was an integral part of the Forum that received heavy traffic. The exhibitors were:

- Acacia-International Development Research Centre
- African Policy Information Center
- Bellanet International
- The British Council
- Ericsson
- Ethiopian Amateur Radio Society
- InfoPlus
- Information Technology Centre for Africa (ECA)
- International Center for Theoretical Physics
- International Gateway
- Lerechabetse Technologies Ltd.
- Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN)
- Nortel Networks
- Oracle Corporation
- SangoNet
- SchoolNet South Africa
- Trade Point Senegal
- Transnational Computer Technology
- TTI International Ltd.
- The World Bank-Africa Region Knowledge and Learning Centre
- UNESCO
- Top 50 Africa Web Sites
- International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
- WorldSpace Corporation
- United Nations Development Programme Internet Initiative for Africa
- United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN)

ANNEX IV: ADF '99 Documentation

The following documentation from ADF '99 is available on the Web at:
<http://www.bellanet.org/partners/aisi/adf99docs/docs.htm>

Document Symbol	Document Title
E/ECA/ADF99/1	African Country Profiles: National Information and Communication Infrastructure
E/ECA/ADF99/1	Profils des pays africains: infrastructure national de l'information et de la communication
E/ECA/ADF/99/2	Africa on the Internet: an annotated guide to African Web sites
E/ECA/ADF/99/2	L'Afrique sur l'Internet: un guide annoté aux sites Web africains
E/ECA/ADF/99/3	ADF '99 Programme
E/ECA/ADF/99/3	Programme de l'FAD'99
E/ECA/ADF/99/4	Democratizing Access to the Information Society
E/ECA/ADF/99/4	Democratiser l'accès à la société de l'information
E/ECA/ADF/99/5	Policies and Strategies for Accelerating Africa's Information Infrastructure Development
E/ECA/ADF/99/5	Politiques et stratégies pour accélérer le développement de l'infrastructure de l'information en Afrique
E/ECA/ADF/99/6	Information and Communication Technologies for Improved Governance in Africa
E/ECA/ADF/99/6	Les technologies de l'information et de la communication à l'appui de la bonne gouvernance
E/ECA/ADF/99/7	Globalization and the Information Economy: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa
E/ECA/ADF/99/7	La mondialisation et l'économie de l'information: enjeux et perspectives pour l'Afrique
E/ECA/ADF/99/8	The Process of Developing National Information and Communications Infrastructure (NICI) in Africa
E/ECA/ADF/99/8	Le processus de développement de l'Infrastructure Nationale de l'Information et de la Communication (INIC) en Afrique
E/ECA/ADF/99/9	Introduction to globalization and the Information Age
E/ECA/ADF/99/9	La mondialisation et l'ère de l'information: introduction
E/ECA/ADF/99/10	Information for participants
E/ECA/ADF/99/10	Informations pour participants
E/ECA/ADF/99/11	Guidelines for chairs, rapporteurs, panelists and presenters
E/ECA/ADF/99/11	Notes et directives à l'intention des présidents, conférenciers, panélistes et rapporteurs
E/ECA/ADF/99/12	Summaries of ADF'99 electronic discussion list
E/ECA/ADF/99/12	Résumé du groupe de discussion électronique du FAD '99

Full text of statements, addresses and panel summaries are available at:

http://www.un.org/Depts/eca/newweb/html/adf_speeches.htm Video clips are available at:

<http://www.bellanet.org/partners/aisi/video/>

Opening Session

- Statement by H.E. Meles Zenawi
- Opening remarks at the inaugural session by the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, Louise Fréchette
- Opening remarks by Mr. K.Y. Amoako, United Nations Under-Secretary General of the Economic Commission for Africa
- Statement of Mr. Omar Kabbaj, President of the African Development Bank
- Statement by the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, Salim Ahmed Salim;
- Address by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Ms. Louise Fréchette (English/French)
- Opening remarks by Mr. K.Y. Amoako, United Nations Under-Secretary General of the Economic Commission for Africa
- Address by Mr. Leonard H. Robinson, Jr. President and CEO, the National Summit on Africa
- Speech by Mr. Noah Samara, Chairman and CEO, World Space Corporation
- ADF Panel Summary No. 1 - "Progress towards the African Information Age", 25 October 1999 (*Monday 25/10*)
- ADF Panel Summary No. 2 - Globalization and the Information Economy - Challenges and Opportunities (Theme 1) (*Monday 25/10*)
- ADF Panel Summary No. 3 - ICTs for Improved Governance (Theme 2) (*Monday 25/10*)
- ADF Panel Summary No. 4 - Strengthening Africa's Information Infrastructure (Theme 3) (*Monday 25/10*)
- ADF Panel Summary No. 5 - Democratizing Access to the Information Society (Theme 4) (*Monday 25/10*)
- ADF Panel Summary No. 6 - Strategies for Policy Research: A role for African Think Tanks (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Panel Summary No. 7 - Findings of the Gender Focus Group (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Panel Summary No. 8 - ICTs and the Media (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Summary No. 11 - Indicators for the information economy and their relevance to Africa (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Summary No. 12 - Breakout sessions on Information Economy (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Summary No. 13 - Breakout sessions on Governance (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Summary No. 14 - Breakout sessions on Democratizing Access (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Summary No. 15 - Breakout sessions on Infrastructure (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Summary No. 16 - Feedback on Youth Focus Group (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Summary No. 17 - Workshop on introducing electronic commerce to small business (*Tuesday 26/10*)
- ADF Summary No. 9 - Summary of Address by *President Alpha Oumar Konaré* to the ADF

- ADF Summary No. 10 - The Response from Donors (*Wednesday 27/10*)

Closing day

- ADF ends with concrete initiatives on the table
- SCENARIO: FINAL PLENARY ADF, 28 October 1999
- The Way Forward to a people-centred African Information Society

[illegible]

- Participants' presentations

Time	Session	Document Title
Sunday, 24 October 1999		
18.00	Opening Session	<p>Statement by H. E. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on African Challenges and Visions for Development</p> <p>The Challenge to Africa of the New Millennium: The Perspective of the OAU, Statement by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity</p> <p>Africa's Development Challenges and the Information Age, Remarks by Ahmed Bahgat of the African Development Bank at the Opening Session</p> <p>Opening Statement, K. Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa</p> <p>Opening Remarks at the Inaugural Session of the African Development Forum, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations</p> <p>Address by Mr. Leonard H. Robinson, JR. - President and CEO, the National Summit on Africa, Sunday, October 24, 1999</p>
Monday, 25 October 1999		
9.00	Keynote presentations	<p>La Vice-Secrétaire Générale, Allocution au Forum Africain du Développement '99</p> <p>The Deputy Secretary-General, Address to the African Development Forum '99 (French above)</p> <p>Statement by Noah Samara</p> <p>Presentation by K. Y. Amoako</p>
11.00	Progress towards the African Information Age	<p>Globalization and the Information Age, Role of the African Information Society Initiative, by Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane</p> <p>Statement by the Right Honourable Justin Malewezi, Vice President of the Republic of Malawi, October 25, 1999</p>
14.30	Information & Communication Technologies for Improved Governance	<p>Royaume du Maroc Secrétariat d'Etat auprès du Premier Ministre à la Poste et aux Technologies de l'Information, Les TI au service de la bonne gouvernance- Le cas du Maroc, Najat Rochdi, Conseiller du Ministre</p>
16.30	Strengthening Africa's Information Infrastructure	<p>Policies and Strategies for Improving Africa's Information and Communications Infrastructure, Mike Jensen</p> <p>Panel Commentary by H. E. John Mahama, Minister of Communication (Ghana)</p>

Time	Session	Document Title
		<p>Internet Projects in Tunisia, Mrs. Khedija Ghariani</p> <p>Atelier d'élaboration d'un cadre stratégique régional de développement des Chapitres ISOC en Afrique pour la promotion des Systèmes d'Information et des Communications, by Olivier Sagna</p> <p>RASCOM SYSTEM</p> <p>RASCOM's Regional Approach Towards Strengthening Africa's Information Infrastructure in the Global Information Society, presented by Leke Bètechuoh Casimir</p>
Tuesday, 26 October 1999		
9.00	ICT support for I and II education (Democratization theme)	<p>Rapport de l'Atelier sur la création de réseaux scolaires régionaux</p> <p>SchoolNet Africa, Concept Proposal</p> <p>Schools Networking in Ghana, presented by Samuel Eshun, National Coordinator, WorLD-Ghana</p> <p>Cape Town Declaration, School Networking in Africa</p>
	Extending access... (Democratization theme)	<p>IRIN - Integrated Regional Information Network, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</p> <p>Kids and the next Millennium ... towards a Global Society, by Heba Ramzy-RITSEC</p> <p>Mount Kenya Multipurpose Community, Telecentre Development Project (MKMCT), presented by Youth Enterprise Scheme, Nairobi, Kenya</p>
	Facilitating citizens participation in the governance process (Governance theme)	<p>Popular Urban Information System (SIUP) of Yoff, Pilot Project of the Dakar Region, Senegal-West Africa, Presentation: Mamadou GAYE, Director</p> <p>SYSTEME D INFORMATION URBAIN POPULAIRE (SIUP) DE YOFF, Projet pilote pour la Région de Dakar (SENEGAL), CRESP/ECOYOFF, Présentation: Mamadou GAYE, directeur du projet</p> <p>Préparer les parlements africains à la société de l'information, par Mamadou DIOP "Decroix", Député à l'Assemblée Nationale du Sénégal, Président du Réseau des Parlementaires sur Les Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication</p>
	Global, regional, subregional, national frameworks (Information economy theme)	<p>Le Commerce Électronique et l'AGCS 2000: Perspectives africaines, FDA'99, Abdoulaye Ndiaye, Sénégal</p> <p>Towards an Electronic Commerce Policy for South Africa, by Dillo Lehlokoe, Project Coordinator</p>

Time	Session	Document Title
		<p>An Egyptian Electronic Commerce Initiative, Dr. Sherif Hashem, The Egyptian Cabinet, Information & Decision Support Center (IDSC)</p> <p>Electronic Commerce: How can Africa Participate? by Ibrahima Diagne</p> <p>What voluntary business associations should do to promote electronic commerce in Africa, by Kebour Genna</p> <p>UNCTAD Press Release - Intense Activity Ahead on Promoting Electronic Commerce for Developing Countries: UNCTAD's Work on E-commerce Gears up with Series of Meetings and Workshops</p> <p>Vers une Société Africaine de l'Information: Un défi pour les organisations Africaines de régionalisation économique, Willy Jackson</p> <p>Information Economy Theme Report</p>
	Investment and financing (Infrastructure theme)	Infrastructure & Policy, Workshop on Financing & Investment, by Muriuki Mureithi, Summit Strategies - Nairobi, Kenya
	Indicators of the information economy (Information economy theme)	Toward an African Information Economy: Indicators and Benchmarks, Heather E. Hudson
11.00	Lessons learned in ICT applications in governance (Governance theme)	<p>The New Technologies of Information and Communication at the Service of the Development, Trade Point Senegal, an Experience to Share</p> <p>Information Support for Agricultural Research in Ghana: the Ghana Agricultural Information Network System (GAINS), by Clement Entsua-Mensah and Joel Sam</p>
	Internet Governance (Infrastructure theme)	Internet Governance and New Mechanisms for Managing Africa's Information Infrastructure, Pierre Dandjinou, UNDP
	Knowledge, Education & Learning to strengthen the information economy (Information economy theme)	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) - Mediated Education and Training Within the Context of an Information and Knowledge Economy (IKE) by Clement Dzidonu Ph.D.
	Capacity building &	South African IT Industry Strategy (SAITIS) Baseline
	Human Resource development ... (Infrastructure theme)	Studies, by Tina James

Time	Session	Document Title
	Integrating new and old technologies... (Democratization theme)	Proposition de Projet: "RELIER LA RADIO RURALE A L'INTERNET", Une Approche Intégrée de Communication pour le Développement, Appliquée à l'Internet et au Développement Agricole et Rural, Présentée par Jean-Pierre Ilboudo, Ph.D.
	The challenge and opportunities of ICTs in the health sector (Governance theme)	Developing Appropriate Healthcare Information Systems for Africa: The Made-in-Nigeria Primary Healthcare and Hospital Information System Project by Ms. Soriyan H.A, Computer Science & Engineering Department, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, Mikko J. Korpela, Computing Centre, University of Kuopio, Finland; Makanjuola R.O.A., Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex, Ile-Ife, Nigeria Communication de la délégation Malgache, la Politique Sanitaire Face au défi de la Mondialisation et l'Ere de l'Information en Afrique Some Information and Communication Technologies and their Effect on Maternal Health in Rural Uganda, by Maria G. N. Musoke
	Community Applications	Telecenters: The Egyptian Experience, Dr. Sherif Hashem
	Creating Information Industries in Africa (Information economy theme)	Creating information industries in Africa , by Mavis Ampah Sintin-Misa Projet Régional INDAFTEL, Assistance pour le Développement de l'Industrie des Télécommunications en Afrique, par Assane DIALLO, Coordonnateur Shaping the Future of E-Commerce in Africa, Presented by Jacques Rostenne, President, PERWIT International
14.30	Content poster session	TOP 50 African Web Sites, In Search for Quality Web Content, Noel Yavo, Managing Director, Woyaa African Electronic Lists, by Claire Sibthorpe
16.30	Introducing e-commerce to small business	Internet for Business, Making Money on the Web, a Specialized workshop for Executives and Entrepreneurs, Presented by Jacques Rostenne, President, PERWIT International, Ottawa, Canada
	ICTs and the media	Mass Media and Challenge of ICT, by Olufemi Ajayi Radio and the Internet, Converging for Pluralism & Democracy, by Bruce Gerard

Time	Session	Document Title
Wednesday, 27 October 1999		
14.30	National Information & Communication Infrastructure Policies and Plans	Country Report on the Development of a National Information and Communication Infrastructure for Namibia, Presented by Hon. Ben Amathila, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Republic of Namibia Infrastructure NIC au Burkina Faso, NTIC National Information and Communication Infrastructure Plans for African Countries: Lishan Adam An Address by His Excellency Professor Jerry Gana, Honourable Minister of Co-operation and Integration in Africa, the Presidency, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Abuja
16.30	Development Agencies panel	ICTs in Africa and the EC, by Amos Tincani European Union, Summary of Key Principles for Applicants to Budget Line B-7 6000, "NGO Co-financing"
Thursday, 28 October 1999		
9.00	Plenary	Address by President A. Konare of the Republic of Mali (English - Summary)
11.30	Use & Development of ICTs to promote learning, teaching... An electronic commerce research agenda...	Computers for Academic, Management and Administrative Support (CAMAS), An ICT Project at the University of Zambia, by Prof. J. M. Mwenechanya Use and development of ICTs to promote learning, teaching and research in African Universities, by Prof. G. O. Ajayi RITSEC-RDLP, Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Center, Regional Distance Learning Program FEMCOM, COMESA, Creating a Better Future

Time	Session	Document Title
15.30	The Way Forward	<p>SCENARIO: FINAL PLENARY</p> <p>International Policies, African Realities: an Electronic Roundtable, Hosted by the Africa Policy Information Center (APIC), in Partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and with Assistance from Bellanet</p> <p>Les ONG a l'ère de l'information: Recommandations pour une participation effective de la société civile à l'ère de l'information</p> <p>NGOs in the Information Age: Recommendations for Effective Participation of Civil Society in the Information Age</p> <p>Private Sector Focus Group Report</p> <p>Gender Focus Group Report</p> <p>Youth Focus Group Report</p> <p>Think Tank Focus Group Report</p> <p>African Diaspora Focus Group Report</p> <p>The Way Forward, to a people-centred African Information Society</p>

Annex V: Partners in ADF'99

- African Connection Programme
- Bellanet International
- Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Centre for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM)
- Ford Foundation
- Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC)
- Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP)
- Government of the Netherlands
- Government of Switzerland
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- Partnership for Information and Communication Technologies in Africa (PICTA)
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- World Bank Institute (WBI)
- WorldSpace Corporation

Annex VI: List of Participants

Algérie

M. Mohamed Cherif Benerbaiha
Services du Chef du Gouvernement
Ministère de la Planification
Algiers, Algérie
Phone: 213 2 92 21 17

Belgium

Mr. Sola Osinibi
Ambassador Consultant
Origin International
Imperiastraat 12
B-1930 Zaventem, Belgium
Phone: 32 (0)2-712 37 92
Fax: 32 (0)2-712 35 01
E-Mail: sola.osinibi@origin-it.com

Mr. Jay Sauerbrei
Global Marketing Manager, ES
Origin International
Imperiastraat 12
B-1930 Zaventem, Belgium
Phone: 32 75 84 60 63
Fax: 32 2 712 3778
E-Mail: jay.sauerbrei@origin-it.com

Amos Tincani
Head of Division
European Commission-DG DEV/B/3
200 rue de la loi
1049 Brussels, Belgium
Phone: 322 2959444
Fax: 322 2992897
E-Mail: amos.tincani@cec.eu.int

Mr. Noel Yavo
Managing Director
UNESCO - Woyaa Inc.
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: 065 33 4586
Fax: 065 84 50 61
E-Mail: sales@woyaa.com

Bénin

M. Sadikou Aya Alao
President
GERDDES Africa
B. P. 1258
Cotonou, Bénin
Phone: 229 334333
Fax: 229 334332/334499
E-Mail: jenddes@bow.intnet.bj

M. Boko Baguidi
Inspector
Ministère du Plan
Cotonou, Bénin
Phone: 229 30 15 53
Fax: 229 30 16 60

Leslie Bird
Director
Advocates for Technology
08 BP 0686
Cotonou, Bénin
Phone: 229 33 73 73
Fax: 229 33 73 74
E-Mail: birdlj@hotmail.com

M. Pierre S. Dandjinou
Programme Officer for Africa
Sustainable Development Networking Programme - Africa
(SDNP/Africa)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
BP 506
Cotonou, Bénin
Phone: 229 31 53 84
Fax: 229 31 53 84
E-Mail: sdnfaj@intnet.bj
URL: <http://www.sdnf.undp.org>

M. Dominique Houkonnou
03 BP 3030
Cotonou, Bénin
Phone: 229-332284
Fax: 229-335182
E-Mail: dhounk@bow.intnet.bj

M. Yaovi Hounkponou
Directeur
Agence Bénin Presse
Ministère de la culture et de la communication,
Porte parole du Gouvernement
BP 72
Cotonou, Bénin
Phone: 229 31 26 55
Fax: 229 31 13 21
E-Mail: abpben@bow.intnet.bj

M. Emmanuel Kouagou
Directeur adjoint de Cabinet
Ministère de la culture et de la communication
s/c PNUD
Cotonou, Bénin
Phone: 229 30-19-88/ 30-05-36/315729
Fax: 229 31 59 31

M. Ken Lohento
Président
ORIDEV
03 BP 4301
Cotonou, Bénin
Phone: 229 30 20 04
Fax: 229 30 52 71
E-Mail: oridev@h2com.com

Botswana

Mr. Kampembe Nsingo
Chairman of the Board and Executive President
The African Renaissance Institute
Plot 50361
Gaborone, Botswana

Phone: 267 588207
Fax: 267 588108
E-Mail: ari@powernet.bw

Burkina Faso

Son Excellence M. Mahamoudou Ouédraogo
Ministre
Ministère de la Communication et de la Culture
03 BP 7045
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Phone: (226) 314572/324272
Fax: (226) 310363
URL: <http://www.primature.gov.bf/>

Son Excellence Mme. Bernadette Sanou
Ministre
Ministère de l'Intégration Régional
BP : 01 BP 06
Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso
Phone: (226) 33 73 69
Fax: 226 31 41 90
URL: <http://www.primature.gov.bf/>

M. Joachim Tankoano
Délégué Général de l'Informatique
Bureau de Premier Ministre
01 BP 1332
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Fax: 226 31 41 05
E-Mail: joachim.tankoana@delgi.gov.bf

Burundi

M. Evode Ndayizigiye
Directeur
Agence Burundaise de Presse (ABP)
Ministère de la Communication
BP 2870
Bujumbura, Burundi
Phone: (257) 213083
Fax: (257) 222282
E-Mail: abp@cbinf.com
URL: <http://www.abp.info.bi>

Son Excellence M. Léon Nimbona
Ministre
Ministère de la Planification du Développement et de la Reconstruction
B.P. 224
Bujumbura, Burundi
Phone: (257) 225394/226420
Fax: (257) 226 420
E-Mail: arthur@cbinf.com

Son Excellence M. Luc Rukingama
Ministre
Ministère de la Information et de la Communication
B.P. 704
Bujumbura, Burundi
Phone: (257) 22 46 66
Fax: (257) 21 63 18

Cameroun

M. Modo Asse
Ministry of Communication
Yaoundé, Cameroun

Pauline Biyong
League for Women and Child Education
B.P. 14702
Yaoundé, Cameroun
Phone: 237 22 40 01
Fax: 237 22 40 01
E-Mail: pauline.biyong@camnet.cm

Mr. Daniel Boo
UNESCO
P.O. Box 12909
Yaoundé, Cameroun
E-Mail: d.boo@unesco.org

Mme. Paule Assoumou Koki
InfoPlus
Yaoundé, Cameroun
Phone: 237 205 094
Fax: 237 205 096
E-Mail: infoplus@camnet.cm

M. Mezom Melouta
Yaoundé, Cameroun

M. Wawa A. Ngege
National Coordinator, SDNP Cameroon
SDNP
B.P. 30655 Biyem Assi
Yaoundé, Cameroun
Phone: (237) 22 21 82
Fax: (237) 22 21 82
E-Mail: wangenge@sdncmr.undp.org
URL: <http://www.sdn.undp.org/sdncmr/wawa.htm>

Mr. Ousmanou Oumara
Civil Administrator
Ministry of Public Investments
c/o UNDP - Cameroun
Yaoundé, Cameroun
Phone: 237 222182
URL: wangenge@sdncmr.undp.org

Prof. Ernest Touna Mama
University of Yaoundé
P.O. Box 1365
Yaoundé, Cameroun
Phone: 237 20 69 25
Fax: 237 23 73 89

M. Francis Wete
Inspecteur Général
Ministry of Communication
Yaoundé, Cameroun
Phone: 237 22 11 79

Mme Gisele Yitamben
Director
Association pour soutien et l'appui à la Femme Entrepreneur

(ASAFE)
P.O. Box 5213
Douala, Cameroun
Phone: 237 30 86 90
Fax: 237 42 90 70
E-Mail: asafe@camnet.cm

Son Excellence M. René Ze Nguele
Ministre de la Communication
Ministère de la Communication
S/c: PNUD
Yaoundé, Cameroun
Phone: s/c (237) 221779
Fax: s/c (237) 224369

Canada

Dr. John Afele
Director
International Program for Africa
University of Guelph, Department of Plant Agriculture
Crop Science Building
Guelph, Ontario, Canada
Phone: 519-824-4120 ext 3934
Fax: 519-763-8933
E-Mail: jafele@plant.uoguelph.ca

Mr. David Balson
Director
Bellanet International
P.O. Box 8500
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Phone: +1 613 236 6163/2436
Fax: +1 613 238 7230
E-Mail: dbalson@bellanet.org
URL: <http://www.bellanet.org>

Mr. Alain Berranger
Director
IDRC
POB 8500
Ottawa, ON K1G 3H9, Canada
Phone: 613 236-6263
Fax: 613 563 9815
E-Mail: aberranger@idrc.ca

M. Roger Dumelie
Director
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
200 Promenade du Portage
Quebec, Canada
Phone: 819 997-5579
Fax: 819 953-6357
E-Mail: roger_dumelie@ACDI-CIDA.gc.ca

Mr. Shady Kanfi
Programme Officer
Bellanet
c/o IDRC
Ottawa, ON K1G 3H9, Canada
Phone: +1 613 236 6163
Fax: +613 238 7230
E-Mail: skanfi@bellanet.org

Ms. Katherine Morrow
Program Officer
Bellanet International
c/o IDRC
Ottawa, ON K1G 3H9, Canada
Phone: +1 613 236 6163
Fax: +1 613 238 7230
E-Mail: kmorrow@bellanet.org
URL: <http://www.bellanet.org>

Fakiha Muktar
Consulting Manager
CGI, Canada
1 Dundas St. West, Fl. 17
Toronto, Canada
Phone: 416 215 2964
Fax: 416 598 2369
E-Mail: fakiha.muktar@cgi.ca

Mr. Lawrence Peck
Program Officer
Panafrican and Francophonie Program
CIDA
200 Promenade du portage
Hull, Quebec J8Y 2S6, Canada
Phone: 819 997 6380
Fax: 819 997 5453
E-Mail: lawrence_peck@acdi-cida.gc.ca

Mr. Jacques Rostenne
President
Perwit International
505 Westminster Ave.
Ottawa, Canada
Phone: 613 729-2090
Fax: 613 729-2144
E-Mail: jrostenne@perwit.com

Ms. Nidhi Tandon
Networked Intelligence for Development
210 Indian Road
Toronto, Ont; Canada
Phone: (1 416) 763 0371
Fax: (1 416) 763 0372
E-Mail: ntnp@interlog.com

Mr. Frank Tulus
Research Officer
IDRC
P.O. BOX 8500
Ottawa, ON K1G 3H9, Canada
Phone: 613 236 6163
Fax: 613 567 7749
E-Mail: ftulus@idrc.ca

Mr. Robert Valantin
Senior Scientific Advisor
Information and Communication Technologies
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
P. O. Box 8500
Ottawa, ON K1G 3H9, Canada
Phone: +1-613-2366163 ext 2604
Fax: +1-613-5633858
E-Mail: rvalantin@idrc.ca

Cap-Vert

Son Excellence M. António Joaquim Rocha Fernandes
Ministre de l'Infrastructure et de l'Habitat
Ministère de l'Infrastructure et de l'Habitat
Praia, Cap-Vert
Fax: 236 614141

Côte d'Ivoire

Mme. Gertrude Akapelwa-Ehueni
Special Assistant
African Development Bank
B.P. V316
Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: +225 204444
Fax: +225 21 77 53
E-Mail: comuadb@afdb.org

Dr. Ahmed Bahgat
Vice President
African Development Bank (ADB)
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Dlinpela Coulibaly
Directeur
Ministre Délégué, Chargée des Collectivités Territoriales
l'Intérieur
BP V 266
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: 225 21 27 79
Fax: 225 2135 76

M. Salieu Jack
African Development Bank (ADB)
BP V316
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: 225 20 51 39
Fax: 225 20 40 53
E-Mail: s.jack@afdb.org

M. Bouah Kablan Francis
IICBA - Unesco
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: 225 335021
E-Mail: bfkablan@francimel.com

M. L. Konate
Centre Informatique Régional
06 BP 1851
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: 225 44 81 44
Fax: 225 44 81 43

M. B. Casimir Leke
Promotion and Signatories Manager
RASCOR
2, Avenue Thomasset
Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: 225 22 36 74/22 36 83
Fax: 225 22 36 76/22 36 79

Yuma Morisho Paul
Group Challenge

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: 225 47 04 08
Fax: 225 21 10 25
E-Mail: chalsag@africaonline.com

Dr. Ini Urua
Principal Industrial Engineer
African Development Bank (ADB)
BPV 316
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Phone: 225 20 52 50
Fax: 225 20 49 02
E-Mail: ini.urua@yahoo.com

Djibouti

Mme. Afaf Abu-Hasabo
Représentant résident
Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement
Boîte Postale 2001
Djibouti, Djibouti
Phone: (253) 351361
Fax: (253) 350587

M. Mohamed Ahmed Moussa
Secrétaire General
Pount People's Action (PPA)
BP 10114
Djibouti, Djibouti
Phone: 253 353052
Fax: 253 354131

M. Ahmed Ariata
Ministère de l'éducation nationale
B.P. 16
Djibouti, Djibouti
Phone: (253) 350997
Fax: (253) 354234

Kasim Mohamoud Waiss
UNESCO - Djibouti
Djibouti, Djibouti
Phone: 00 253 35 11 51
Fax: 00 253 35 57 57
E-Mail: kassimw@hotmail.com

M. Warsama Osman Ahmed
President
Pount People's Action (PPA)
Plateau du Serpent
Djibouti, Djibouti
Phone: 253 353052
Fax: 253 354131

Egypt

Adel Danish
Managing Director
STANDARDATA Egypt
Cairo 12411, Egypt
Phone: 202 344 5394
Fax: 202 346 0652
E-Mail: adanish@sdata.egnet.net

Ms. Effat El Shooky
Executive Director
RDLP-RITSEC
11A, Hassan Sabry St., Zamalek
Cairo, Egypt
Phone: (202) 339-1394 / 319-9355
Fax: (202) 341-2139

Dr. Sherif Hashem
Project Manager
The Egyptian Cabinet Information & Decision Support Center
(IDSC)
1 Magles El-Shaab Street
Cairo, Egypt
Phone: +20 2 3668203 / 202 3199355
Fax: +20 2 3551716
E-Mail: shashem@idsc.gov.eg

Ms. Magda Ismail
Information Highway Unit
Information Decision and Support Center
1, Magless El Shaab St.
Cairo, Egypt
Phone: -3668015
Fax: -3551514
E-Mail: magdam@idsc1.gov.eg

Ms. Heba Ramzy
Director
Kids Information Highway Division, RITSEC
11 A Hassan Sabry Street, Zamalek
Cairo, Egypt
Phone: 202 341 1761/ 339 1390
E-Mail: hramzy@ritsec1.com.eg

Ethiopia

Mr. Berhane Abate
Ministry of Transport & Communications
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 2511 15 35 50

Mr. Asmare Abate
Managing Director
Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation
PO Box 1047
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 15 80 80
Fax: 251 1 51 57 77
E-Mail: a.abate@telecom.net.et

Mr. Solomon Abate
Manager
Vision Information and Promotion
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 09 208118

Jalal Abdel-Latif
Inter Africa Group
P.O. Box 1631
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Benhadi Abdellatif
OAU

P.O. Box 200225
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510397

Ali Abdi
Resident Representative
IMF - Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511411
Fax: 251-1-511118

Ms. Genet Abebe
Third Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
POB 393
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-517345 / 156203
Fax: 251-1-511244
E-Mail: genetabebe@hotmail.com

Samuel Aberra
President
Global African Social Investment Promotion Council (African
Youth Think Tank
Group)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-601306
Fax: 251-1-612514
E-Mail: facic@telecom.net.et

Mr. Joseph Aboul-Faki
IICBA - Unesco
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 75 87
Fax: 55 75 85
E-Mail: jaboulfaki@unesco-iicba.org

G. Timnit Abraha
Researcher
University of London
W 18, K36
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510850
E-Mail: timnit@yahoo.com

Mr. Fanta Adane
Manager
Internet Service Division
Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC)
POB 7772
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-514556
Fax: 251-1-515777
E-Mail: fadane@telecom.net.et

Mr. Mohamed Adea Ibrahim
Chairman
Organization of the United Somali National Students (OUSNS)
P.O. Box 10092
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-188527
Fax: 251-1-611252

Mrs. G. Oyebola Adetula
International Expert on Drug Control
Organization of African Unity (OAU)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510474
Fax: 251-1-185201
E-Mail: bolaadetula@hotmail.com

Mr. Y.C. Afanou
Head, Transport and Communications Division
OAU
P.O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510397
E-Mail: y.afanou@telecom.net.et

Sheik Mohammed H. Al-Amoudi
Chairman & General Manager
MIDROC-Ethiopia Group
PO Box 8677
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 71 12 77
Fax: 251 1 71 19 12 / 71 29 90

Mr. Mekonnen Alemayehu
A/ Division Manager
Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation (ETC)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-157849
Fax: 251-1-515777

Dr. Nega Alemayehu
Lecturer
School of Information Studies for Africa (SISA)
Addis Ababa University
P.O. Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-110433
Fax: 251-1-553811
E-Mail: Sisa.aau@telecom.net.et

Dr. Tadesse Alemu
Consultant
e-Health Systems
P. O. Box 6728
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-110781 / 515469
Fax: 251-1-553965
E-Mail: tadesse.alemu@telecom.net.et

Mr. Zewege Alemu
Alemu Taffese & Sons
P.O. Box 3690
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Joan Allison
Liasion Office
UNHCR
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Adjoa Amana
Regional Adviser
UNFPA/CST
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Sam Amoo
Director
Peace for Development
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dée Dee Angagaw
Program Coordinator - IGAD
UNDP
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Obeng Anthony Victor
FAO Representative in Ethiopia, to OAU and ECA
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
P.O.Box 5536, Addis Ababa
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 513093
Fax: 515266
E-Mail: anthony.obeng@field.fao.org

Dr. Samuel Assefa
AIDDA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 714665
E-Mail: s_Asefa@hotmail.com

Mr. Demlew Aweke
Department Head
National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA)
P. O. Box 1090
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-512299
E-Mail: demlew@hotmail.com
Ms. Genet Awlachew
British Council
P.O. Box 1043
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dr. Hailu Ayele
Academic Vice President
Addis Ababa University
P. O. Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1- 557477
Fax: 251 1 55 06 55
E-Mail: hailu.ayele@telecom.net.et

His Excellency Mr. Kassahun Ayele
Minister of Industry and Trade
Ministry of Industry and Trade
PO Box 2559
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 51 80 25
Fax: 251 1 51 54 11

Mr. Yasser Bagersh
Marketing Executive
S. A. Bagersh
W 21 K 01
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-530419
Fax: 251-1-510922

Mr. Abdullah Bagersh
Executive

SA Bagersh
P.O. Box 1269
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 530 419
Fax: 516 288
E-Mail: bagersh@telecom.net.et

Mr. Omar Bagersh
President
SA Bagersh
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-530419 / 156288
Fax: 251-1-510922
E-Mail: bagersh@telecom.net.et

Mr. Abdi Hersi Bashir
Organization of the United Somali National Students (OUSNS)
P.O. Box 10002
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Abiyot Bayu
SISA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mrs. Rahel Bekele
Head
Library and Information Science
Addis Ababa University
P.O. Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-550844 Ext. 237
Fax: 251-1-550655
E-Mail: Kennedy.aau@telecom.net.et

Dr. Dawit Bekele
Department of Mathematics
Addis Ababa University
P.O. Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: 251-1-550655
E-Mail: Maths.aau@telecom.net.et

Mr. Demisew Bekele
EMA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 5191 32

Mr. Teklu Bekele
Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mrs. Engudai Bekele
Coordinator
Partnership Africa Canada (PAC)
P.O. Box 60233
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 39 71
Fax: 51 58 33
E-Mail: pac@telecom.net.et

Ms. Sophia Bekele
President/Managing Partner
CBS International
P.O. Box 12649

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 515733/ 519074
Fax: 251 1 515640/510097
E-Mail: cbs@telecom.net.et

Ms. Rebecca Belay
British Council
P.O. Box 1043
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Abebe Belayneh
Deputy Transmission Division
ETC
P.O. Box 1047
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 64 66
Fax: 51 57 77
E-Mail: abelayneh@hotmail.com

Mr. Dilnesaw Berhanu
Technical Head
Multichoice Ethiopia
W 18 K 27, HN 987/05
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510390
E-Mail: habru@telecom.net.et

Mr. Daniel Bezuayehu
Mosbez Pvt. Ltd Co.
P.O. Box 2262
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 56 00 70

Mr. Getachew Birru
Dean
School of Information Studies for Africa (SISA)
Addis Ababa University
P. O. Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-110433
Fax: 251-1-553811
E-Mail: Sisa.aau@telecom.net.et

Guunel Bjorhert
General Manager
Ericsson - Ethiopia
POB 19864
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: 251-1-516190

Laura Buffoni
c/o UNHCR
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 11 00

Mr. Asrat Bulbula
Commissioner
Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission
P.O. Box 2490
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: estc@telecom.net.et

M. Moussa Makan Camara
Resident permanent aupres de l'OAU et de la CEA

Organization internationale de la francophonie
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: +251 1 51 00 64

Mr. Thomas Chacko
Managing Director
Venus Computer Training Centre
P.O. Box 32363
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 556460
Fax: 251 1 55 23 41
E-Mail: thomas.chacko@telecom.net.et

Mr. Melvin Chalobah
UNDP/UNOPS
P.O. Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 53 12 84
Fax: 53 34 13
E-Mail: melchalobah@hotmail.com

Georg Charpentier
Deputy Resident Representative
UNDP - Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Abebe Chekol
Development Information Officer
Development Information Center
British Council
P.O. Box 1043
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-550022
Fax: 251-1-552544
E-Mail: Abebe.Chekol@bc-addis.bcouncil.org

Ms. Fay Chung
Director
IICBA - UNESCO
P.O. Box 2305
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 75 85
Fax: 55 75 85
E-Mail: fchug@iicba-unesco.org

Mr. Abdoul Coulibaly
Consultant
IICBA - Unesco
P.O. Box 2305
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 75 88
Fax: 55 75 86

Mr. Gunther Cyranek
Regional Advisor for Africa
UNESCO
POB 1177
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-513953
Fax: 251-1-511414
E-Mail: g.cyranek@unesco.org
URL: <http://www.unesco.org/webworld>

Dr. Ermias Dagne
Department of Chemistry
Addis Ababa University
P.O. Box 30270
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: 251 1 551244

Ms. Zahara Dagne
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 12 48 48
E-Mail: zdamai@hotmail.com

Dr. Yohannes Damtew
Executive Director
Healthinfo-Ethiopia
P.O. Box 9051
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-12 43 88
Fax: 251-1-53 14 42
E-Mail: yohannes_damtew@yahoo.com

Mr. Fisseha Dawit
WorldSpace - Ethiopia
P.O. Box 17
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 20 58
Fax: 51 20 58
E-Mail: ahidaru@hotmail.com

Mr. Dawit Deguefu
World Bank - Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Normand Demers
Head
Information Services
ILRI
P.O. Box 5689
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 611692
Fax: 251 61 18 92
E-Mail: n.demers@cgiar.org

Prof. Vremudia Diejomaoh
Director
ILO/Addis Ababa
POB 2788
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510346
Fax: 251-1-513633
E-Mail: ilo-addis@telecom.net.et

Nassir Dino
HILCOE
P.O. Box 33465
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 97 69
Fax: 55 14 77
E-Mail: hilcoe@telecom.net.et

Mr. David Eckerson
Deputy Director
USAID/Ethiopia
P. O. Box 1014

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510088
Fax: 251-1-510043
E-Mail: deckerson@usaid.gov
URL: <http://www.usaidethiopia.org>

Prof. Andreas Eshete
AIDDA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 71 46 65
E-Mail: s_assefa@hotmail.com

Dr. Churchill Ewumbue
Information Officer
OAU/IREP
POB 200059
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-186600
Fax: 251-1-615337

Fekade Fantahoun
Bagersh SA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mr. Asamoah Frederick
Craft Specialist
UNDP
POB 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Soule Funa
Director
Sub Regional Resource Faculty
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Alula G. Michael
Multi Choice Ethiopia
W 18 K 27
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Sirak G. Yohannes
Computer Specialist
UNDP
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: sirak.gyohannes@undp.org

Mr. Seyoum G/Hiwot
Manager
Library and Information Services
British Council
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-550022
Fax: 251-1-552544
E-Mail: Seyoum.G.hiwot@bc-addis.bcouncil.org

Mr. Melaku G/Yohannes
First Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ahadu Gebreamlak
Lawyer
GASIPC
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 25 14

Mr. Gemechu Geleta
National Computer and Information Centre
Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission
P.O. Box 2490
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 155306
Fax: 251 1 518829/533368
E-Mail: estc@telecom.net.et

Ms. Meron Genene
Gender and Networking Officer
InterAfrica Group
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-514575
Fax: 251-1-517554
E-Mail: iag@telecom.net.et or merongenene@hotmail.com

Mr. Mulugeta Gessesse
S. A. Bagersh
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Shimelis Getu
Head, Medical Library
Faculty of Medicine
Addis Ababa University
P.O.Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-159634
Fax: 251-1-513099
E-Mail: shimelisg@hotmail.com

Mr. Kebour Ghenna
General Manger
CEO, Infotec
P.O.Box 3155
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-71 21 96
Fax: 251-1-71 09 92
E-Mail: infotec.itg@telecom.net.et

Hannah Gutema
UNDP/Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Tesfaye Habisso
Ministry of Transport and Communications
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-158804/154608
Fax: 251-1-515665

Mr. Debebe Habte Yohannes
WorldSpace
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-512058
Fax: 251-1-512058

Selamawit Hagos
SbCommunications Netware-SbcNet
P.O. Box 11521
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-51-74-97

Fax: 51-56-70

E-Mail: SbcNet@cbsintc.com

URL: www.sbcnet.com

Ms. Frehiwot Haile Leoul
World Space
c/o P.O. Box 17
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: ahidaru@hotmail.com

Mr. Asfaw Hailemariam
Coordinator
ETC
P.O. Box 10899
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 15 94 60
Fax: 51 57 77
E-Mail: asfawhm@hotmail.com

Heikku Haili
Counsellor
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
POB 1017
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-611575
Fax: 251-1-610123

Mohamed Halifani
OAU
P.O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 77 00
Fax: 51 30 36

Ms. Aster Hidar
WorldSpace Corporation
W23 K13 HN 927
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-512059
Fax: 251-1-512058
E-Mail: ahidaru@hotmail.com

Mr. Abdulsemed Hussein
Marketing Division Mgr.
ETC
P.O. Box 1047
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 15 64 83
Fax: 51 57 77
E-Mail: abdulsemed_hussien@hotmail.com

Dr. Ahmed Hussien
Department of Mathematics
Addis Ababa University
P.O. Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-559769
E-Mail: Maths.aau@telecom.net.et

Dr. Habib Ibrahim
Training Materials Specialist
International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
P. O. Box 5689
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Phone: 613 215 ext. 259

E-Mail: h.ibrahim@cgnet.org

Tegen Ingram Hill
Director
British Council
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 00 22
Fax: 55 25 46

Mr. Shiferaw Jammo
AIDDA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 71 46 65
E-Mail: s_assefa@hotmail.com

Mr. Petros Kassahun
Head, Documentation and Information Services
Ministry of Trade and Industry
P.O. Box 704
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 15 25 02
E-Mail: petkan@telecom.net.et

Mr. Ahmed Kassam
Content and Operations
WorldSpace
c/o P.O. Box 17
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 254-2-210 805
Fax: 254-2-210 845
E-Mail: akassam@worldspace.com

Gladson Kayira
Senior Economist
UNDP
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mesfin Kebede
Training Manager
Infotec Plc.
P.O. Box 3155
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Tilahun Kebede
General Manager
Ethiopian Telecommunication Authority
P.O. Box 9991
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-515766
Fax: 251-1-531255

Mr. Getachew Kebede
Head, Frequency Mgmt.
ETA
P.O. Box 9991
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 53 00 86
Fax: 53 12 55
E-Mail: tele.agency@telecom.net.et

Mr. Alemayehu Kebede
Maritime and Transit Services Enterprise
W 21 K 1

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-151708

Mr. A.S. Koram
Chief, Communications Section
OAU
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Amare Lebesse
Second Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
POB 393
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-517345
Fax: 251-1-514300

Yehenew Lemma
British Council
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Sophia Lemma
World Food Programme
P.O. Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 515188
E-Mail: sophia.lemma@wfp.org

Judith Lewis
Country Director & Representative
World Food Programme
P.O.Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 51 88
E-Mail: judith.lewis@wfp.org

Fikirte Lijalem
Expert
Ministry of Transport and Communication
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Alex Loriston
Head, Operational Support Unit
World Food Programme
P.O. 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1515188
E-Mail: alex.loriston@wfp.org

Mary Maboreke
Chief
ESCAS Department
OAU
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-517700
Fax: 251-1-517844

Mr. Wondimeneh Mammo
Head
Science Faculty Library
Addis Ababa University
P.O.Box 1176
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Wagshum Mekonnen
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mamo Mengesha
IICBA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 11 43 28

Mr. Gashaw Mengistu
Development Information Specialist
USAID/Ethiopia
P.O. Box 1014
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 00 88
Fax: 51 00 43
E-Mail: gmengistu@usaid.gov

Ms. Sara Menker
Student
ICS-Addis Ababa
POB 70282
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-711062/711544
Fax: 251-1-710722
E-Mail: ics@telecom.net.et

Gelila Michael
General Manager
MultiChoice Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: habru@telecom.net.et

Dr. Salvatore Minniti
Associate Professional Officer
UNAIDS
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510152
Fax: 251-1-511021
E-Mail: unaids@telecom.net.et

Allehone Mulugeta
GASIPC
P.O. Box 150315
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 15 08 57

Mr. Waktasu Negeri
Acting Director General
International Organizations and Economic Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
POB 393
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-517345
Fax: 251-1-514300

Mr. Samuel Nyambi
Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme
P. O. Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: (251-1) 511025
Fax: (251-1) 514599

Dr. Peter Okoye
Deputy Resident Representative
UNHCR
POB 1076
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Elias Omar
Multi Choice
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 03 90
Fax: 51 36 81

Abimbola Omolabi
Urban Planner
UNDP
P.O. Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 51 77

Koorosh Raffii
UNICEF
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: kraffii@unicef.org

Mr. Robert Ransom
Deputy Director
ILO/Ethiopia
POB 2788
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-514313
Fax: 251-1-513633
E-Mail: ransom@ilo.org

Roberta Rossi
Public Information Officer
World Food Programme
P.O. Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 51 88
E-Mail: roberta.rossi@wfp.org

Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim
Secretary General
Organization of African Unity
PO Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 517 700
Fax: 251 1 512 622

Brahima Sanou
Senior Adviser
Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT)
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
ITU Regional Office
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-513346/514977
Fax: 251-1-517299
E-Mail: brahima.sanou@itu.int

Ms. Juliana Sendi
FSSD
UNECA/POPIN
P.O. Box 3005
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Phone: 251 1 517200 ext. 33383
E-Mail: sendi@un.org

Selamawit Seyoum
Multi Choice
W 18 K 27
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Getachew Seyoum
S. A. Bagersh
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Berhe Seyoum
Manager
External Relations Division
Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation (ETC)
P. O. Box 1047
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-159420
Fax: 251-1-515777
E-Mail: etc-hq@telecom.net.et

Ms. Kidist Shawl
SISA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 12 60 66

Mr. Govinda Shrestha
Consultant
IICBA - Unesco
IICBA, Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Phone: 55 75 87
E-Mail: shrestha@fas.harvard.edu

Ravi Shrestha
UNDP-UNU
P.O. Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dr. M.E. Smalley
Director, SPAN
ILRI
P.O. Box 5689
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 61 18 92
E-Mail: m.smalley@cgiar.org

Haile Meleket Tadesse
Alcatel
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 45 37
Fax: 51 47 13

Mr. Legesse Tashu
Ministry of Trade and Industry
POB 704
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-152961
Fax: 251-1-514288

Shiferaw Taye
British Council

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 00 22

Ms. Sehin Teferra
Intern
UNDP
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Melaku Tegegn
Panos Officer, Eastern Africa
Panos Institute - East Africa
P.O.Box 6826
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 610280
Fax: 610280
E-Mail: panos@telecom.net.et

Negash Tegene
T.W.M. International
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mrs. Yetunde Teriba
Women's Affairs Officer
OAU Women's Unit
OAU
Box 200055
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-517700
Fax: 251-1-512622
E-Mail: yetundeteriba@yahoo.com

Rahel Teshome
Bethlehem Training Center
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-610200

Mr. Barka Tessera-Worq
H 15 K 30
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Wossenyeleh Tigu
Head, Legal Service
Ethiopian Telecommunications Authority (ETA)
P.O. Box 9991
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 53 00 86
Fax: 53 12 55
E-Mail: tele.agency@telecom.net.et

Sebsibe Tilahun
Supervisor
Development Resource Center
PACT-Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-614806
Fax: 251-1-615465
E-Mail: pact.eth@telecom.net.et

Asrat Tilahun
Public Relations Associate
UNDP
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dr. David Tommy
Representative
UNIDO/Ethiopia
P.O. Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-514245
E-Mail: david.tommy@undp.org

Gumbo Touray
Urban Planner
UNDP
P.O.Box 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 515177
E-Mail: gumbotouray@yahoo.com

Kelemachew Tsehay
Civil Service College
P.O. Box 41 664
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Mike Vigrass
Director, Program Support Unit
P.O. Box 1009
CIDA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 71 56 00
Fax: 251 1 71 57 44
E-Mail: michael.vigrass@telecom.net.et

Luke Wasonga
Deputy Coordinator
UNDP - Ethiopia
POB 5580
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Claire Watier
Management Advisor
OAU
c/o OAU
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: claire.watier@cus.gc.ca

Dr. Miriam K. Were
Director
UNFPA
POB 8714
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-513134
Fax: 251-1-517133

Mr. Kifle Wodajo
AIDDA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 71 46 65

Mr. Arega Worku
Senior Advisor
MIDROC Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-71 12 77
Fax: 251-1-71 19 12

Tseday Worku
Intern
UNDP
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Henok Workye
UNESCO
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Bekele Yadeta
World Space
C/o Addis Office
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: byadeta@worldspace.com

Abdelkarim Ahmed Yousif
Counsellor
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Nabel Yusuf
Regional Representative
MCI World Com
PO Box 40040
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 654 645
Fax: 251 1 654 354
E-Mail: 403-7525@mcimail.com

Adama Zampagne
Deputy Resident Representative
UNDP-Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

H.E. Mr. Meles Zenawi
Prime Minister of Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dr. Legesse Zerihun
Associate Dean
Faculty of Medicine
Addis Ababa University
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: +251 1 512876
Fax: +251 1 513099
E-Mail: LegesseZ@eth.healthnet.org

France

Jean-Yves Besnier
Director
External Affairs
Nortel Networks
1 Place des Freres Montgolfier 78928 Guyancourt - Yvelines -
cedex 9
Paris, France
Phone: 33 139 44 3376
Fax: 33 138 44 38 80

Prof. J.M. Chassériaux
IRD
213 rue Lafayette
Paris, France

Phone: 33 1 48037721
Fax: 33 1 40362385
E-Mail: jean-michel.chassériaux@paris.ird.fr

Jean Coulon
Alcatel Space Division
5 rue Noël Pom
Nanterre, France
E-Mail: jean.coulon@alcatel.fr

M. Badara Faye
World Space France
World Space
1, Impasse de Candie
Toulouse, France
Fax: 00 335 61 43 84 10
E-Mail: badara_faye.worldspace@worldspace.com

M. Willy Jackson
Laboratoire Sedet
2 Place Jussieu
Paris, France
Phone: (33) 6 14 28 42 43
Fax: (33) 1 44 27 79 87
E-Mail: Wjackson@ccr.jussieu.fr

Dr. Marc Jaudoin
Département des politiques et des études
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
5, rue Roland Barthes
PARIS, Cedex 12, France
Phone: 33 1 53 44 31 31
Fax: 33 1 44 87 99 39
E-Mail: jaudoinm@afd.fr
URL: <http://www.afd.fr>

Jozias Koster
OECD - Club du Sahel
Paris, France
E-Mail: jozias.koster@oecd.org

Andrew Macintyre
Club du sahel OECD
94 rue Chardon-Lagache 75016
Paris, France
E-Mail: andrew.macintyre@oecd.org

Ms. Estedar Negga
University of Toulouse
14 rue de Jumeaux
Toulouse, France
Phone: 05 61 11 24 30
Fax: 05 61 11 24 30
E-Mail: estedar.negga@infonie.fr

M. Cyrille Simard
Responsable de projets
Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie
Institut francophone des Nouvelles technologies de l'information
et de la formation
(INTIF)
15-16, Quai Louis XVIII, 33000 Bordeaux
Bordeaux, France
Phone: +33(0)5 56 01 59 00

Fax: +33 (0)5 56 51 78 20
E-Mail: Cyrille.Simard@francophonie.org
URL: <http://www.agence.francophonie.org/>

Gabon

M. Alain Ba Oumar
Chairman
Gabon Chapter of Internet Society
BP 826
Libreville, Gabon
Phone: 241-729797
Fax: 241-764853
E-Mail: abo@internetgabon.com
URL: www.internetgabon.com

M. Dominique Hella-Ondo
Chargé de la Restructuration de l'OPT
Libreville, Gabon

Son Excellence M. Zéphirin Rayita
Ministre
Ministre de la Communication, de la Poste et des Technologies
de l'Information
Libreville, Gabon

Germany

Ingo Fehrmann
Executive Director
International Operations Africa, ME, CIS
Siemens AG
Wittelsbacherplatz 2
Munich, Germany
Phone: +49 89 636 32702
Fax: +49 89 636 32704
E-Mail: ingomar.Fehrmann@mchw.siemens.de

Mr. Jeffrey Hedberg
Member, Board of Management
International Division
Deutsche Telekom
c/o Georg Habenicht, Dir., Int'l Communication Management
Munich D-53105, Germany

Mr. Herbert Henke
Head
IT Division
GTZ
Eschborn, Germany
Phone: 49 6196 79 18 00
Fax: 49 6196 797107
E-Mail: herbert.henke@gtz.de

Mr. Marc Mortier
Vice president, Middle East and Africa
Information and Communication Networks Group
Siemens AG
Munich, Germany
Phone: +49 8972231103
Fax: +49 8972233310
E-Mail: marc.mortier@ien.siemens.de

Ghana

Mr. Joseph Abbey
Executive Director
Center for Policy Analysis
35 Josif Tito Avenue
Accra-North, Ghana
Phone: 233 21 779 364/5
Fax: 233 21 773670
E-Mail: cepaed@ncs.com.gh

Mr. Yawo Assigbley Yakoule
Association of African Universities (AAU)
P.O. Box 5744
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233 21 774495
Fax: 233 21 774821
E-Mail: yassig@aau.org
URL: <http://www.aau.org>

Ms. Gloria Bampo
Center Manager
Community Learning Center (CLC)
Central Regional Development Commission
P.O. Box 1198
Cape Coast, Ghana
Phone: 233 4232396/32639
Fax: 011 233 32 829
E-Mail: cedele@africaonline.com.gh

Prof. Mumuni Dakubu
University of Ghana
Chemistry Department, University of Ghana, Accra
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233-21-767886
E-Mail: mdakubu@ug.edu.gh

Prof. Clement Dzidonou
President & CEO
The International Institute for Information Technology (INIIT)
P.O. Box AN-19782
Accra-North, Ghana
Phone: 233-21-246200
Fax: 233-21-763062 or 233-21-779048
E-Mail: dzidonu@africaonline.com.gh

Mr. Clement Entsua-Mensah
Director, INSTI
CSIR
P.O. Box M32
Accra, Ghana
Fax: 233-21-779809
E-Mail: Cemensah@libr.edu.ug.gh

Dr. Kobena Gyapea Erbynn
Director-General
National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)
Flagstaff House, POB CT-633
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233-21 773089
Fax: 233-21 773046 / 773055
E-Mail: nprp@africaonline.com OR ndpc@ncs.com

Mr. Samuel Eshun
Country Coordinator
World Links for Development (WorLD)
P. O. Box CT1671
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233-27 581480
Fax: 233-21-771500
E-Mail: sgeshun@africaonline.com.gh
URL: www.world-Links.org/ghana

Ms. Dorothy K. Gordon
Development Consultant
P.O. Box 106, Legon
Accra, Ghana
Phone: (233-21) 400960
E-Mail: dorothy@ghana.com

Ms. Christine Kisiedu
Librarian
Dept of Library and Archival Studies
University of Ghana
P.O. Box 60
Legon, Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233 21 24 37 31 73
Fax: 233-21 50 27 01
E-Mail: ckisiedu@ug.gh.edu

Ms. Eva Lokko
Regional Programme Coordinator
UNDP Internet Initiative for Africa
Ammame House, P.O.Box 1423, Accra, Ghana
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233-21 506827
Fax: 233-21 773890
E-Mail: elokko@ghana.com

His Excellency Mr. John Mahama
Minister
Ministry of Communications
P.O. Box M41
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233 21 230672
Fax: 233 21 235800

Mr. Anthony Osei
Research Fellow
Center for Policy Analysis
P.O.Box 19010 Accra-North
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233-21-779364
Fax: 233-21-773670
E-Mail: aqakoto@yahoo.com

Mr. Nii Quaynor
Executive Chairman
Network Computer Systems
7, Sixth Ave Ridge PMB Osu
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233-21-220 622
Fax: 233 21 225 472
E-Mail: quaynor@ghana.com
URL: www.ghana.com

Mr. Joel Sam
GAINS Coordinator
Ghana Agricultural Information Network System (GAINS)
Institute for Scientific and Technological Information
P. O. Box M32
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233 21 76 35 23
Fax: 233 21 77 98 09
E-Mail: gains@libr.ug.edu.gh

Mr. Issah Yahaya
Ass. Director
Research and Information
Ministry of Communications
P.O.Box M.41
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233-21-242608
Fax: 233-21-235800
E-Mail: issahy@yahoo.com

Mr. Eric Yankah
Director, Internal Audit
Volta River Authority
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233 21 22 11 32
Fax: 233 21 66 2610
E-Mail: enyankah@ghana.com
URL: http://ericYankah.tripod.com

Guinée

M. Ahmadou Bah
Ministère de l'économie et des finances
BP 2519
Conakry, Guinée
Phone: 244 45 52 46

M. Cheick Fantamady Condé
Secrétaire Général
Ministère de l'administration du territoire et de la
décentralisation
S/c: Ministère à la Présidence chargé des affaires étrangères
Conakry, Guinée
Phone: (244) 411611/ 411673
Fax: s/c (244) 412485

Prof. Abdoulaye Diakite
Directeur Général
Adjoint Institut Polytechnique
Université de Conakry
B.P. 1147
Conakry, Guinée
Fax: (224) 413 040
E-Mail: a.diakite@syfed.gn.refer.org

M. Alpha Mohamed Kallo
Assistant du Ministre
Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances
BP 579
Conakry, Guinée
Phone: 224 45 30 00
Fax: 224 45 30 48
E-Mail: akallo@netscape.net

M. Ibrahima Sory Sangare
Directeur
National du Plan
Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération
BP 221
Conakry, Guinée
Phone: 224 414012
Fax: 224 413059

M. Alséni Sylla
Deputy Director
Ministère du commerce, de l'industrie et des petites et moyennes entreprises
S/c: Ministère à la Présidence chargé des affaires étrangères
Conakry, Guinée
Phone: (244) 411611/411673
Fax: s/c (244) 412485

Ireland

Mr. Sean O'Siochru
Director
Nexus Research Co-Operative
Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane
Dublin 8, Ireland
Phone: 353 1 2720739
Fax: 353 1 2720034
E-Mail: sean@nexus.ie
URL: www.iol.ie/nexus

Italy

Mr. Enrique Canessa
ICTP
Strada Costiera 11
Trieste, Italy
Phone: 39 040 2240
Fax: 39 040 2240 406
E-Mail: canessae@ictp.trieste.it

Mr. Jean-Pierre Ilboudo
Communication Officer
United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Via Delle Terme di Caracalla 00 100
Rome, Italy
Phone: 0039 06 5705 6889
Fax: 00 39 06 5705 3251
E-Mail: jeanpierre.ilboudo@fao.org

Dr. Elena Murelli
Maurizio Galil
Piacenza, Italy
Phone: +39 0523 754646
Fax: +39 0523 754840
E-Mail: elenamur@tin.it or e.murelli@irixweb.com

Mr. Fulvio Postogna
Electrical Engineer
Programme of Networking
ICTP-International Center for Theoretical Physics
ICTP. Costiera 11-34014
Trieste, Italy

Phone: +39 040 2240406
Fax: +39 040 2240406
E-Mail: Postogna@ictp.trieste.it

Kenya

Mrs. Jane Asaba
Africa Regional Centre
CAB International
P. O. Box 633
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: +254 2 521450
Fax: +254 2 521001/522150
E-Mail: J.asaba@cabi.org
URL: www.cabi.org

Allen Citta
Oracle
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 44 05 86

Dr. Jeffrey Cochrane
Team Leader
ICT Programs
USAID/REDSO/ESA
P. O. Box 30261
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 862400 x2762
E-Mail: cochrane@igc.org

Hezekiel Dlamini
Computer Applications Officer
UNESCO Nairobi Office
P. O. Box 30592
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: +254-2-622 717
Fax: +254-2-2191
E-Mail: hezekiel.dlamini@unesco.unon.org

Ms. Suzanne Drouilh
East African Internet Association
P.O. Box 21 762
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 56 72 20
Fax: 254 2 57 06 94
E-Mail: sdrouilh@bix.com

Ms. Beth Ingraham
Information Officer
INFOTERRA - DEIAEW
UNEP
P.O. Box 30552
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 62 42 99
Fax: 254 2 62 42 69
E-Mail: beth.ingraham@unep.org
URL: www.unep.org

Dr. Magdalen Juma
Institute of Distance Education
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 81 20 65

Fax: 254 2 81 24 67
E-Mail: mjuma@nbnet.co.ke

Mr. Alfred Kamanja Kibe
Information Technology Manager
Winrock International
P.O. Box 60745
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 71 15 90
Fax: 254 2 71 28 39
E-Mail: winrock@africaonline.co.ke

Mr. John Gitabi Kimotho
Manager
Audio-Visual Services
National Museums of Kenya
P.O. Box 40658
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 74 21 31
Fax: 254 2 74 14 24
E-Mail: nmk@africaonline.co.ke

Ms. Lisbeth Levey
Director
Project for Information Access and Connectivity (PIAC)
P. O. Box 41081
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254-2-710444
Fax: 254-2-712203
E-Mail: l.levey@fordfound.org
URL: <http://www.piac.org>

James Majani
Asst. Director
IT
POB 30091
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 225901
E-Mail: j_majani@yahoo.com

Mr. Jerusha W. Makumi
Director
Bureau for Support Development Services
P.O. Box 24433
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 60 77 34

John Marirmoi
Assistant Minister
Ministry of Finance
P.O. Box 3007
Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. Samuel Muchemi
Senior Meteorologist
Kenya Meteorological Dept.
P.O. Box 30259
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 56 51 64
Fax: 57 73 73
E-Mail: sam57me@mail.excite.com

Mr. Muriuki Mureithi
Summit Strategies

P. O. Box 62454
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 788984
Fax: 254 2 226584
E-Mail: summit@africaonline.co.ke; tfa@arcc.permanet.org

Ms. Sabi Muteshi
Regional Officer
IDRC, Kenya
Liaison House, State House Ave.
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 71 31 60
Fax: 254 2 71 10 63
E-Mail: smuteshi@idrc.or.ke
URL: <http://www.idrc.ca/earo>

Mr. Andrew Nderitu
Youth Enterprise Scheme
P.O. Box 67 620
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 02 247553
Fax: 254 02 247553
E-Mail: yes@cybercom.africaonline.com

Dr. Dominique Njinkeu
African Economic Research Consortium
P.O. Box 62882
Nairobi, Kenya
Fax: (254-2) 219308

Ms. Margaret Nyambura Ndung'u
Information and Communication Assistant
Orkonerei Integrated Pastoralists' Survival Programme
Econews Africa
P.O. Box 76406
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254-02-721076/99
Fax: 254-02-725171
E-Mail: mnyambura@iconnect.co.ke

Ms. Edith Ofwona
Research Officer
Eastern and Southern Africa
IDRC
P.O. BOX 62084
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 713160/1
Fax: 254 2 711063
E-Mail: eofwona@idrc.or.ke
URL: <http://www.idrc.ca>

Mr. Duncan Okello
Programme Officer
Institute of Economic Affairs
Mararo Avenue Off Gitanga Road
Nairobi 254-02, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 57 15 37 18
Fax: 254 2 57 15 38

Mrs. Grace Oloo
African Renaissance Institute
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 74 11 76
Fax: 588 207

Mr. Adebayo Oyejola
Secretary General
African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO)
P.O. Box 57363
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 3300882
Fax: 254 2 21 87 92
E-Mail: aoyejola@nbnet.co.ke

Mr. David Pulkol
Deputy Regional Director
East and Southern Africa Regional Office
UNICEF
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: +254 2 622 304
Fax: 254 2 622 225
E-Mail: dpulkol@unicef.org

Ms. Lynn Muthoni Wanyeki
Executive Director
African Women's Development and Communications Network
(FEMNET)
P. O. Box 54562
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254-2-741301/20
Fax: 254-2-742927
E-Mail: femnet@africaonline.co.ke

Lebanon

Antoine Georges Abi Antoun
Patton Electronics
P.O. Box 165188
Beirut, Lebanon
Fax: 961 1 39 72 18
E-Mail: antoine@patton.com

Mr. Joseph Abou Abdallah
International Gateway
P.O. Box 165188
Beirut, Lebanon
Phone: 961 1 39 71 97
Fax: 961 1 39 72 18
E-Mail: atcmea@atcteleports.com

Francois Hannouche
International Gateway
7 Elias Saab st., Sioufi
Beirut, Lebanon
Phone: 961 1 397197
Fax: 961 1 397218
E-Mail: igadmin@ig.com.lb

Lesotho

His Excellency Mr. Lesao Archibald Lehohla
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
P.O. Box 47
Maseru, Lesotho
Phone: (266) 313045 / 317 900
Fax: (266) 310562 / 310 601

Mr. Motlatsi Monyane
Ministry of Information
P.O. Box 36
Maseru, Lesotho
Phone: 32 50 64

Liberia

Mr. Numene T.H. Bartekwa
Assistant Minister and Special Assistant to the Minister
Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications
GPO Central Complex
Monrovia, Liberia
Phone: 231 226079
Fax: 231 226003

His Excellency Mr. John Bestman
Minister
Ministry of Posts & Telecommunications
GPO Central Complex
Monrovia, Liberia
Phone: 231 22 60 79
Fax: 231 22 6000

Mr. S. Norwood Langley
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
Broad Street
100 Monrovia 10, Liberia
Phone: (231) 226076
Fax: (231) 226076

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Mr. Salaheddin Miad El Alous
The General People's Committee for Planning
Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Dr. Omran Manssur El Shamam
President
Elfateh Medical University
Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Phone: 360 2978
Fax: 360 2978

Dr. Mohamed M El-Mehdawi
Deputy Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
Benghazi Box 823 Libya
Benghazi, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Phone: 9007371
Fax: 9092323

Mr. Ahmed S. Fituri
Deputy Executive Director
ACARTSOD
P.O. Box 80606
Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Phone: 281 21 83 36 40
Fax: 218 21 83 50 66
E-Mail: fituri_acartsod@hotmail.com

Madagascar

M. Donné Marc Rabesahada
Directeur
Ecole Normale Mahajanga
BP 70
Mahajanga, Madagascar
Phone: 401 62 227 76

Colonel Gabriel Randriantsarafa
Ministère de la Santé
Antananarivo, Madagascar

Malawi

Ms. C. Chimbe
Personal Assistant
Malawi Government
c/o Malawi Embassy
Lilongwe, Malawi
Phone: 78 27 77
Fax: 78 15 21

Dr. Mapopa Chipeta
Director General
Office of the President and Cabinet
National Economic Council
P.O. Box 30136
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Phone: 265 782 300
Fax: 265 782 224

Mr. Shyley Sinya Kondowe
Executive Director
Malawi Institute of Democratic and Economic Affairs (MIDEA)
Kirk Road, Old Town
Lilongwe, Malawi
Phone: 265 743530
Fax: 265 743578
E-Mail: midea@malawi.net

Mr. Victor Lungu
Personal Assistant
National Economic Council
PB 30316
Lilongwe, Malawi
Phone: 265 78 23 00
Fax: 265 78 22 24
E-Mail: nec@malawi.net

E.E.B. Mahuka
Deputy Postmaster General
Malawi Posts & Telecommunications Corporations
P.O. Box 537
Blantyre, Malawi
Phone: 265 62 09 77
Fax: 265 62 01 88

Mr. Emanuel Mahuka
Deputy Post Master General
Malawi Posts and Telecommunications Corporations
POB 537
Blantyre, Malawi
Fax: 265 620 188

His Excellency Mr. Justin C. Malewezi
Vice-President and Minister for Privatization
PO Box 30399
Lilongwe, Malawi
Phone: (265) 782777/622600
Fax: (265) 624662/781521

Ms. Thandikile Mbvundula
Managing Partner
Epsilon & Omega
2nd Floor, ADL House
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Phone: 265 784444
Fax: 265 781 231
E-Mail: thandim@eomw.net

Mr. B.W. Nampuntha
Special Economic Affairs Assistant
Vice Presidents Office
Lilongwe, Malawi

Dr. Paulos Nyirenda
National Coordinator
National Research Council of Malawi
Malawi Sustainable Development Network Programme
PO Box 303
Blantyre 3, Malawi
Phone: 265 670 411 or 82 47 87
Fax: 265 670 578 or 522 046
E-Mail: paulos@sdnp.org.mw
URL: <http://www.sdnp.org.mw>

Mr. Wilson Pankuku
Director General
Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
P.O. Box 30133, Chichiri
Blantyre, Malawi
Phone: 265 67 12 22
Fax: 265 67 13 53

Dr. Sam Safuli
Secretary for Information
Ministry of Information
P.B 310
Lilongwe, Malawi
Phone: 265 780 706
Fax: 265 784 586

Mr. Bessie Saidi
Chief Executive
Malawinet Limited
P.O. Box 1698
Blantyre, Malawi
Phone: 265-622436/596
Fax: 265-624447
E-Mail: bessie@malawi.net
URL: <http://www.malawinet>

His Excellency Mr. Clement Stambuli
Minister of Information
Ministry of Information
PB 310
Lilongwe, Malawi

Phone: (265) 783233/620266
Fax: (265) 784568

Malaysia

Rinalia Abdul Rahim
Policy Technologist
National Information Technology Council (NITC)
Mimos Berhad, Technology Park Malaysia, 57000
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Phone: 603 9665000 x 2407
Fax: 603 9660255
E-Mail: rinalia@mimos.my

Mali

Moussa Camara
ACCT
Bamako, Mali

M. Pascal Baba Couloubaly
Antenne ANAIS-Bamako
BP 1463
Bamako, Mali
Phone: 223 230043
Fax: 223 230043
E-Mail: anais@malinet.ml

M. Beidy Haidara
Ministere de la Communication
Bamako, Mali
Phone: 221 220496

Son Excellence M. Alpha Oumar Konaré
President of the Republic of Mali
Bamako, Mali

Dr. Oumar Makalou
President
CERDES
Avenue Moussa Traore
Bamako, Mali
Phone: 223 228 183
Fax: 223 218164 or 228183
E-Mail: omakalou@hotmail.com

Chick S.M. Nimaga
Conseiller Technique
Ministère de la Communication
BP 740
Bamako, Mali
Phone: 22 26 47
Fax: 22 83 19
E-Mail: chinimaga@potelma.ml

Son Excellence Mme. Ascofaré Ouleymatou Tamboura
Ministre de la Communication
Ministère de la Communication
Quartier du Fleuve B.P. 116
Bamako, Mali
Phone: (223) 22 26 47
Fax: (223) 22 83 19

Son Excellence M. Modibo Sidibe
Ministère des Affaires Etrangère
Bamako, Mali

Samba Sow
SOTELMA
BP 740
Bamako, Mali
Phone: 223 21 72 02
Fax: 223 21 30 22
E-Mail: sows@sotelma.ml

M.. Denis Traoré
Conseiller Technique
Bureau du Premier Minstre
B.P. 790
Bamako, Mali
Phone: 223 23 42 79
Fax: 223 22 85 83

Maroc

M. Larbi Ajjoul
Secrétaire d'Etat auprès du Premier Ministre, chargé de la poste
Ministère des postes et des nouvelles technologies d'information
Avenue Moulay Youssef
Rabat, Maroc
Phone: (212 7) 702091/370059
Fax: (212 7) 202777/764679/765508

Ahmed Khaouja
Directeur, Evaluations et Concurrence
ANRT
Rabat, Maroc
E-Mail: khaouja@anrt.net.ma

M. Aziz Rabbah
Ministry of Industry
Rabat, Maroc
Phone: 212 2 76 52 15
Fax: 212 7 66 00 21
E-Mail: aziz@mcinet.gov.ma

Mme. Najat Rochdi
Conseiller du Ministre
Secrétariat d'Etat à la Poste et aux Technologies de l'Information
Avenue No. EL Hassan
Rabat, Maroc
Phone: +(212 7) 20 70 20
Fax: +(212 7) 720 27 77
E-Mail: n.rochdi@septi.gov.ma / najat@fusion.net.ma
URL: www.septi.gov.ma

M. Hassan Sqalli
Directeur des affaires économiques et de la coopération
internationale
Union Maghreb Arabe
27 Avenue Okba
Rabat, Maroc
Fax: 212-7-77 26 96

M. Mohamed Timoulali
Consultant
ONIGT

Appt 314 Océan
Rabat, Maroc
Phone: 797482
Fax: 683792
E-Mail: timoulali@atlasnet.net.ma
URL: www.onigt.org.ma

Mauritanie

M. Housseynou Ba
Informatique et Centre National Internet
Office des Postes et Télécommunications
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Phone: 222 25 10 55
Fax: 222 25 17 00
E-Mail: houss@opt.mr

M. Abddi Ould Horma
Adviser to the Minister
Ministère de l'Intérieur, des postes et télécommunications
s/c PNUD
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Phone: s/c (222-2) 56900
Fax: (222-2) 536-61

Son Excellence M. Dah Ould Abdel Jelil
Ministre
Ministère de l'Intérieur, des postes et télécommunications
s/c PNUD
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Phone: (222-2) 8532
Fax: (222-2) 536-61

M. Zakaria Ould Amar
National Coordinator
IIA/SDNP
UNDP
P.O. Box 620
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Phone: 222 29 08 66
Fax: 222 25 26 16
E-Mail: zakaria@iiaidd.mr

M. Ahmedou Ould Haouba
Doyen de la Faculté des sciences et techniques
Université de Nouakchott
B.P. 1913
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Phone: (222-2) 25 67 03
Fax: (222-2) 25 39 97
E-Mail: haouba@univ-nkc.mr
URL: http://www.univ-nkc.mr

Mozambique

Mr. Salomao Manhica
Executive Secretary
ICT Policy Commission
Office of the Prime Minister
Maputo, Mozambique
Phone: 258 1 309398
Fax: 258 1 302241
E-Mail: infopol@zebra.uem.mz

Prof. Venancio Massingue
Vice-Rector
Eduardo Mondlane University
Praça 25 de Junho P. 257
Maputo, Mozambique
Phone: 258-82 300271
Fax: 258-1-491557
E-Mail: venancio@bravo.uem.mz

Mr. Americo Francisco Muchanga
Director
Center for Informatics
Eduardo Mondlane University
Av. Julius Nyerere 931 Flat 21
Maputo, Mozambique
Phone: 258 1 49 26 01
Fax: 258 1 491557
E-Mail: ameroico@dzowo.uem.mz

Mr. Fernando Neves
Director
SYSCOM
Av. Guerra Popular
Maputo, Mozambique
Phone: 258 1 42 18 71
Fax: 258 1 42 41 75
E-Mail: syscompt@teledata.mz

His Excellency Mr. Arnaldo Valenti Nhavoto
Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
Av. 24 de Julho 167, 9º andar
Maputo, Mozambique
Phone: (258-1) 490830, 492829, 490249
Fax: (258-1) 492160, 490979

Daniel Zomos Junior
Teacher
Ministry of Education
Maputo, Mozambique
Phone: 49 27 82
E-Mail: dbomba@mined.uem.mz

Namibia

His Excellency Mr. Ben Amathila
Minister of Information and Broadcasting
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
2nd Floor, Government Building
Windhoek, Namibia
Phone: (264-61) 2839111
Fax: (264-61) 23 43/23 01 70

Ms. Elizabeth Asino
Manager
Intranet/Internet Project
Office of the Prime Minister
P.B. 13338
Windhoek, Namibia
Phone: 264 61 2056111
Fax: 264 61 257529
E-Mail: asinoe@namibia.com.na

Ms. Aldenia Chaka
Systems Administrator
Information Technology (IT)
Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU)
P.O. Box 40710
Windhoek, Namibia
Phone: 264 61 228284
Fax: 264 61 231496
E-Mail: nepru1@nepru.org.na
URL: <http://www.nepru.org.na>

Ms. Wilma Deetlefs
Deputy Director, Media Liaison
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Private Bag 13344
Windhoek, Namibia
Phone: 264 61 2889111
Fax: 264(61) 222343 / 230170

Mr. Raashied Galant
Research and Information Officer
Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)
Private Bag 13386
Windhoek, Namibia
Phone: +264 61 232975
Fax: +264 61 248016
URL: www.misanet.org

New Zealand

Mr. Don Anderson
Member Services Director
APC / Global Knowledge
31 Matatiro St.
Wellington, New Zealand
Phone: 64 4 236 0012
Fax: 64 4 2360112
E-Mail: don@apc.org

Niger

Mr. Seffou-Dine Akande
Senior Economist
Subregional Development Center for Western Africa (WA-SRDC)
P.O. Box 744
Niamey, Niger
Phone: 227 72 29 61
Fax: 227 72 28 94

Dr. Mamoudou Djibo
Ministre
Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche et de la Technologie
B.P. 628
Niamey, Niger
Phone: 227-722620
Fax: 227-724040

Dr. Legrand Saah
ACMAD
Niamey, Niger

Maman Sani Zakari
Niger/Rinaf
Direction Informatique
BP 259
Niamey, Niger
Phone: 227 72 45 06
Fax: 227 72 27 23
E-Mail: zakari@delgi.ne

Nigeria

Dr. Abimbola Adubi
Head of Training
National Center for Economic Management and Administration (NCEMA)
No. 3, Oba Akinyelle Avenue, Old Bodija
Ibadan, Nigeria
Phone: 234 2 810 3265/810 0063
Fax: 234 2 8100079
E-Mail: aaadubi@nceme.gov.ng

Prof. Gabriel Ajayi
Director
Dept. of Electronic & Electrical Engineering
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife, Nigeria
Phone: 234 36 23 09 72
Fax: 234 36 23 17 33

Mr. Lanre Ajayi
Chief Executive
PINET Informatics Ltd
16th Floor Western House
Lagos, Nigeria
Phone: 234 1 26 45 306
Fax: 234 1 263 1868
E-Mail: lanre@pinet.com.ng
URL: www.pinet.com.ng

Prof. G. Olalere Ajayi
Information Technology and Communication Unit
Obafemi Awolowo University, Dept. of Electronic and Electrical Engineering
ILE-IFE, Nigeria
Phone: 39 040 2240340, +234 36 230972
Fax: 39 040 2240604, +234 36 231733
E-Mail: ajayi@ictp.trieste.it, gajayi@oauife.edu.ng

Mr. Kayode Ayodele
Student
Electronic and Electrical Eng. Department
Obafemi Awolowo University
C/o Dr. M.O. Omoigui., Elec. & Elec. Engr. Dept, Obafemi Awolowo Univ.
Ile Ife, Nigeria
Phone: 234-034-242268
E-Mail: public@oauife.edu.ng

Mr. Peter K. Ayodele
Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Dr. Sule Bassi
Director
Ministry of Cooperation and Integration in Africa
Abuja, Nigeria

Prof. Robert Boroffice
Director
National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA)
PMB 437, Garki
Abuja, Nigeria
Fax: +234 9 5235765
E-Mail: cpeomaliko@hyperia.com

Dr. Lola Dare
Chief Executive Officer
Chestrad International
U.I Post office
Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
Phone: 234 2 81 02 40 1
Fax: 234 2 81 02 40 5
E-Mail: chestard@yahoo.com

Mr. Brownson Dede
Director General
Ministry of Cooperation and Integration in Africa
Abuja, Nigeria

Prof. Jerry Gana
Minister
Ministry of Cooperation and Integration
New Federal Secretariat
Abuja, Nigeria
Phone: 251 1 55 06 44
Fax: 251 1 55 2307

Dr. Samuel Inyang
Project Manager
Health and Information Systems E-mail Network (HISEN)
34 Rwang Pam St. P.O. Box 903
Jos Plateau State, Nigeria
Phone: 234-73-458092
Fax: 234-73-46469
E-Mail: sam.inyang@hisen.org

Dr. Emmanuel Nnama
Executive Director/CEO
Nigerian Communications Commission
Plot 19, Aguata Close
Abuja, Nigeria
Fax: +234 9 2344593

Mr. Ike Nwokike
Special Asst. to Minister
Ministry of Cooperation and Integration in Africa
Abuja, Nigeria

Mrs. Rosaline Odeh
Director
Federal Ministry of Information
P.O. Box 3630, G.P.O. Garki
Abuja, Nigeria
Phone: 09 234 6356
Fax: 09 234 6356

Mr. Peter Okebukola
Consultant
UNESCO - IICBA
Lagos, Nigeria
E-Mail: pokebukola@hotmail.com

Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah
Program Officer - Media, Arts & Culture
Ford Foundation
Lagos, Nigeria
Phone: +234-1-262-3970-2
Fax: +234-1-262-3973
E-Mail: A.OPOKU-MENSAH@FORDFOUND.ORG

Mr. Oluwale D. Oshota
National Executive President
South-South Cooperation Project
BD39 Federal Low Cost Housing Estate, Ipaja
Lagos, Nigeria
Fax: 234-1-2691746
E-Mail: ooshota@hotmail.com

Prof. Banji Oyeyinka
Professor
NISER
PMB 5, U.I. Post Office
Ibadan, Nigeria
Phone: 234 2 8102904
Fax: 234 2 8101194
E-Mail: oyeyinka@ibadan.skannet.com

Prof. Adebayo Sanni
Executive Director
National Centre for Technology Management
Obafemi Awolowo University
Osun State
Ile Ife, Nigeria
Phone: 234-2 2413002
Fax: 234-36 231245
E-Mail: ssanni@nacetem.oauife.edu.ng

Abdoulaye Seck
Delegate
ECOWAS
PMB 401-Abuja (Nigeria)
Abuja, Nigeria
Phone: 234-9 314-76-38
Fax: 234-9 314 7646/314 76 3006

Mrs. H.A. Soriyan
Department of Computer Science and Engineering
Obafemi Awolowo University
Ile Ife, Nigeria
E-Mail: hsoriyan@oauife.edu.ng

Prof. Adedoyin Soyibo
Development Policy Centre
P.O. Box 30733
Ibadan, Nigeria
Phone: 234 2 81 03 221
Fax: 234 2 81 01 32 80
E-Mail: doyin.soyibo@ibadan.skamnet.com

Dr. Muta Tiamiyu
Director
ARCIS
African Regional Centre for Information Science
6, Benue Road, P.O. Box 22133
Ibadan, Nigeria
Phone: 234 2 81 03 610
E-Mail: arcis@infoweb.abs.net

Mr. Ya'u Yunusa Z.
Executive Director
Computer Literacy Project
P.O. Box 102
Kano, Nigeria
Fax: 234 9 5231570 or 5231571
E-Mail: capp@cocapp.org

Norway

Ms. Kristin Sverdrup
Research Adviser
NORAD
P. O. Box 8034 Dep
Oslo 0030, Norway
Phone: +4722242031
E-Mail: kristin.sverdrup@norad.no

République démocratique du Congo

M. Biongo Lokoba
Expert
Ministère des PTT
Kinshasa, République démocratique du Congo
Fax: 002438802332

M. Mbanzi Lukwama
Expert
Ministère des PTT
Kinshasa, République démocratique du Congo

République du Congo

M. Paul Henri Bouanga-Kalou
Directeur de Cabinet
Ministère des postes et télécommunications
S/c: Ministère des affaires étrangères, de la coopération, chargé
de la francophonie
Brazzaville, République du Congo
Phone: 243 814160/ 814161/ 814162
Fax: s/c (242) 8803425/811679

M. Jean Dello
Ministre des postes et télécommunications
Ministère des postes et télécommunications
S/c: Ministère des affaires étrangères, de la coopération, chargé
de la francophonie
Brazzaville, République du Congo
Phone: 243 814160/ 814161/ 814162
Fax: s/c (242) 8803425/811679

Mme. Yako née Ehoboutou Chantal
Conseiller aux Services Postes et Financiers
Ministère des Postes et Télécommunications
Brazzaville, République du Congo

Phone: 242 81 17 02
Fax: 242 81 19 34

M. Louis Mahoungou
Conseiller des Affaires Etrangères
Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
B.P. 13 300
Brazzaville, République du Congo
Fax: 242 812044

Rwanda

M. Assumani Bizimana
Director of Communications
Ministère des transport et des communications
BP 720
Kigali, Rwanda
Phone: 250-82574/85638
Fax: 250-85755
E-Mail: dircom@rwandatel.rwanda.com

Mr. Gaston Bushayija
Manager
Information Technology Department
Kigali, Rwanda
Phone: +250 83942/74282
Fax: 250 84671

Mr. Mike Kabanda
Student
University of Rwanda
Butare, Rwanda
Phone: 08503596
E-Mail: mikekabanda@usa.net

M. Egide Kamemura
Ministry of Public Works and Communications
Kigali, Rwanda

Mr. Abraham Makuza
Secretary
AMUR
P.O. Box 594
Kigali, Rwanda
Phone: 250 73 106
Fax: 250 73 106
E-Mail: a_makuza@hotmail.com

Mr. Gerald Mpyisi
Director, Information Systems
Office of the Vice President
BP 23
Kigali, Rwanda
Phone: (250) 84671/82316
Fax: (250) 84671
E-Mail: y2k@rwandatel1.rwanda1.com

Mr. Frank T. Mukama
Chairperson
Youth Service Centre
Youths' Association for Human Rights Promotion and
Development
P.O. Box 117
Butare, Rwanda

Fax: 250 32142
E-Mail: mukfrank@hotmail.com, jijkiwa@nur.ac.nw

Mr. Albert Nsegiumva
University of Rwanda
Kigali, Rwanda

Mr. Dieudonne Nzeyimana
Y2K Steering Committee
Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications
P.O. Box 3919
Kigali, Rwanda

Emmanuel Rugomboka
Kigali Institute of Science and Technology
P.O. Box 3900
Kigali, Rwanda
Phone: 250 71 923
Fax: 250 71 925

M. Epherem Rutaboba
Secretary General
Ministère des Travaux Publics des Transports et des
Communications
B.P. 24
Kigali, Rwanda
Phone: 250 75 75 0
Fax: 250 76 64 1

M. Jean Bosco Rutagengwa
Ministry of Public Works and Communications
Kigali, Rwanda

Dr. Dieudonné Sebsshongore
Director
Department of Civil Engineering
KIST
P.O. Box 3900
Kigali, Rwanda
Phone: 250 74 698
Fax: 250 71 924

Sao Tomé et Principe

Mme. Aida D'Almeida
Chief of Cabinet
Ministry of Economy
Sao Tomé, Sao Tomé et Principe
Phone: s/c 239-12 22562
Fax: (239-12) 22347/24179

Sénégal

M. Mohamadou Abdoul
Researcher
Panos Institute
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 822 16 66
Fax: 221 822 5290

M. Alioune Camara
Senior Programme Specialist
West and Central Africa Regional Office
International Development Research Centre (IDRC) - Acacia

Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: (221) 864-0000
Fax: (221) 825-3255
E-Mail: acamara@idrc.org.sn
URL: www.idrc.ca

M. H.A.W. Cheik
Director
INEADE
IICBA - Unesco
INEADE BP. 11248
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 3214851
Fax: 221 3214851

M. Alex Corenthin
President
Bureau Executif ISOC Senegal
Dakar, Sénégal
E-Mail: corenthi@ucad.sn

M. Ibrahima Diagne
Trade Point Sénégal
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 839 73 73
Fax: 221 823 32 72
E-Mail: idiagne@tpsnet.org

M. Mamadou Diop
ICTS
Assemblée Nationale
Place Soweto
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 823 88 19
Fax: 221 823 5863
E-Mail: Ajsavmar@sonatel.senet.net or diopdeku@hotmail.co

Amadou Mbaye Diop
Chef
Service Decentralisation
Direction de la Promotion et du Marketing, Foundation Trade
Point Senegal
Dakar, Sénégal

M. Laurent Elder
Coordinator
Dakar Regional OfficeOffice
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Ave. Cheick AntDiop
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 613 236 6163 ext. 2074
Fax: 613 563 0815
E-Mail: lelder@idrc.ca

M. Moussa Fall
Coordonnateur du Network
Communications
ENDA-Third World/ENDA-Tiers Monde
B.P. 3370
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: +221-8235772

Fax: +221-8222195
E-Mail: moussaf@enda.sn
URL: <http://www.enda.sn>

M. Mamadou Gaye
Directeur
SIUP
Ecoyoff pilot project
BP 8873
Dakar, Yoff, Sénégal
Phone: 221 820 6067, 820 6167
E-Mail: mgaye@siup.sn

Prof. Mamadou Gueye
Telemedicine Coordinator
University Cheikh Anta Diop
P. O. Box 5505 Dakar-Fann
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 825-2067
Fax: 221 825-9227
E-Mail: gueyemd@ucad.refer.sn

M. Moustapha Gueye
Expert Informaticien, Chargé de la Division Information et
Documentation du Centre
Le Centre régional africain de technologie
Immeuble Fahd Ben Abdel Aziz
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: (221) 237712
Fax: (221) 237713

Mme. Marie-Hélène Mottin-Sylla
ENDA-SYNFEV
B.P. 3370
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 821 6027
Fax: 221 822 2695/222695
E-Mail: mhms@enda.sn
URL: <http://www.enda.sn/synfev/synfev.htm>

M. Malick Ndiaye
Conseiller technique en informatique du premier ministre
Bureau du Premier Ministre
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: +221 23 81 58
Fax: +221 22 55 78
E-Mail: malick@primature.sn

M. Abdoulaye Ndiaye
Consultant/Researcher
AGiR Promouvoir
BP 4140
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221-8324070
Fax: 221-8324070
E-Mail: abdoulay@sonatel.sn

M. Olivier Sagna
USAID - Senegal
2, Ave Abdoulaye Fadiga
Dakar, Sénégal
E-Mail: osagna@usaid.gov

Son Excellence Mme. Aissata Tall Sall
Ministre de la Communication
Ministère de la Communication
B.P. 4027
Dakar, Sénégal
Fax: 221 821 45 04

Adama Sankhare
Presidente
Reseau des Clubs EVF
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 835 42 20
E-Mail: geepop@syfed.refer.sn

Dr. Diery Seck
Executive Director
SISERA
c/o IDRC
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 864 0000
E-Mail: dseck@idrc.org.sn

M. Mactar Seck
Secrétaire Exécutif
Conseil supérieur de l'industrie du Sénégal
104, Rue Carnot
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 821 1544
Fax: 221 8220415
E-Mail: seck@sonatel.senet.net

Mme Fatoumata Sow
IDRC Pearson Fellow
B. P. 3559
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 613 236 6163 ext 2007
Fax: 613 536 08 15
E-Mail: fsow2@idrc.org.sn

Mme Fatimata Seye Sylla
Directeur General
Solutions 3+
51-53 Bld Djily Mbaye
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 822 81 05
Fax: 821 23 59
E-Mail: fsylla@telecomplus.sn

M. Amadou Top
President
Observatoire sur les Systèmes de l'Information, les Réseaux et
les Inforoutes au
Sénégal (OSIRIS)
51, boulevard Djily Mbaye
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 823 85 27 / 221 823 85 25
Fax: (221) 823.85.27
E-Mail: osiris@ucad.sn / active@sonatel.senet.net

M. Gaston Zongo
Executive Director, Acacia
Regional Office for West and Central Africa
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop

Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: (221) 864-0000
Fax: (221) 825-3255
E-Mail: gzongo@idrc.org.sn

Sierra Leone

Her Excellency Ms. Shirley Y. Gbujama
Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
c/o UNDP
Freetown, Sierra Leone
Phone: c/o (23222)225390/225346
Fax: 23222-242076

His Excellency Dr. James Jonah
Minister
Ministry of Finance, Development and Economic Planning
c/o UNDP
Freetown, Sierra Leone
Phone: c/o (23222)225390/225346
Fax: 23222-228472

Somalia

Mr. Jama Abdillahi
Organization for Environment and Development
Erigavo Sanaag Region, Somalia

South Africa

Mr. David Barnard
Coordinator
PRODDER
HSRC
PB X41
Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Phone: 27 12 302 2017
Fax: 27 12 302 2497
E-Mail: dbbarnard@beauty.hsac.ac.za

Mr. Koos Bekker
Managing Director
MIH Holdings, Ltd.
Heerengracht 40
Cape Town 8001, South Africa
Phone: 27 21 406 2482
Fax: 27 21 406 3793
E-Mail: KoosBekker@naspers.com

Mr. Peter Benjamin
Lecturer
Link Centre,
Witswatersand University
P.O. Box 691, Wits 2050
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: +2782 829 3353
Fax: +2711 488 5902
E-Mail: peter@wn.apc.org

Ms. Sonja Boezak
Coordinator
Women's Net Information
Longsbank Building 187 Bree Street

Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: +27 11 8386943
Fax: +27 11 4921058
E-Mail: Sonja@sn.apc.org
URL: http://womensnet.org

Mr. Jesse Boynton
Director
Lerechabetse Technologies
P. O. Box 4429
Rivonia, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 807 6441
Fax: 27 11 807 6391

Mr. Denis Brandjes
Executive Director
SchoolNet South Africa
P.O. Box 477
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: (27-11) 403-3952/
Fax: (27-11) 403-1417
E-Mail: denis@schoolnet.org.za
URL: http://www.school.za

Cyrilla Bwakira
UNAIDS
P.O. Box 1722
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 88 35 714
Fax: 27 12 322 0220
E-Mail: cyrilla@iafrica.com

Susannah Cameron Crichton
Manager
University of Cape Town
PB 7701
Rondebosch, South Africa
Phone: 27 21 650 4146
Fax: 27 21 685 6976
E-Mail: Crichton@bremner.uct.ac.za

Ms. Anriette Esterhuysen
Executive Director
Southern African Nongovernmental Organization Network
(Sangonet)
P. O. Box 31
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 838 6943/4
Fax: 27 11 492 1058
E-Mail: anriette@sn.apc.org
URL: http://www.sn.apc.org

Ms. Yasmin Forbes
Business Development Manager
Communications
Computer Configurations Holdings
P.O. Box 923
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 804 3772
Fax: 27 11 802 2033
E-Mail: yasmin@configs.co.za

Mr. Rodgers Gamuti
Business Development Coordinator

SENTECH
Private Bag x06 Honeyview
Johannesburg 2040, South Africa
Phone: 27 471 4400
Fax: 27 471 4756
E-Mail: gamutir@sentech.co.za

Mr. Rodwyn Grewan
Project Director
South African Information Technologies Industries
PB X84
Pretoria, South Africa
Phone: 27 12 322 4600
Fax: 27 12 320 0650
E-Mail: rodg@dti.pwv.gov.za
URL: www.saitis.co.za

Dr. Heather Hudson
ELSA Coordinator
Regional Office for Southern Africa
IDRC-Acacia
P.O. BOX 477, WITS, 2050
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27-11 403 3952 ext. 224
Fax: 27-11 403 1417
E-Mail: hhudson@idrc.ca
URL: www.idrc.ca/acacia

Ms. Tina James
Senior Advisor Acacia
Regional Office for Southern Africa
IDRC
P.O. BOX 477, WITS, 2050
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27-11 403 3952 ext. 224
Fax: 27-11 403 1417
E-Mail: tjames@idrc.ca

Mr. Michael Jensen
Independent consultant
P. O. Box 101, Port St Johns
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 47 564 1351
Fax: 27 47 564 1351
E-Mail: mikej@sn.apc.org

Mr. Glen Jordan
Project Director
Rosslyn Learning Project
Rivonia 2128, South Africa
Phone: +27 11 807 8007
Fax: + 27 11 803 3733
E-Mail: glen@intavision.com

Mr. Collins Khumalo
Regulatory Affairs
Multichoice
Multichoice Africa
251 Oak Avenue
Randburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 189 4894
Fax: 27 11 789 5123
E-Mail: ckhumalo@multichoice.co.za

Ms. Anina Labuschagne
Consultant
Lerechabetse Technologies
P. O. Box 4429, Rivonia 2128
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 011 807 6441
Fax: 011 807 6391

Ms. Nebo Legoabe
Local Economic Development & Provincialization
Mikomtek, CSIR
P. O. Box 395
Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Phone: +27 12 841 3134
Fax: +27 12 841 4720
E-Mail: legoabe@csir.co.za
URL: http://www.csir.co.za

Ms. Dillo Lehlokoe
Manager
Telecommunications Policy Unit
Department of Communications
Private Bag X860
Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Phone: +27 12 427-8000
Fax: +27 12 427-8102
E-Mail: dillo@doc.pwv.gov.za

Robert Letsoalo
Exhibition Manager
MTN
3 Alice Lane, Sandton 2146
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 83 212 1392
Fax: 27 11 301 2872
E-Mail: Letson-r@mtn.co.za

Charley Lewis
Head of Department
Information Technology Unit
COSATU
No 1 Leyds Street
Braamfontein, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 339 4911
E-Mail: charley@cosatu.org.za

Prof. Paul Licker
Director
Department of Information Systems
University of Cape Town
BP Rondebosch 7701
Cape Town, South Africa
Phone: (27 21) 650 2582
Fax: (27 21) 650 2280
E-Mail: licker@infosys.uct.ac.za

Clarissa Mack
General Manager
MIH
251 Oak Ave. Randburg
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 289 4737
Fax: 27 11 886 3618
E-Mail: cmack@multichoice.co.za

Wayne Mackintosh
Bureau for University Teaching
University of South Africa
P.O. Box 392
Pretoria, South Africa
Phone: 27 12 429 6347
Fax: 27 12 429 3551
E-Mail: mackiwg@alpha.unisa.ac.za

Mr. Mohamed H Madhi
Chief Executive Officer
CyberKnowledge Systems Pvt. Ltd.
29 Forbes Reef Waterkloof Heights Road
Pretoria, South Africa
Phone: 27 0 12 347 4893
Fax: 27 0 12 347 4895
E-Mail: madhi@cyberknowledge.co.za

Mr. Bobby Makweta
Chairman
Lerechabetswe Technologies
P. O. Box 4429
Rivonia, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 807 6441
Fax: 27 11 807 6391

Ashiek Manie
Deputy Managing Director
Intekom
Pvt Bag x125
Midrand 1685, South Africa
Fax: 27 11 31 50 70 7
E-Mail: ashiekm@intekom.co.za

Her Excellency Dr. Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburri
Minister for Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting
Ministry for Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting
Private Bag X860
Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Phone: 27 12 351 1000
URL: www.doc.org.za

Ms. Julia Maxted
Human Sciences Research Council
P.B. X41
Pretoria, South Africa
Phone: 27-12-302-2434
Fax: 27-12-302-2994
E-Mail: jem@silwane.hsra.ac.za

Dr. Jonathan Miller
Steering Committee
South African IT Industry Strategy Project(SAITIS)
DTI, Schoeman Street
Pretoria, South Africa
Phone: 27 12-3101556
E-Mail: jonmil@icon.co.za

Dr. Stephen Mncube
Manager
Development Information Business Unit
Development Bank of Southern Africa
P.O. Box 1234
Midrand, South Africa

Phone: +27 11 313-3588
Fax: +27 11 318-1949
E-Mail: stephenm@dbsa.org

Ms. Esme Modisane
Mamelodi Community Information Service
P.O. Box 77851
Mamelodi West 0101, South Africa
Phone: 27 12 805 1294
Fax: 27 12 805 1293
E-Mail: emodisan@callisto.cids.org.co.za
URL: www.mweb.co.za/

Dr. Sebileto Mokone-Matabane
Group Executive
Corporate Affairs
Sentech
P.Bag X06 Honeyden 2040
Roodepoort 2040, South Africa
Phone: 27-11-471 4406
Fax: 27-11 471-4653
E-Mail: matabane@sentech.co.za

Mr. Alemayehu Molla
University of Cape Town
BP Pondebosch 7701
South Africa
Phone: 27 21 650 4233
Fax: 27 21 650 2280
E-Mail: amolla@infosys.uct.ac.za

Ms. Felleng Molusi
General Manager
Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN)
P.O. Box 1227
Johannesburg South Africa
Phone: 27 0 11301 6905
Fax: 27 0 11 301 6514
E-Mail: molusi_f@mtn.co.za

Mr. Connie Molusi
Ministry for Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting
P.B X860
Pretoria 0001, South Africa
Phone: 27 12 427 8111
Fax: 27 12 362 6915
E-Mail: connie@doc.pwv.gov.za

Ms. Denise Momberg
SAFIKA Online (Pty. Ltd)
P.O. box 657
Parklands, South Africa
Phone: 011 802 4250
Fax: 011 802 4412
E-Mail: denise@saol.co.za

Mr. Nigel Motts
Senior Programme Officer
International Development Research Centre
P.O.Box 477 WITS 2050 South Africa
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 011 403 3952

Fax: 011 403 1413
E-Mail: nmotts@idrc.org.za
URL: www.idrc.org.za

Mr. Kwezi Mtenganya
Regulatory Affairs
M-Net Ltd.
137 Hendrik Verwoed Drive, Randburg, S.A
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 0 27 11 329 5421
Fax: 27 11 886 9906
E-Mail: kmtengen@mnet.co.za

Mpumbe Ncube
Market Analysis Manager
Mobile Telephone Net Works (MTN)
3 Alice Lane, Sandton 2146
Johannesburg, South Africa
E-Mail: nube-m@mtn.co.za

Mr. Sandile Ndawonda
Greater Edendale Environmental Network
P.O. Box 3515
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
E-Mail: sandile.green@pixie.co.za

Mr. Lufuno Nevhutalu
Executive Director
Computer Configuration Holdings (CCH)
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 011 804 3772
Fax: 011 804 3826
E-Mail: lufuno@cch.co.za

Mr. Devadass Pillay
Teaching and Learning Technologies
University of Western Cape
PB X17
Bellville, South Africa
Phone: 27 21 959-2410
Fax: 27 21 959 2202
E-Mail: dev@uwc.ac.za

Mr. Peter Schioler
UNESCO Pretoria
P.O.Box 11667, Tramshed
Pretoria 0126, South Africa
Phone: 27-123201464/65
Fax: 27-123207738
E-Mail: ptschioler@un.org.za

Mr. Dominic Schofield
Regional Office - PBDO
IDRC
23 Jorissan St.
Braamfontein 2001, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 403 3952
Fax: 27 11 403 1717
E-Mail: dschofield@idrc.org.za

Mr. Ntutule Tshenye
Director, Education Director
SchoolNet SA
P.O. Box 477

Braamfontein, South Africa
E-Mail: ntutule@schoolnet.o

Mr. Marc Van Ameringen
IDRC
Johannesburg, South Africa

Ms. Elmarie Van Rheede Van Oudtsmoom
PR & Marketing
Lerechabets Technologies
P.O. Box 4429, Rivonia 2128
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 011 807 6441
E-Mail: elmarie@leretech.com

Ms. Irma Verwey
LEAP Connections
32 Second Ave.
South Africa
Phone: 27 832 686 560
E-Mail: irma.leap@pixie.co.za

Ms. Tiseme Zegeye
Student
Pretoria High School for Girls
69 Rigel Avenue Waterloof Ridge
Pretoria, South Africa
Phone: 17012 346 6304
E-Mail: jem@hsr.ac.za

Sudan

His Excellency Prof. Ibrahim Ahmed Omer
Minister
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
P.O. Box 2081
Khartoum, Sudan
Phone: 249-11 779312
Fax: 249-11 779312

His Excellency Dr. Lam Akol
Minister
Ministry of Transport
P.O. Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan
Phone: (249-11) 772990
Fax: (249-11) 773266

Ms. Leila M. A. El Bedawi
National Coordinator
Institutional Strengthening Project
Ministry of Finance and Economy
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: 249 11 773274

Dr. Badr Eldin Omer Musa Elhag
Director
Ministry of Higher Education
Khartoum, Sudan
E-Mail: baomelmu@hotmail.com

Dr. Abdulrahman A. Obeid
Committee for ITC Policy
Sudan University for Science and Technology

c/o Dr. Izzeldin Osman
Khartoum, Sudan
Phone: 249 11 77 52 92
Fax: 249 11 77 45 59
E-Mail: c/o izzeldin@acm.org

Dr. Izzeldin Osman
President
Sudan University of Science and Technology
P.O. Box 3297
Khartoum, Sudan
Phone: 249 11 77 52 92
Fax: 249 11 77 45 59
E-Mail: izzeldin@acm.org

Swaziland

Ms. Nomathemba Dlamini
Chief Economist
Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
P.O. Box 602
Mbabane, Swaziland
Phone: (268) 43765/6/7/8
Fax: (268) 42157

Mr. N. H. Mahluza
Director of Computer Services
Computer Department
Ministry of Finance
P.O. Box 3702
Mbabane, Swaziland
Phone: (268) 40 45 826
Fax: (268) 42157
E-Mail: swazi.gov@iafrica.sz

His Excellency Mr. Majosi V. Sithole
Minister of Economic, Planning & Development
Ministry of Economic Planning & Development
P.O. Box 602
Mbabane, Swaziland
Phone: (268) 404-37658
Fax: (268) 404-2157/9
E-Mail: ep_cso@realnet.co.sz
URL: www.swazi.com/government/ministries/min-econ.html

Switzerland

Ms. Irene Bertrand
Librarian
WHO
1211 Geneva 27
Geneva, Switzerland
Phone: 41 22 791 2096
Fax: 41 22 791 4150
E-Mail: bertrandi@who.ch

Ms. Edith Certain
Librarian
WHO
1211
Geneva 27, Switzerland
Phone: 41 22 791 2061
Fax: 41 22 791 4150
E-Mail: certaine@who.ch

Ms. Mary Chinery-Hesse
Executive Director
International Labour Organization
CH 1211
Geneva 22, Switzerland
Phone: 41 22 799 6140
Fax: 41 22 799 6157

Dr. Awa Marie Coll-Seck
Director
Department of Policy, Strategy and Research
United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
20 Avenue Appia, CH-1211
Geneva 27, Switzerland
Phone: 41 22 791 36 92
Fax: 41 22 791 41 87
URL: http://www.unaids.org

Nicoletta Confalone
International Environment House
UNFPA
1219 CH Etelaine
Geneva, Switzerland
Phone: 41 22 917 8570
Fax: 41 22 917 8016
E-Mail: nicoletta.confalone@undp.org

Mr. Hans-Peter Egler
Deputy Head
Division for Development & Transition
Department for Commercial and Environmental Technology
Cooperation, State
Secretariat for Economic Affairs
Effingerstrasse 1, CH-3003
Bern, Switzerland
Phone: 0041 31 324 08 13
Fax: 0041 31 324 09 60
E-Mail: hans-peter.egler@seco.admin.ch

Ellie Fouilloux
7 rue de la Muse
Geneva 1201, Switzerland
Phone: 41 79 203
Fax: 41 79 203
E-Mail: 113322.1543@compuserve.com

Mr. Gerome Fouilloux
Switzerland

Ms. Cynthia Hewitt de Alcantara
Deputy Director
United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
Palais des Nations, CH-1211
Geneva 10, Switzerland
Phone: (41 22) 917 29 50
Fax: (41 22) 917 06 50
E-Mail: hewitt@unrisd.org
URL: www.unrisd.org

Mr. Mustapha Hlil
Alliances and Marketing Manager
Oracle Europe, Middle East & Africa
World Trade Center 2, CP 591
1215 Geneve 15, Switzerland

Phone: 4122 7999900
Fax: 4122 7999983
E-Mail: mhlil@ch.oracle.com

Mr. Ngandu Iluga
Deputy Director
UNHCR
Geneva, Switzerland
E-Mail: ngandui@unhcr.ch

Mr. Rebecca Mayer
Research Officer
ITU
19 Blvd Helvetique
Geneva, Switzerland
E-Mail: rebecca.mayer@itu.int

Mr. Rainer Pritzer
Assistant to the Executive Director
International Labour Organization
CH 1211
Geneva 22, Switzerland
Phone: 41 22 799 6140
Fax: 41 22 799 6157

Mr. Hamadoun Touré
Director
Office of the Development of Telecommunications (BDT)
International Telecommunications Union
Place des Nations
Geneva 20, Switzerland
Phone: 41 22 730 5111
Fax: 41 22 733 7256
E-Mail: itumail@itu.int

Mr. Gerolf Weigel
Deputy Head Division, SDC Bretton Woods Institutions
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Switzerland
Phone: 0041 31 322 3196
Fax: 0041 31 324 1347
E-Mail: gerolf.weigel@deza.admin.ch

Tchad

M. Hadjaro Barkaye
Directeur Général
Ministère des postes et télécommunications
BP 154
N'djaména, Tchad
Phone: 235 521555
Fax: 235 521530

M. Francis Beninga Deouro
DMI
Faculte des Sciences
B.P. 1027
N'Djamena, Tchad
Phone: 235 52 97 40
Fax: 235 51 40 33
E-Mail: facs@intnet.td

The Netherlands

Dr. Catherine Nyaki Adeya
Research Fellow
Institute for New Technologies (INTECH)
United Nations University (UNU)
Keizer Karelplein 19
Maastricht, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)43-3506330
Fax: +31 (0)43-3506399
E-Mail: Nyaki@intech.unu.edu

Mr. Bruce Girard
Economics of Infrastructure Programme
Faculty of Technology, Policy and Management
2600 GA Delft, The Netherlands
Phone: 31 15 278 85 48
Fax: 31 15 278 79 25

Ms. Nanny Kempers
Project Manager
Centre for Development Cooperation Services, Information,
Communication &
Organization Unit
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
VUA/CDCS/ICO
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 20 4449063
Fax: +31 20 4449095
E-Mail: wam.kempers@dienst.vu.nl

Ms. Rose Kiggundu
Research Fellow
Institute for New Technologies (INTECH)
United Nations University (UNU)
Keizer Karelplein 19
Maastricht, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)43-3506344
Fax: +31 (0)43-3506399
E-Mail: rose@intech.unu.edu

Mr. Paul Rees Osborn
Mediateurs
Willem Alexanderpoort 46
Vithoorn, The Netherlands
E-Mail: paul.osborn@mediateurs.org

Loeki Schaeffers
International Institute for Communication and Development
(IICD)
The Hague, The Netherlands
Phone: 31 0 70 311 7311
Fax: 31 0 70 311 7322
E-Mail: schaeffen@iicd.org

Mart Van de Guchte, Director
Institute for Communication and Development
The Hague, The Netherlands
Phone: 31 70 311 7311.

Mr. Dewit Van de Weerd
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P.O. Box 2006
The Hague, The Netherlands

Phone: 0031 70 348 5834
Fax: 0031 70 348 6436
E-Mail: d.vande.weerd@dio.minsuza.nl

Togo

M. Yawo Amouzouvi
Secrétaire Général
Ministère de l'éducation nationale
BP 12175
Lomé, Togo
Phone: 228 21 68 65
Fax: 228 22 07 83

Assane Diallo
Regional Coordinator INDAFTEL
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
c/o UNDP P. O. Box 911
Lomé, Togo
Phone: 228 228414
Fax: 228 22 84 15

M. Tsatsou Fiadjoe
Directeur
Centre Informatique et de Calcul
Université du Bénin
Lomé, Togo
Phone: (228) 255 094
Fax: (228) 256 603
E-Mail: hfiadjoe@café.tg

M. Jean-Marie Noagbodji
Café Informatique
BP 12596
Lomé, Togo
Phone: 228 25 55 55
E-Mail: jmnoagbo@café.tg

Tunisie

M. Lazhar Bannour
Directeur
Ministère du Commerce
Tunis, Tunisie
E-Mail: oct.email@ati.tn

Dr. Salah Ben Abdallah
Executive Director
IRSIT
Tunis, Tunisie
E-Mail: salah.benabdallah@irsit.mrt.tn

Khedija Houmouda Ghariani
President/Director General
Agence Tunisienne d'Internet
13 Rue Jughurte 1002
Tunis, Tunisie
Phone: 2161846100
Fax: 2161846600
E-Mail: Ghariani@ati.tn

M. Majed Khalfallah
IRSIT
Tunis, Tunisie

Phone: +216 1 800 122
E-Mail: majed.khalfallah@irsit.mrt.tn

M. Mondher Makni
Managing Director
Databox Inc.
Z5, Ariana Aeroport, B.P. 360
Tunis, Tunisie
Phone: +216 1 705 330
Fax: +216 1 709 739
E-Mail: databox@planet.tn
URL: http://www.databox.com.tn

Uganda

Mr. Alex Kakooza
Principal Assistant Secretary
Office of the President
PB 7142
Kampala, Uganda
Fax: 25 72 52

Sendi Kayondo
Assistant Director
HEDA
P. O. Box 19121
Kasangat, Uganda
Phone: 346 144

Mrs. Norah Madaya
Project Officer
Acacia Secretariat
P.O. Box 6884
Kampala, Uganda
Phone: 256 41 2504 99
Fax: 256 41 23 4579

Her Excellency Ms. Miria Matembe
Minister of Ethics & Integrity
Office of the President
Parliament Building,
Kampala, Uganda
Fax: (25641) 235459/ 234588
URL: http://www.uganda.co.ug/govt1.htm

Mr. William Mbonigaba
Department of Information and Data
Uganda National Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 24204
Kampala, Uganda
Fax: 256 41 34 76 35
E-Mail: katatumb@swiftuganda.com

Mr. Vincent K. Musubire
Commilinks Business Associates Ltd.
P.O. Box 10078
Kampala, Uganda
Phone: 075 64 66 53
Fax: 25 52 88
E-Mail: vmusubire@hotmail.com

Zerubabel M. Nyiira
Executive Secretary and National Acacia Programme
Coordinator

Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
P.O. Box 6884
Kampala, Uganda
Phone: 256 41 250499
Fax: 256 41 234579
E-Mail: uncst@starcom.co.ug

Mr. A. Babatunde Thomas
Resident Representative
United Nations Development Programme
P. O. Box 7184
Kampala, Uganda
Phone: (256-41) 245290
Fax: (256-41) 244801

Ms. Ida Wanendeya
Private Sector Foundation
P.O. Box 9314
Kampala, Uganda
Phone: 256 41 266493
Fax: 256 41 259 109
E-Mail: monaent@swiftuganda.com

UK

Mr. John Atkinson
TTI International Ltd.
11 High Street
Hampshire, UK
Phone: +44 1329 828831
Fax: +44 1329 828832
E-Mail: atkinson@ttint.net

Charlotte Atkinson
TTI International
11 High Street
Fareham Hants, UK
Phone: 44 1329 82 88 31
Fax: 44 1329 82 8832

Mr. B. M. Chivhanga
The Internet Studies Research Group, Department of
Information Science
City University
Northampton Sq.
London EC1V 0HB, UK
Phone: +44 171 477 8000
Fax: +44 171 477 8584
E-Mail: ck521@soi.city.ac.uk

Mr. James Deane
Executive Director
Panos Institute
9 White Lion St
London, UK
Phone: (+44) 171 278 1111
Fax: (+44) 171 278 0345
E-Mail: panos@panoslondon.org.uk
URL: <http://www.oneworld.org/panos>

Mr. Philip Ferguson
Director
Africa Foundation for Development (AFFORD)
54 Camberwellcroad

London, SE5 OEN, UK
Phone: 44 1 207 703 0653
Fax: 44 1 7710 329 389
E-Mail: info@afford.dircon.co.uk

Prof. Robin Mansell
Director of Research
Science and Technology Policy Research (SPRU)
University of Sussex
University of Sussex, Mantell Building, Falmer, Brighton, East
Sussex, BN1 9RF, UK
Brighton, UK
Phone: 44 1273 678165 / 877187
Fax: 44 1273 685865
E-Mail: R.E.Mansell@sussex.ac.uk
URL: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/spru/ink/>

Ms. Maria G. N. Musoke
Dept. of Information Studies
University of Sheffield
Regent Court, 211 Portobello Street
Sheffield S1 4DP, UK
Phone: 0114 22780300
Fax: 0114 2222634, 2222630
E-Mail: lip97mgm@sheffield.ac.uk

Ms. Clare O'Farrell
Research Officer
Agricultural Extension Rural Development Department
(AERDD)
University of Reading
Whiteknights Campus
Reading, UK
Phone: +44 (0)118 9318119
Fax: +44 (0)118 9261244
E-Mail: c.m.ofarrell@reading.ac.uk
URL: <http://www.rdg.ac.uk/AERDD/AERDD/ICTs.html>

Stephan Roman
Director
Information Services
British Council
58 Whitworth Street
Manchester, UK
Phone: +44 161 957 7171
Fax: +44 161 957 7168
E-Mail: stephan.roman@britcoun.org

Shalon Simmons
US Telecom Interest Group
Pent House 1, Block 1
London, UK
Phone: 44 171 487 5303
URL: sgsimmons@hotmail.com

Mr. Christopher Slade
VP Public & Industry Sector Development
Oracle Corporation UK Ltd.
Oracle Parkway, Building 520, Thames Valley Park
Reading, UK
Phone: 44 118 924 5450
Fax: 44 118 924 5471
E-Mail: cslade@uk.oracle.com

Mr. Shola Taylor
Coordinator
African Telecom Think Tank
4 Woodward Avenue
London E1V, UK
Phone: +44 1 71 728 1106
Fax: +44 1 717 28 1163
E-Mail: africatelethink@hotmail.com

Mr. David Woolnough
ICT & Energy Advisor
DFID
94 Victoria St.
London SW1E 5JL, UK
Phone: 0171 917 9541
Fax: 0171 917 0072
E-Mail: d-woolnough@dfid.gov.uk

United Republic of Tanzania

Mr. Imrah Bakari
Director
Zanzibar International Film Festival
P.O. Box 3032
Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania
Phone: 255 54 233135
E-Mail: ziff@zanzibar.org

Mr. John Kajiba
IT Expert
Economic and Social Research Foundation
Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
Phone: 255 51 760 260
Fax: 255 51 760 062
E-Mail: jkajiba@esrf.or.tz
URL: www.esrf.or.tz

Mr. Vincensio Kazimzuri
Principal Secretary
Informatics Section
Planning Commission, Policy Information Department
P. O. Box 9242
Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
Phone: 255 112681-3/130314
Fax: 255 11 55 19
E-Mail: vkazimzuri@hotmail.com

Mr. Rakesh Kukreja
ICS(t) Ltd.
Tancot House, Ohio St. P.O. Box 861
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
Phone: 255 51 112000
Fax: 255 51 11 55 71
E-Mail: rakesh@icstz.com

Prof. Hasa Mfaume Mlawa
Institute of Development Studies
University of Dar es Salaam
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
Fax: +255 51 41 03 82
E-Mail: mlawa@ud.co.tz

Ahmed Mohiddiyy
Africa Dialogue Centre

P.O. Box 6020

Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania
Phone: 057 8125

Prof. Beda M. Mutagahywa
Director, Computer Centre
University of Dar Es Salaam
P.O.Box 35062
Dar es Saalam, United Republic of Tanzania
Phone: 255-51-410500-8 ext. 2458
Fax: 255-51-410758/410690
E-Mail: Bmutag@udsm.ac.tz

Dr. Mebel Kabeta Mwaniki
c/o Mr. And Mrs. Kisanga
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
Phone: 255 51 668624
Fax: 255 51 114989
E-Mail: wic@cats-net.com

Prof. Samuel Wangwe
Executive Director
Economic and Social Research Foundation
United Nations University
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania

USA

Dr. Akin Adubifa
Program Officer
Carnegie Corporation of New York
437 Madison Avenue
New York 11427, USA
Phone: 1 212 371 3200
Fax: 1 212 223 9822
E-Mail: oaa@carnegie.org

Prof. Raymond Akwule
Centre for Telecommunication, Department for
Communications
George Mason University
4404 University Drive
Fairfax, Virginia 22030, USA
Phone: 703-993-1091
Fax: 703-993-1096
E-Mail: rakwule@gmu.edu

Ms. Elizabeth Arriaza
Abt Associates
4800 Montgomery Lane
Bethesda, MD, USA
Phone: 301 913-0556
Fax: 301 652 3618
E-Mail: larriaza@abtassoc.com

Mr. Fikru Asfaw
WorldSpace
2400 N. St. NW
Washington, DC, USA
Phone: 202 969-6000 / 251-1-615659
E-Mail: afikru@hotmail.com

Fisseha Assefa
Operations Mgr.
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr,
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0851
Fax: 310 015 0655
E-Mail: fisseha@tct540.com

Mr. Brian Bacon
International Projects Manager
International Program
NTCA
4121 Wilson Blvd., Tenth Floor
Arlington, VA USA
Phone: (703) 351-2011
Fax: (703) 351-2027
E-Mail: bacon@ntca.org
URL: <http://www.ntca.org>

Ms. Maggie Banducci
General Manager
Fire & Light
1642 Baywood LN.
Bayside CA 95524, USA
Phone: 707-822 6851
E-Mail: maggiebayside@hotmail.com

Ms. Raj Bardouille
Economic Affairs Officer
OSCALDC, United Nations
New York 10017,
USA

Kristen Beard
GIIC - Secretariat
1800 K Street, NW, Suite 620
Washington, DC 20006, USA
Phone: 202 775 3134
Fax: 202 452 1340
E-Mail: kbeard@csis.org

Mr. Rodney Beard
Pastor
Living Word Ministries
1306 Concord Rd
Nashville, TN USA

Ms. Gloria Primm Brown
Carnegie Corporation of New York
437 Madison Avenue
New York, USA
Phone: 212 207 6254
Fax: 212 754 4073
E-Mail: mdb@carnegie.org

Mr. Keith Brown
Deputy Assistant Administrator
USAID
RRB 4.08-025
Washington, DC 20523-4800, USA
Phone: 1 202 712 0500
Fax: 1 202 216 3008

Mr. Brandon Bruce
GIIC Secretariat
1800 K St., NW
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202 775 3134
Fax: 202 452 1340
E-Mail: bbruce@csis.org

Marilyn Burch
World Space Corporation
2400 N Street NW
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202 969 6000
Fax: 1-732-274-200

Mr. Thomas Chesney
Business Development Manager
Sun Microsystems (GKP)
7900 Westpark Dr. Suite Allo
McLean, Virginia, USA
Phone: 703 204 4124
E-Mail: thomas.chesney@east.sun.com

Dr. Derrick L. Cogburn
Executive Director: GIIC Africa
Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC)
1800 K St, N.W. Suite 620
Washington DC,, USA
Phone: +1 202 775 3185
Fax: + 1 202 452 1340
E-Mail: dcogburn@csis.org
URL: www.giic.org

Ms. Imani Countess
Sr. Research Fellow
African Policy Information Center (APIC)
110 Maryland Ave #509
Washington, D.C. 20002, USA
Phone: 202 546 7961
Fax: 202 546 1545
E-Mail: imani@igc.org
URL: www.africapolicy.org

Mr. Zephirin Diabré
Associate Administrator
UNDP
New York, New York, USA
Fax: (1-212) 906 6464

Dr. Ibrahim El Badawi
Principal Economist
World Bank
1818 St. NW
Washington D.C., USA

Mr. Larry Forgy
Work Program Administrator
InfoDev
World Bank
1818 H St. NW
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 1 202 473 7462
Fax: 1 202 522 3186

E-Mail: lforgy@worldbank.org
Ms. Louise Fréchette
Deputy Secretary-General
Headquarters
United Nations
UN Headquarters
New York, NY 10017, USA
Phone: 1 212 963 5012
Fax: 1 212 963 8845/2155

Ms. Lynne Gallagher
Telecom/Telematique Inc.
2737 Devonshire Place, NW
Washington, D.C., USA
Phone: 202 462 5966
Fax: 202 232 4954
E-Mail: tti@his.com

Mr. Alan Gelb
Chief Economist
AFTMI
The World Bank
1818 H Street, N.W.
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202-473-7667
E-Mail: agelb@worldbank.org

Mr. Shoa Girma
World Space
Washington D.C., USA

Mr. Nicolas Gorjestani
Lead Maanagement Specialist
AFTKL
The World Bank
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202 473 3343
Fax: 202 477 2977
E-Mail: ngorjestani@worldbank.org

Mahzent Habte-Mariam
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0851
Fax: 310 015 0655

Asfaw Haile-Giorgis
Senior Progrmmer
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0881
Fax: 310-615 0658
E-Mail: asfaw@tctsys.com

Roger Hoff
Senior Progrmmer
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0881
Fax: 310-615 0658
E-Mail: Roger@tctsys.com

Ms. Joan Hubbard
Coordinator
GKP Secretariat
The World Bank
1818 H. St NW
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202 473 5847
Fax: 202 522 1492
E-Mail: hubbard@worldbank.org

Mr. Dawit Isayas
President and CEO
Millennium Computer Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 3614
Laurel, MD, USA
Phone: 202 422 7222
Fax: 530 686 4382
E-Mail: disayas@branna.com

Jack Janardhan
Project Manager
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0881
Fax: 310-615 0658

Mr. Erik Caldwell Johnson
Knowledge Management Officer
WBIP
The World Bank
Washington D.C., USA

Mr. Philip Karp
Manager, Knowledge Systems
GKP Secretariat
World Bank Institute
1818 H Street, NW, Room G4-155
Washington, DC 20433, USA
Phone: 1 202 473 8710
Fax: 1 202 522 1492
E-Mail: pkarp1@worldbank.org

Shimeles Kindie
Local Rep.
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0881
Fax: 310 615 0655

Robert F. Krill
Director of Programs
Westar Group, Inc.
3000 K Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC, USA
Phone: (202) 965-3900
Fax: (202)965-4200
E-Mail: Bob@westargroup.com

Ms. Zemenay Lakew
United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
1, United Nations Plaza 336 E 45th st.

New York, USA
Fax: 212 906 6958
E-Mail: zemenay.lakew@undp.org

Ms. Bhavya Lal
Senior Policy Analyst
Abt Associates Inc.
55 Wheeler St.
Cambridge, USA
Phone: 617 34 92 452
Fax: 617 492 5219
E-Mail: blal@abtassoc.com
URL: www.abtassoc.com

Mr. Tedros Lemma
World Space
Washington D.C., USA

Tudor Lomas
Project Director
World Bank
1818 H St.
Washington D.C., USA
E-Mail: tudor@jemstone.net

Mr. Edward Malloy
Telecom/IT Policy Advisor
USAID
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202 712 1579
Fax: 202 216 3229
E-Mail: emolloy@usaid.gov

Ms. Leela McCullough
Information Director
SatelLife
30 California Street
Watertown, MA USA
Phone: +1-617-926-9400
Fax: +1-617-926-1212
E-Mail: leela@usa.healthnet.org
URL: <http://www.healthnet.org>

Mr. Kerry McNamara
Senior Knowledge Management Officer
GKP Secretariat
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW, room J2-127
Washington, DC 20433
USA
Phone: 202 473 8215
Fax: 202 522 1492
E-Mail: Kmcnamara1@worldbank.org
URL: www.globalknowledge.org

Tegegne Mesfin
Ass. Manager
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0881
Fax: 310-615 0658

Mr. Mohamed Mushin
Chief Information Officer
ISG
The World Bank
Washington D.C., USA

Jack Noa
Senior Programmer
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr, El Segundo
California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0881
Fax: 310-615 0658

Mr. Ohene Owusu Nyanin
Manager, Regional Initiatives
AFTPG
The World Bank
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202 473 2219
Fax: 202 473 8046
E-Mail: onyanin@worldbank.org

Ms. Susan Pasquariella
Coordinator
United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN),
Population Division
United Nations
New York 10017, USA
E-Mail: pasquariella@un.org

Mr. Rubin Patterson
Associate Professor of Sociology and Africana studies
Department of Sociology
University of Toledo
2801 West Bancroft
Toledo, Ohio 43606, USA
Phone: 419 530 4953
Fax: 419 530 8406
E-Mail: rpatter@utnet.utoledo.edu

Mr. Touraj Rahimi
Schools Online
1735 North First St,
San Jose CA, USA
Fax: 408 501 0771
E-Mail: touraj@schoolsonline.org

Mr. Leonard Robinson
President and CEO
The National Summit On Africa
1218 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C., USA
Phone: (202) 861-8644
Fax: (202) 861-8645
E-Mail: lrobinson@africasummit.org
URL: <http://www.africasummit.org/>

Mr. José Luis Rojas
School of International & Public Affairs
Columbia University
500 Riverside Drive, #843
New York, NY USA

Phone: 212-316-8921
Fax: 212-316-8415
E-Mail: jr552@columbia.edu

Ms. Melissa Rosser
USAID - Leland Initiative
M-01-32
Washington, D.C. 20004, USA
Phone: 202 712 4439
Fax: 202 216 3515
E-Mail: mrosser@usaid.gov

Mr. Noah Samara
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer
WorldSpace Corporation
2400 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037, USA
Phone: 1 202 969 6000 / 6110
Fax: 1 202 969 6002
E-Mail: nsamara@worldspace.com

Ms. Karin Santi
African Policy Information Center (APIC)
110 Maryland Ave #509
Washington, D.C. 20002, USA
Phone: 202 546 7961
Fax: 202 546 1545
E-Mail: ksanti@mweb.co.za

Ms. Lesley Simmons
Communications Officer
GKP Secretariat
World Bank
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202 473 1785
Fax: 202 522 1492

Mr. Lane Smith
USAID - Leland Initiative
Washington, D.C., USA
Phone: 202 712 0826
Fax: 202 216 3373
E-Mail: lasmith@usaid.gov

Mr. Dan Spealman
Strategic Communications Associate
Pact
1901 Penn Av, NW #501
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 202 466 5666
Fax: 202 466 5669
E-Mail: speal@usa.net

Erin Walsh
Manager
International Strategies and Partnerships
Cisco Systems
170 West Tasman
San Jose, CA USA
Phone: (408) 525-3373
Fax: (408) 527-0754
E-Mail: erwalsh@cisco.com
URL: <http://www.cisco.com/edu/academies/index.html>

Dr. Robert White
Professor
Department of Government and Politics
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521, USA
Phone: (707) 826-3911
Fax: (707) 826-4496
E-Mail: rgw2@axe.humboldt.edu

Prof. Ernest J. Wilson
Director
Centre for International Development and Conflict Management
University of Maryland
College Park, MD
USA
Phone: 301 314 7711
Fax: 301 314 9256
E-Mail: ewilson@cidcm.umd.edu
URL: <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/wilson/>

Mr. Kelly Wong
Senior Associates
CIDCM
University of Maryland
0121D Tydings Hall
College Park, MD 20742, USA
Phone: 1 301 314 1285
Fax: 1 301 314 9254
E-Mail: kwong@cidcm.umd.edu

Wond Wossen Mesfin
President
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0881
Fax: 310-615 0658
E-Mail: wwm@tctsys.com

Mr. Reinhard Woytek
Consultant
AFTKL
The World Bank
Africa Region - Knowledge Learning Center
Washington D.C., USA
Phone: 1 202 473 1641
Fax: 1 202 477 2977
E-Mail: rwoytek@worldbank.org

Soltan Zahirsha
Senior Programmer
Transnational Computer Technology
100N Sepulveda Blvd. 17th Flr
El Segundo, California, USA
Phone: 310 615 0881
Fax: 310-615 0658
E-Mail: sultan@tctsys.com

Zambia

Mr. Mambo Banda
Vice Chair
EPCCI

Parireyatwa Rd.
Chipata, Zambia
Phone: (260 62 21 518
Fax: (260 1) 21 583
E-Mail: mambokb@zamnet.zm

Schuller Habeezu
Managing Director
Zamnet
P.O. Box 38299
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: 260 1 75 3888
Fax: 260 1 224 775

Mrs. Katherine N. Ichoya
Senior Policy Analyst
COMESA/FEMCOM
The COMESA Centre, Ben Bella Road,
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: +260-1-229725/32
Fax: +260-1-225107
E-Mail: kichoya@comesa.int
URL: <http://www.comesa.int>

Mr. E. Mupela
IT Specialist
Ministry of Health/CBOH
P. Bag RW 443X
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: 260 1 253179
Fax: 260 1 764126
E-Mail: hritmup@zamnet.zm

Prof. J.M. Mwenenchanya
Professor
McLink Consulting Services
Mezzanine Floor, Findeco House, Cairo Road, P.O. Box 36527
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: 00260 1 232295
Fax: 00260 1 227528
URL: jorry.mwenenchanya

Mr. Robert Okello
Director
Subregional Development Center for Southern Africa (SA-SRDC)
P.O. Box 30647
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: 260 1 21 59 48
Fax: 260 1 23 69 49
E-Mail: uneca@zamnet.zm

Jimmy Pittchar
Advisor
COMESA
P.O. Box 30051
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: 260 1 229 725
Fax: 260 1 293 917
E-Mail: jpittchar@hotmail.com

Dr. G.B. Silwamba
Director General
Ministry of Health

Lusaka, Zambia
His Excellency Mr. Newstead L. Zimba
Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services
Box 51025
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: (260-1) 251 766/8
Fax: (260-1) 253 457

Zimbabwe

Prof. Stanley Moyo
AVU Coordinator
Department of Biology
University of Zimbabwe
P.O.Box MP 167
Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe
Phone: 26304333669 / **mob:**263091315847
Fax: +263-4-307137
E-Mail: stanley.moyo@uz.ac.zw

Ms. Helga Patrikios
Deputy University Librarian
Medical Library
University of Zimbabwe
Mount Pleasant, Zimbabwe
Phone: 263-4-7981450
Fax: 795019;
E-Mail: patrikios@healthnet.zw

EMBASSIES/AMBASSADES

Algérie

M. Hamid Boukrif
Counsellor
Ambassade d'Algérie
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: algemb@telecom.net.et

Mme. Samia Hamdani
Secrétaire
Ambassade d'Algérie
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Son Excellence M. Chergui Smail
Ambassadeur
Ambassade d'Algérie
Addis Ababa, Algérie

Angola

Mr. Raimundo Kimoma
Angola Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Fernando Miguel
Second Secretary
Angolan Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510085

Jose Pinto
Angola Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Raimundo Quimoma
Second Secretary
Angolan Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510085

Isabel Resende
Angola Embassy
P.O. Box 2962
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 00 85

Austria

L. Moll
Austrian Embassy
P.O. Box 11553
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 53 38 28
Fax: 53 38 31

Botswana

Mr. Diabi J. Mmualefe
Embassy of the Republic of Botswana
P.O. Box 22282
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 71 54 22
Fax: 71 40 99

Ms. Edith Modisane
Embassy of the Republic of Botswana
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Burkina Faso

Mr. Samate Kloutan Abdel Karim
Embassy of Burkina Faso
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Son Excellence M. Léandre B. Bassole
Ambassadeur
Ambassade du Burkina Faso
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 58 64
Fax: 61 20 94

Daouda Keita
Burkina Faso Embassy
P.O. Box 19685
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-615863
Fax: 251-1-612094

Benjamin Nana
Troisième Secrétaire
L'Ambassade du Burkina Faso
P.O. Box 19685
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mme. Minata Samata
Premier Conseiller
L'Ambassade du Burkina Faso
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

M. Kloutan Samate
Attache de Presse
Ambassade du Burkina Faso
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

M. Léonard Simporé
Conseiller
Ambassade du Burkina Faso
P. O. Box 19685
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-615864
Fax: 251-1-612094

Burundi

Bwakira Melchior
P.O. Box 3641
Burundi Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Cameroun

Zang Samuel Roger
Cameroon Embassy
P.O. Box 1026
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-50 44 88
Fax: 251-1-50 44 88
E-Mail: zsr.addis@telecom.net.et

Canada

Mr. Telahun Workeneh
Commercial Officer
Canadian Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 71 30 22
Fax: 71 30 33
E-Mail: telahun.workeneh@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Cap-Vert

Gilberto Lopes
Embassy of Cape Verde
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 18 52 01

China

Zhao Wei
Chinese Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Yan Xianxu
First Secretary
Chinese Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Cote d'Ivoire

Son Excellence Pierre L. Yere
Ambassadeur
Ambassade de Cote D'Ivoire
P.O. Box 3668
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 71 12 13
Fax: 71 21 78

M. Severin Kouadio
Premier Secrétaire
Ambassade de Côte d'Ivoire
P.O.Box 3668
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1 711-213
Fax: 251-1 712-178
E-Mail: coted.aa@telecom.net.et

M. Christophe Kouakou
Conseiller
Ambassade de Côte D'Ivoire
P.O. Box 3668
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Son Excellence M. Rerre L. Lobognon
Ambassadeur
Ambassade de Côte d'Ivoire
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Czechoslovakia

Isabella Havlova
Attaché
Czech Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-516382/516132
Fax: 251-1-513471

Egypt

Khalid Ali Elbakly
First Secretary
The Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Aboubaker H. Mahmoud
First Secretary
The Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

France

M. Denis Gaillard
First Secretary
French Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-550066
Fax: 251-1-551441
E-Mail: denis.gaillard@diplomatie.fr

Gabon

Paul Bekale
Premier Conseiller
Ambassade du Gabon
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 10 75
Fax: 61 37 00

Sylvester Miembet
Conseiller
Gabon Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 03 32

Ghana

His Excellency Mr. Benjamin Godwyll
Ambassador
Embassy of Ghana
P.O. Box 3173
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 711402
Fax: 712511
E-Mail: ghmf24@telecom.net.et

Harold Gunshie
Ghana Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Ernest Lomotey
Counsellor
Embassy of Ghana
P.O. Box 3173
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 711402
Fax: 712511
E-Mail: ghmf24@telecom.net.et

Mr. Harold Quashie
Minister
Embassy of Ghana
P.O. Box 3173
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 711402
Fax: 712511
E-Mail: ghmf24@telecom.net.et

Mr. Albert Yaniley
Counsellor
Embassy of Ghana
P.O. Box 3173
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 711402
Fax: 712511
E-Mail: ghmf24@telecom.net.et

Guinée

Son excellence M. Diallo Bouracar Biro
Ambassade de Guinée
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 65 13 08

Son excellence Mr. Mamadi Diawara
Ambassadeur
Ambassade de Guinee
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 65 13 08
Fax: 65 12 50

Indonesia

Ms. Jerusalem Hailu
Staff of Information and Economic Dept.
Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Addis Ababa
Mekanissa Road, H.23, K.13, House No. 1816
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251- 712-104
Fax: 251-1 710 873
E-Mail: kbriadis@telecom.net.et

Mr. Andi Rahadian
Head of Information Dept. Third Secretary
Information and Economic Dept.
Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Addis Ababa
Mekanissa Road, H.23, K.13, House No. 1816
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251- 712-104
Fax: 251-1 710 873
E-Mail: rahadian2@hotmail.com

Italy

Carmello Barbarello
Embassy of Italy
P.O. Box 1105
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 01 20

Japan

Mr. Mekonnen Ashenafi
Economic Analyst
Embassy of Japan
POB 13698
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511088

Shuichiro Kawaguchi
Deputy Head of Mission
Embassy of Japan
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mapoto Nishi
3rd Secretary
Embassy of Japan
P.O. Box 5650
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 10 88
Fax: 51 13 50

Kenya

His Excellency Bwisa Edward
Ambassador
Kenya Embassy

POB 3301
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-610033

Flora Karugu
Diplomat
Kenya Embassy
P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 610033

Flora Karugu
First Secretary
Kenyan Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-610033

Margaret Auma Nxandon
P.O. Box 3301
Kenya Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 00 33
Fax: 61 14 33

Nthiga Nyaga Peter
Kenya Embassy
P.O. Box 3301
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 610033

Margaret Nyandong
Kenya Embassy
P.O. Box 3301
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 610033

Hippius Ochieng
Second Secretary
Kenya Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-610033
Fax: 251-1-611433

Lesotho

His excellency Masuhla H. Leteka
Ambassador
Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho
P.O. Box 7483
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 43 68

Thabang P. Lekhela
Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho
P.O. Box 7483
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 43 68

Matjoka Ramonono
Lesotho Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 43 68
Fax: 61 28 37

Liberia

G. A. Kennedy
Counsellor
Embassy of Liberia
P.O. Box 3116
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

His excellency Mr. Marcus Kofa
Ambassador
Embassy of Liberia
P.O. Box 3116
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

David J. Sarugee Jr.
Embassy of Liberia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Libya

His Excellency Mr. Ali A. Awidan
Secretary
Libyan Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511077

Mohamed Mehdi Hattab
First Secretary
Libyan Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511077

Madagascar

Mr. M. Jaona
Ambassade de Madagascar
P.O. Box 60004
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 25 55

Malawi

Mr. D.R. Ezala
First Secretary
Malawi Embassy
P.O. Box 2316
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 58 66
Fax: 61b 54 36

B.E. Kamango
Malawi Embassy
P.O. Box 2316
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. M.Y. Mandale
Second Secretary
Malawi Embassy
P.O. Box 2316
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 58 66
Fax: 61 54 36

Mali

Mohamed Askia
Conseiller
L'Ambassade de la République du Mali
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

M. Pascal Coulibaly
Mali Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 51 88 56
Fax: 251 1 712601

Boubacar Diall
First Counsellor
Mali Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 201528
Fax: 712601

Mr. Amadou Haidara
Mali Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

C. Nimaga
Embassy of Mali
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: 71 26 01

M. Souleymane Sidib
First Counsellor
Mali Embassy
BP 4561
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 201528
Fax: 712601

Hamid Sidibe
Mali Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 88 56
Fax: 71 26 01

Abdoul Kader Toure
Ambassadeur
L'Ambassade de la République du Mali
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Seydou Traore
Aide de Camp
L'Ambassade de la République du Mali
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mohamed Traoré
Conseiller
Mali Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Maroc

Khalid Bouziane
Secrétaire
Ambassade du Maroc
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-531700

Azzedine Haddaoui
Chargé d'Affaire
Ambassade du Maroc
Bole Road
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 531700

Mauritius

His Excellency Mr. Mahendr Dosieah
Ambassador
Mauritius Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-614704
Fax: 251-1-614704

Mozambique

Albertina Mac Donald
Second Secretary
Mozambique Embassy
POB 5671
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-613824
Fax: 251-1-613824

Namibia

His Excellency Mr. Eddie S. Amkongo
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Namibia
P.O. Box 1443
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 19 66
Fax: 61 26 77

Mr. Sitwala Mapenzi
First Secretary
The Embassy of the Republic of Namibia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 19 66
Fax: 61 26 77

Niger

Tahirou Maliki
Counsellor
Ambassade du Niger
P.O. Box 5791
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Nigeria

His excellency Mr. B.N. Dede
Ambassador
Embassy of Nigeria
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

A.A. Bolaji
Embassy of Nigeria
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 06 44

Mr. Francis Eyo
Embassy of Nigeria
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

M.K. Ilyasu
Counsellor
Embassy of Nigeria
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 06 44
Fax: 55 23 07

F.N. Isoh
Charge D'Affaires
Embassy of Nigeria
P.O. Box 1019
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

His Excellency Mr. S. Malani
Ambassador
Embassy of Nigeria
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Norway

Oskar Oskarsson
Royal Norwegian Embassy
P.O. Box 8383
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Palestine

Ibrahim Keshla
Palestine Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 08 11

Republic of Korea

Byung Hwa Chung
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

H.E. Jae-chol Hahn
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

République du Congo

Marie Mboundzi
P.O. Box 5639
Ambassade du Congo
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 61 58 66

Jean Prosper Miamona
Ambassade du Congo
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 62 00 26

Casimir Mpiere
Ambasade du Congo
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Phone: 60 08 76
M. Poukawa
2eme Secrétaire
Ambassade du Congo
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Sénégal

Son Excellence M. Papa Louis Fall
Ambassador Permanent Representative of Senegal
Senegal Embassy
Africa Avenue
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 61 13 76
Fax: 251 1 61 00 20

M. Bassirou Sene
Counsellor
Senegal Embassy
Africa Avenue
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-611376
Fax: 251-1 610020
E-Mail: bsene@telecom.net.et

Sierra Leone

Mr. Patrick Willie Bonglo
Counsellor and Head of Chancery
Sierra Leone Embassy
P.O. Box 5619
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 710033
Fax: 711911
E-Mail: sleon@telecom.net.et

Mrs. Bakie N. Remoe-Doherty
Second Secretary
Embassy of Sierra Leone
P.O. Box 5619
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 710033
Fax: 711911
E-Mail: sleon@et.telecom.et

South Africa

His Excellency Mr. J.N.K. Mamabolo
Ambassador
South African Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. G.A. Haasbroek
First Secretary
South African Embassy
P.O. Box 1091
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 71 30 34
Fax: 251 1 71 13 30
E-Mail: sa.embassy.addis@telecom.net.et

Mr. V.P. Makwarela
First Secretary
South African Embassy

P.O. Box 1091
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 71 30 34
Fax: 251 1 71 13 30
E-Mail: sa.embassy.addis@telecom.net.et

Mr. M.V. Motjope
Counsellor
South African Embassy
P.O. Box 1091
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 71 30 34
Fax: 251 1 71 13 30
E-Mail: sa.embassy.addis@telecom.net.et

Spain

Alfredo Del Rio Aisa
Foreign Trade Advisor
Embassy of Spain
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-550222
Fax: 251-1-551131
E-Mail: alfdelrioaisa@hotmail.com

Sudan

Mohamed A. Elkarib
Sudan Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Sweden

Mrs. Karin McDonald
Head of Commercial Section
Embassy of Sweden
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511255
Fax: 251-1-515830
E-Mail: karim.mcdonald@sida.se

Tchad

Son Excellence M. Mahamat Ahmed Kossa
Ambassade de Tchad
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Kosso Mahamat Ahmed
Charge d'Affaires
Ambassade du Tchad
BP 5119
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-61 38 19
Fax: 251-1-61 20 50

Tunisie

M. Mourad Ben Dhiab
Conseiller
Embassy of Tunisia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 612063
Fax: 614568
E-Mail: embassy.tunisia@telecom.net.et

Son Excellence M. Zaouche Hamid
Ambassador
Tunisian Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Uganda

Onok Joyce
Embassy of Uganda
P.O. Box 5644
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 30 88

His Excellency Mr. Alex Kamugisha
Ambassador
Uganda Embassy
P.O. Box 5644
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 31 14

UK

Ms. Frances Guy
Deputy Head of Mission
British Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-612327

Mr. Hugo Rambando
Consultant
British Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-612354

Dr. Nick Taylor
AID Secretary
British Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-612354

Mr. David Williams
Second Secretary
British Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

United Republic of Tanzania

Charles Kileo
Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania
P.O. Box 1077
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 10 63
Fax: 51 73 58
E-Mail: tz@telecom.net.et

Elizabeth Mgay
Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania
P.O. Box 1077
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 51 81 55
Fax: 51 73 58

Mr. Gordon Ngilangna
Embassy of Tanzania

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: ngilangwa@yahoo.com

USA

Mr. Nicholas Janszen
P.O. Box 1014
Embassy of the USA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 55 06 66

Vatican

His Excellency Silvano H. Tomasi
Ambassador
Vatican Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-712100
E-Mail: vatican.embassy@telecom.net.et

Yemen

Sharaf Al-Sharafi
Charge d'Affaires
Yemen Embassy
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: 251 1 711811

Zambia

Mwenya Lwatula
Zambia Embassy
P.O. Box 1909
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Baldwin Njovu
Zambia Embassy
P.O. Box 1909
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Zimbabwe

Mr. Rodney S. M. Kiwa
Minister Counsellor
Embassy of Zimbabwe
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-613877
Fax: 251-1-613476

H.E. Dr. Neuille Ndondo
Ambassador
Embassy of Zimbabwe
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-613877
Fax: 251-1-613476

MEDIA

Bénin

M. Ramanou Kouferidji
Directeur-General
Radio Afrique Espoir FM

Porto Novo, Bénin
Phone: (229) 21 3455/3261
Fax: (229) 21 3263, 331683
E-Mail: rkouferidji@yahoo.com

Ethiopia

Tewodro Abera
Walta Information Center
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Amanuel Abraham
Walta Information
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Yacob Adugna
ETV
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Wosen Alemu
Ethiopian Television (ETV)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Abebe Andualem
Associated Press
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Mulgetta Asefa
Ethiopian Television (ETV)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Emrakeb Assefa
The Reporter
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510743
Fax: 251-1-510101
E-Mail: mec@telecom.net.et

Mr. Tamrat Bekele
Addis Tribune
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-615228
Fax: 251-1-615227
E-Mail: tambek@telecom.net.et

Alem Berhan
Ethiopian News Agency (ENA)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-550014, 550011
Fax: 251-1-552371, 551609

Mr. Guebray Berhane
Agence France Presse (AFP)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511006

Nita Bhalla
BBC
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Feri Bonse
Ethiopian Radio
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Akililu Debalke
Radio Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Laeke Mariam Demissie
RFI-English
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-123902, 122583
Fax: 251-1-511006

Mr. Abebe Demissie
Lead Public Relations
MIDROC Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-712872, 711277, 200243
Fax: 251-1-711912

Mesfin Desta
Reporter
Radio Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ms. Lulit G. Michael
The Monitor
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-156400
Fax: 251-1-512121
E-Mail: themonitor@telecom.net.et

Mr. Eshetu Geizan
MIDROC Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-712872, 711277, 200243
Fax: 251-1-711912

Mr. Abrham Gelaw
Reporter
Radio Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-711111

Mr. Mulugetta Gessesse
Radio Fana
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-711111, 202587
Fax: 251-1-552263

Mr. Dereje Getachew
MIDROC Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 71 12 77
Fax: 251 1 71 19 12

Mr. Kenefe Michael Habte Mariam
The Ethiopian Herald
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-157090, 157017
Fax: 251-1-516819, 510665

Mr. Ghion Hagos
PANA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mekonnen Haile
Freelance Journalist
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Tesfaye Haile
Radio Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Sisay Haile Sellasie
External Service, Radio Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-711111, 202587
Fax: 251-1-552263

Mr. Biruk Hailu
MIDROC Ethiopia
P.O. Box 8677
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251 1 71 12 77
Fax: 251 1 71 19 12

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hicheri
REI-French
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Tafesse Jara
VisNews
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-711272
Fax: 251-1-711272

Mr. Alaa Eldin Kassen
MENA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-613365

Samuel Kebede
Ethiopian TV
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ms. Tewedaj Kebede
Addis Tribune
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-615228
Fax: 251-1-615227
E-Mail: tambek@telecom.net.et

Mr. Girmaye Kebede
Radio Fana
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-711111, 202587
Fax: 251-1-552263

Beru Mamo
ETV
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tesfaye Mekbib
Journalist
A.A Information & Communication Bureau
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ms. Elleni Mekuria
BBC
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Zekaria Mohamed
Ethiopian News Agency (ENA)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-550014, 550011
Fax: 251-1-552371, 551609

Mr. Afrah Mohamed
Yemen Times
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Eskinder Nega
Menelik
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
E-Mail: menelik84@hotmail.com

Mr. Bruk Negash
Radio Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-201319
Fax: 251-1-713222

Yohannes Rufael
Addis Tribune
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-615228
Fax: 251-1-615227
E-Mail: tambek@telecom.net.et

Mr. Getachew Shiferaw
The Ethiopian Herald
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-157090, 157017
Fax: 251-1-516819, 510665

Ms. Caroline Stiebler
Deutsche Welle (DW)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Tsegaye Tadesse
Reuters
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Haileraguel Tadesse
Ethiopian TV
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Mohamed Taha
Al-Arab
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Getachew Tedla
RFI & DW
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Saura Work Tefferi
WorldSpace
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-112823

Mr. Endalkatchew Tesfa
WorldSpace
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-112823

Mr. Tewodros Teshome
MIDROC Ethiopia
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-712872,711277,200243
Fax: 251-1-711912

Berhanu Tibebe
Freelance Journalist
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Teddbabe Tilahun
The Reporter
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-510743
Fax: 251-1-510101
E-Mail: mce@telecom.net.et

Mr. Tamiru Tsige
Reporter
Entrepreneur
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-128584/556780
Fax: 251-1-556780

Mr. Afework W. Gaber
Correspondent of EFE
Spanish N.A.
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Mikias Worku
The Capital
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-711923
Fax: 251-1-711923

Henok Yared
Reporter
ETV
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Woldu Yemesel
Reporter
Radio Fana
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-711111, 202587
Fax: 251-1-552263

Mr. Balew Yenealem
The Ethiopian Herald
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-157090, 157017
Fax: 251-1-516819, 510665

Mr. Zhao Yi
Xinhua
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Abebaw Zewde
Walta Information
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

France
Mr. Samir Gharbi
Jeune Afrique

Paris, France
Phone: 334 430 1960/1927
Fax: 334 430 1930
E-Mail: mailbox@jeuneafrique.com, s.garbi@jeuneafrique.com

M. Jean-Vincent Tchienehom
Journalist
RFO-AITV and Le Messenger
23 BIS, Rue Edgar Quinet 93129
La Courneuve, France
Phone: 00 331 4836 5281
Fax: 00 331 4836 5689
E-Mail: tchienehom_jean_vincent@hotmail.com

Ghana

Mr. George Koomson
Third World Network
Accra, Ghana
Phone: 233 21 302107, 310634, 306069
Fax: 233 21 311687, 231688, 773857
E-Mail: isodec@ghana.com

Kenya

Mr. Mahtar Ba
Africa News
Kenya
E-Mail: amaba@rapide-pana.com

Mr. Adrian Blomfeld
Reuters
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 330 261
E-Mail: adrian.blomfeld@reuters.com

Mr. Harry Hare
Executive Director
AITEC
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 44 1480 831 300
Fax: 44 1480 831 131
E-Mail: sean@aitec-africa.com

Mr. Pamphil Kweyuh
Africa Information Service Syndication
P.O.Box 3325
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 603 572
Fax: 254 2 603 574
E-Mail: afisynbo@form-net.com
URL: http://www.kenyaweb.com

Mr. Ben Parker
Deputy Coordinator
IRIN
UNOCHA
P.O. Box 30218
Nairobi, Kenya
E-Mail: ben@ocha.unon.org

Mr. Jeune-Philippe Rémy
Radio France Internationale (RFI)
P.O. Box 59 134
Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: 254 2 72 45 09
Fax: 254 2 72 45 09
E-Mail: fpress@swiftkenya.com

Namibia

Mr. Mathew Kaikali
Katutura Community Radio
Windhoek, Namibia
Phone: 264 61 263 768
Fax: 264 61 246 172
E-Mail: matts@iwwn.com.na

Nigeria

Mr. Waziri Adio
This Day Newspaper
9 Yinusa Adeniji St.
Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
Phone: 234 1 49 34 060
Fax: 234 1 49 34 061
E-Mail: waziri@beta.linkserve.com

Olufemi Ajayi
WANGONet
Plot 777, Bouake St.
Abuja, Nigeria
Phone: 234 09 52 37 088
Fax: 234 09 52 38 094
E-Mail: abuja@unesco.org

Mr. Tunji Lardner
Consultant
AGENDA
61, Ademola Street
Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria
E-Mail: waziri@beta.linkserve.com

Sénégal

Awa Ba
Journalist
SUD Quotidien
POB 16246
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 632 65 50
Fax: 221 822 52 90
E-Mail: awabinta@hotmail.com

M. Amadou Mansour Diouf
Journalist
National Acacia Advisory Committee
Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 821 8560
E-Mail: sas@santoo.sn

M. Sidy Gaye
Journalist
PANA
POB 4056

Dakar, Sénégal
Phone: 221 8241395
Fax: 221 8244909
E-Mail: sonatel.quoise@senet.net

South Africa

Ms. Jenine Coetzer
Channel Africa
Boulogne Rd, Richmond 2092
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 82 410 5966
Fax: 27 11 714 2072
E-Mail: coetzer@channelafrica.org

Mr. Allan Fransman
Institute for Advancement of Journalism (IAJ)
Johannesburg, South Africa
E-Mail: simone@sn.apc.org

Ms. Simone Shall
SANGONet
Johannesburg, South Africa
Phone: 27 11 714 4233
Fax: 27 11 492 1058
E-Mail: simone@sn.apc.org

Switzerland

Ms. Catherine Fouilloux
Association Inter Presse
Geneva, Switzerland
Phone: 0041 79203 2128
E-Mail: 113322.1543@compuserve.com

Mr. Paul Gerome
Fonde de Pouvoir
Association Inter Presse
7 rue de la Musc CH-1201
Geneva, Switzerland
Phone: 0041 79203 2128
Fax: 0041 79203 2128
E-Mail: 113322.1543@compuserve.com

USA

Mr. Nil K. Bentsi-Enchill
Africa Recovery
New York, USA
E-Mail: bentsi-enchill@un.org

Mr. Don Boob
UN Radio
New York, USA
E-Mail: bobb@un.org

Mr. David Christopher Hansen
Heartland Motion Pictures Inc.
USA
E-Mail: dchansen@hotmail.com

Mr. Reed Kramer
Managing Editor
Africa News Service

P.O. Box 3851
Durham NC 27702, USA
Phone: 919-286-0747
Fax: 919-286-2614
E-Mail: rkramer@africanews.org

Ms. Assumpta Oturu
Radio Pacifica
Los Angeles, CA USA
Phone: 1 818 985 2711
Fax: 1 818 980 0901
E-Mail: spotltafrica@earthlink.net

Mr. Robert Pytlk
Heartland Motion Pictures, Inc.
USA
E-Mail: dchansen@hotmail.com

Dr. T. A. Simone
African Policy Information Center (APIC)
110 Maryland Ave #509
Washington, D.C. 20002, USA
Phone: 202 546 7961
Fax: 202 546 1545
E-Mail: 132@isg.nyu.edu

Zambia

Ms. Patricia Littiya
Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC)
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: 260 1 251 983
Fax: 260 1 239 407
E-Mail: pmlitiya@yahoo.co.uk

Mr. Jason Mvula
Radio Phoenix
Lusaka, Zambia
Phone: 260 1 226652, 224210-11
Fax: 260 1 226839, 222403

Zimbabwe

Mr. Lewis Machipisa
Correspondant
Inter Press Service (IPS)
127 Union Ave.
Harare, Zimbabwe
Fax: 72 84 15
E-Mail: pat@ipsafrica.org , lewis@ipsafrica.org

Ms. Nakai Matema
ICE Films
Harare, Zimbabwe
Phone: 263 4 794 355
Fax: 263 4 707 852
E-Mail: nakai.z@usa.net

Mr. Issaac Mpfunya
ICE Films
Harare, Zimbabwe
Phone: 263 4 794 355

Fax: 263 4 707 852
E-Mail: nakai.z@usa.net
Mr. Stanley Mubvumbi
ICE Films
Harare, Zimbabwe
Phone: 263 4 794 355
Fax: 263 4 707 852
E-Mail: nakai.z@usa.net

Mr. Joel Chikapa Phiri
ICE Films
Harare, Zimbabwe
Phone: 263 4 794 355
Fax: 263 4 707 852
E-Mail: nakai.z@usa.net

Mr. Karl Schodt
ICE Films
Harare, Zimbabwe
Phone: 263 4 794 355
Fax: 263 4 707 852
E-Mail: nakai.z@usa.net

SECRETARIAT

Ms. Azeb Abay
Admin Assistant
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: abay.unprofor@un.org

Aster Abebe
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: abebel.uneca@un.org

Lishan Adam
Regional Adviser
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: adam2@un.org

Ms. Genet Ali
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: alig@un.org

Mr. Abdulkadir Ali
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: ali7.uneca@un.org

K. Y. Amoako
Executive Secretary
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-517200

Mulumebet Arega
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: arega.uneca@un.org

Mr. Gorfu Asefa
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: gasafa.uneca@un.org

Mr. Assefa Bahta
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: bahta.uneca@un.org

Lalla Ben Barka
Deputy Executive Secretary
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-517200

Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane
Director
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: bounemta.uneca@un.org

Ms. Rebecca Benyam
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: benyam.uneca@un.org

Sam Cho
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Florie Cole
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416

Prosper Dovonon
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Frew Dubale
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: dubale@un.org

Gilles Fagninou
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Makane Faye
Regional Adviser
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: faye@un.org

Mr. Melkamu Gebre-Egziabher
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: mdesta@un.org

Mr. Sirak Gebre-Mariam
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416

Ms. Juliana C. Gonsalves
ESPD
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Negussie Gorfe
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416

Abdishakour Gulaid
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416

Roza Habtewold
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416

Ms. Nancy Hafkin
Team Leader, Promoting ICT for Development
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: hafkin.uneca@un.org

Jennifer Kargbo
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mrs. Senait Kebede
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: kebedes@un.org

Yeboah Kwasi
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Desta Mebratu
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Cornelius Mwalwanda
Senior Economic Affairs Officer
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dr. Evans Mwangi
Regional Adviser
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

M.K. Mwango
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Dickson Mzumara
Team Leader
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: mzumara@un.org

Dr. Joseph Ngu
Economic Affairs Officer
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Monsieur Yama Nkouna
CA - SRDC
Yaounde, Cameroun

Don Oben
Economic Affairs Officer
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. Marcos Sahu
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: sahu.uneca@un.org

Mr. Saddik Solbi
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: solbi@un.org

Mr. Oumar Sy
Team Leader
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: oumar@un.org

Ms. V. Tankou
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: tankouv@un.org

Mr. Afework Temtime
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: temtimea@un.org

Mr. Dagnachew Terefe
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416

Mr. Solomon Tesfaye
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: tesfay.uneca@un.org

Mrs. Bethelehem Teshager
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: teshager.uneca@un.org

Ms. Awa Thiongane
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: thiongane@un.org

Souleyman Traoré
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: traores.uneca@un.org

Ms. Kate Wild
ADF '99 Coordinator
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: wild@un.org

Mr. Teffera Woldeyes
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: woldeyes.uneca@un.org

Mr. Makonnen Yimam
Development Information Services Division (DISD)
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-511408/517200
Fax: 251-1-510512/514416
E-Mail: woldeyes.uneca@un.org

Mr. Urbain Zadi
Chief
Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Section
ECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: 251-1-515827
Fax: 251-1-514416
E-Mail: zadi@un.org