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Fourth Meeting of the Committee
on Development Information (CODI IV)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23 – 28 April 2005

FOURTH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION (CODI-IV)
INFORMATION NOTE

Date: 23-28 April 2005

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Theme: *Information as an Economic Resource*

BACKGROUND

What is CODI?

The Committee on Development Information (CODI) is one of the seven technical Committees established by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of Ministers during its review of the Intergovernmental machinery of ECA at its twenty-third session in May 1997. This committee took over the functions of the joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians, Population and Information specialists, and of the United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa, and also ensures the implementation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). Its terms of reference include:

- To promote the growth of an Information Society in Africa;
- To advise on measures to improve all aspects of statistical development of member States;
- To advise on the building, maintenance and dissemination of regional development databases, including bibliographic, textual and spatial databases.

The Committee meets every two years in accordance with Resolution 826 (XXXII), adopted at the aforementioned conference. CODI conducts its technical deliberations under three subcommittees, namely:

- Sub-Committee on Information and Communications Technologies,
- Sub-Committee on Statistics, and
- Sub-Committee on Geoinformation.

Previous Meetings

There have been 3 CODI meetings, all of which have been held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The first meeting of CODI (CODI-I) was held from the 28 June to 2 July 1999 under the theme "Harnessing Information for Development". It set the scene for information specialists to discuss ways and means of creating appropriate interventions in Africa's development process. The second meeting was organized from 4 to 7 September 2001 under the theme of "Development Information for Decision Making". This event highlighted the relevance and need for African decision-makers to gain access to reliable and accurate information for timely and effective choices that would make a significant difference in them lives of all Africans. Consequently, one of the recommendations of CODI II was for ECA to work closely with African stakeholders to sensitise them to their role with regard to preparations for the World Summit on the Information (WSIS), held in Geneva in December 2003.

The third meeting was held from 12 to 15 May 2003 under the theme of "Information and Governance" to focus the attention of practitioners in the various fields involved in development information on their roles and contributions in the ongoing discourse on governance in Africa. The rationale for this theme was based on Africa's current development agenda, as set out in ECA's work plan, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), NEPAD and other initiatives, which stress the importance of good governance. The meeting recommended strategies to ECA, its member States and partners for harnessing information for good governance. It also served to increase understanding of the central role of information in implementing programmes designed to improve governance.

Participants at these meetings included delegates from member States and observers from United Nations agencies, Europe, Asia and North America, as well as sub-regional, regional and international organizations, academic and research institutions, multi-national corporations and small business enterprises.

CODI meetings usually include specialized technical working group sessions and workshops on topics such as land information systems, strengthening statistical capacity for poverty monitoring, the use of ICT by small and medium enterprises (SMEs), spatial data infrastructures (SDIs), monitoring and measuring good governance in Africa, knowledge management, and the African Virtual Library and Information Network.

THE FOURTH MEETING OF CODI (CODI-IV)

The Theme

Over the years, the Information Society has become one of the most potent forces driving development and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's), have become an enabling tool for enterprises, individuals, firms and communities in developed and developing nations. In this regard, the theme **"Information as an economic resource"** has been selected in order to investigate, deliberate and document the advantages and returns of the emerging information and knowledge economy as an economic resource which will improve growth and facilitate economic positioning of our member States. Strategies for sustained resourcing and maintenance of information services, systems and institutions to make relevant information available and accessible to decision makers and the general public were adopted during CODI III. This meeting will therefore build on the outcomes of CODI III, and will focus on information as an economic resource to foster Africa's economy growth and advancement of the development agendas set out in ECA's work plan, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and NEPAD.

Objectives/Expectations of CODI-IV

The overall objectives of CODI-IV are:

- Increase the understanding of the key role of data and information in planning and implementing Government programmes and projects; and

- Examine and investigate the opportunities offered by the information economy, in particular in relation to the African continent;

- Set the path for the development of the ECA two-year programme on Harnessing Information for Development.

Format of the Meeting

The programme is structured to emphasize the synergies between the various fields and groups, while providing for in depth treatment of technical issues at the level of sub committees. There will therefore be a mix of plenary sessions for all participants, and parallel sub-committee sessions devoted to discipline-specific topics. The main meeting will be convened from the 25th - 28th of April 2005 and pre and post-meeting workshops and seminars will take place from the 23rd - 24th of April 2005 or after the meeting if deemed necessary..

The Keynote Address

A keynote address on the subject of information as an economic resource will set the tone for the meeting. The address will be delivered by an expert on the theme and will elucidate the meaning of information as an economic resource and present the advantages and returns of the emerging information and knowledge economy as an economic resource to improve growth and facilitate economic positioning of our member States. The address will be followed by four sector responses from identified respondents on ICT, Statistics, Geo-Information and Library respectively. The meeting findings will be eventually be compiled into a publication.

Participants

Every member State sends an official government delegation comprised of statisticians, information and geo-information specialists and librarians. These are usually drawn from National Statistics Offices, Population Agencies, National or University Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres, Information and Communications Agencies, National Mapping Agencies and other geoinformation management organizations. There are also observers representing countries outside Africa; United Nations agencies; sub-regional, regional and international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations; academic and research institutions; multinational corporations; small and medium enterprises; civil society organizations and private practitioners. The workshop and seminars are open to other invited stakeholders from various sectors of the society in Africa who would benefit from them.

Funding

CODI is a statutory meeting of ECA. Therefore delegates and observers are expected to cover the cost of their travel and subsistence for the duration of their stay in Addis Ababa. The funds for organizing and supporting the main meeting are from the regular budget of ECA. The workshops are usually organized in collaboration with partners, who may fund the costs associated with bringing the experts and facilitators, and sometimes the travel and subsistence of invited participants to the workshops.

Exhibitions and Posters

The United Nations Conference Centre has a large exhibition space, which will be made available for displays of information material, products, services and posters. Exhibits will be on display throughout the duration of the meeting. At least 200 delegates and observers representing government officials, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academicians and private practitioners in the fields of ICT, libraries, geoinformation and statistics are expected to attend.

CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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