



Distr.: General

E/ECA/CODIST/1/4
17 March 2009

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

Original: **English**

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology
First session

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
28 April – 1 May 2009

**ECA activities in information and communications technologies for
development in 2008-2009:
Implementation of the recommendations of the fifth session of the Committee
on Development Information and work programme for 2010-2011**

List of acronyms

AISI	African Information Society Initiative
ARN	African Research Networks
AU	African Union
CePRC	Canadian e-Policy Resource Centre
CEMAC	Central African Monetary and Economic Community
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CODI	Committee on Development Information
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ePol-Net	e-Policy Resource Network
GAID	Global Alliance on ICT and Development
GKP	Global Knowledge Partnership
ICT4D	Information and Communications Technology for Development
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
ITCA	Information Technology Centre for Africa
NICI	National Information and Communication Infrastructure
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Corporation
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
TIGA	Technology in Government in Africa
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

I. Introduction

1. This report covers the activities undertaken since the last session of the Committee on Development Information (CODI-V) held in April 2007, which reviewed the work programme for 2007-2008, as well as the implementation of the recommendations of that session. The areas examined in this report include the development of national, sectoral and regional information and communication infrastructure policies and plans; development of information society indicators; capacity-building for information society stakeholders, outreach and communication, as well as partnership and networking.

II. Development of national information and communication infrastructure policies and plans

2. A key ingredient in implementing the Africa Information Society Initiative (AISI) adopted by the Conference of African Ministers in May 1996 has been the development of national e-strategies, or national information and communication infrastructure (NICI) plans. Even though development pillars for these plans varied from one country to another, the overall strategies focused on the following major themes:

- (a) Developing an appropriate digital infrastructure to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Poverty Reduction Strategies;
- (b) Building human resource capacity through training and education;
- (c) Promoting the emergence of a strong national information and communications technology (ICT) sector through private sector development; and
- (d) Creating adequate institutional and legal frameworks for the development of the information society.

3. Under the cooperation agreement between the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Finland and Industry Canada through the e-Policy Resource Network (ePol-Net), a number of African countries received support to develop, implement and monitor their sectoral, national and regional e-strategies in 2007-2008. ECA provided technical assistance to help member States to improve their capacities to formulate, implement, coordinate and evaluate information for development policies and strategies. Consequently, 10 countries (Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Malawi, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Togo) were able to initiate and/or continue consolidating their national ICT policy processes; 3 countries (Burundi, the Gambia and Swaziland) finalized and adopted their policy processes and started implementing their ICT plans; while 11 more countries started formulating and implementing ICT policies.

4. Efforts were also made to sensitize countries on the importance of gender in the NICI development process (Togo and Chad). This endeavour was highly successful, as the number of countries with ICT policies increased from 13 in 2000 to 35 in 2008. In addition, through the cooperation agreement between ECA and the Government of Finland in 2007, support and technical advisory services were provided to Rwanda and Kenya in the area of telecommunications regulation. A telecommunications convergence study was also commissioned in Nigeria and Sierra Leone—an activity supported by a Finnish telecommunications regulation expert who worked with ECA in advising NICI countries on telecommunications regulation activities.

5. To support the NICI development process and address the ICT infrastructure challenge in Africa, ECA helped organize the Connect Africa Summit held on 29-30 October 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda, which culminated in the adoption of five goals to bridge the digital divide in Africa. To help achieve these goals, many participants announced major commitments, totalling approximately \$US55 billion. During summit, delegates participated in a series of interactive sessions, debating on issues related to broadband ICT networks, rural connectivity, capacity-building, applications and services, and the enabling environment. In cooperation with the Canadian e-Policy Resource Centre (CePRC) and in partnership with the African Union (AU), the Internet Society, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, ECA organized two pre-summit parallel workshops on regulation and public access and internet governance on 24-25 October, attended by over 100 policymakers and stakeholders from member States.

6. Below are the highlights of NICI-related activities at country level:

Chad

7. The country's information and communications technology (ICT) policy was adopted in June 2007 under the following pillars: infrastructure development; ICTs and poverty reduction; legal and regulatory framework; content development; capacity-building; e-governance; and ICTs and vulnerable groups.

Congo

8. Following the adoption of the country's ICT policy, the ECA subregional Office for Central Africa supported the roll-out of a youth e-employment project in Brazzaville for 12 months commencing in June 2007, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Works of the Congo. Several multimedia centres were also opened in 2008 to provide the youth with ICT training and assistance with the online search for employment opportunities.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

9. The ECA-supported ICT policy development process has faced undue delays owing to the complexity of the administrative arrangements and the various changes in the political landscape. Efforts are under way to adopt the draft policy document by 2009.

Gambia

10. The Government of the Gambia, recognizing that ICTs play a pivotal role in the development process, formulated the nation's ICT for Development (ICT4D) policy with technical support from ECA and the Government of Finland. The Executive Summary of the policy is available at: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/docs/GambiaNICI-Summary.pdf>. In developing this policy statement, the Government recognized that, for it to make an appreciable impact on the Gambia's socio-economic development process, it would need to be integrated into the overall developmental objectives, priorities and programmes of the country. The aim of such a comprehensive policy was to encourage initiatives that would help address the key developmental challenges facing the Gambia.

11. Further support was provided in 2008 to develop a NICI plan through a national consultative process involving all key stakeholder institutions in the public and private sectors.

Mozambique

12. ECA received a request from the Government of Mozambique to support the Ministry of Science and Technology in the implementation of the Mozambique Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy which was approved by the Council of Ministers during its 15th ordinary session on 27 June 2006. In response to this request and in line with its work programme as well as the memorandum of understanding signed between ECA and the Government of Mozambique on cooperation and implementation of joint activities and programmes in the area of ICT, science and technology for development, the ICT, Science and Technology Division (ISTD) of ECA appointed an international consultant in January 2009 on a three-month assignment to advise the ministry and coordinate its activities to operationalize the strategy.

13. The operationalization of the strategy will involve four different sets of activities: implementation programming; budgeting; development and application of a methodology for the science, technology and innovation project; and mobilization and application of resource systems; and implementation and management of the strategy.

Nigeria

14. Following consultations between ECA and the Government, a Nigerian national strategic action plan committee was established to develop an e-strategy action plan and programmes in line with national development objectives and priorities. The committee was composed of representatives of all the development sectors in Nigeria. The plan was designed to help implement the stated socio-economic development policy priorities and programmes of the Government. The 2010 ICT4D Plan was organized under a number of broad policy sub-plans.

15. The final Nigeria NICI plan, integrating all the eleven sub-plans, was submitted to ECA in December 2008 and a brief description of the plan is available at: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/docs/NigeriaNICI-Summary.pdf> . The programmes of the sub-plans are expected to be implemented by a number of agencies at the federal and the state level. The National Information Technology Development Agency will be among the agencies implementing and coordinating the plan.

Sierra Leone

16. ISTD is supporting Sierra Leone in developing its NICI policy as the guiding framework for its ICT programme planning, project development and implementation. The NICI development process in Sierra Leone was initiated by the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning following the country's request to ECA for support and technical assistance. To supervise the process, the ministry has set up a high-level technical committee, the National Core Group, incorporating representatives of all the stakeholders.

17. As recommended by the fourth session of the Committee on Development Information, a new initiative was launched for member States to develop integrated NICI and spatial data infrastructure policies, as several NICI process building blocks would require geoinformation support for effectiveness and efficiency. Sierra Leone was identified as one of the countries to

benefit from this programme at a joint NICI and spatial data infrastructure experts group workshop was held in November 2006. In November 2007, the Sierra Leone NICI was enhanced to include the geoinformation science sector, resulting in geo-enabled NICI policy and plans. Since then, however, there has been little progress, due to the creation of new portfolios after a change of Government.

18. In January 2008, the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and Environment, in an effort to implement the National Lands Policy, requested the technical assistance of ECA in geoinformation and mapping, for the creation of the spatial data infrastructure to support infrastructure redevelopment in Sierra Leone. This was intended to rebuild the country's physical, institutional and information infrastructure which had been destroyed in the civil war that lasted more than a decade. In response, ECA started supporting the Government of Sierra Leone in this regard in September 2008 and this work is currently in progress.

III. Developing sectoral information and communication infrastructure policies and plans

19. With regard to the development of sectoral policies, a number of activities have been undertaken since CODI-V.

Benin

20. ECA provided advisory services to Benin for the development of a sectoral e-education plan implementation strategy. The main objective of the strategy was to facilitate education and teaching and content development at all levels, and capacity-building to guide Benin through the knowledge economy. The strategy was submitted in December 2008 to the various ministries in charge of education for validation and implementation.

Burkina Faso

21. Burkina Faso, with the assistance of ECA and the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), was one of the first African countries to complete a NICI plan in 2000. The plan was further updated and aligned to the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper with the financial support of the World Bank and the UNDP in 2004. The plan framework encompassed several activities, including the development of sectoral strategies. It is in this context that Burkina Faso, has as a follow-up, requested assistance from ECA to support the implementation of its sectoral activities.

22. Based on the national ICT policy and e-strategy, the overarching goal of these activities, which are supported by the Government of Finland, is the elaboration and subsequent activation of five sectoral e-strategies to modernize business practices, increase productivity, and improve transparency, good governance, education and service delivery to citizens, especially in rural areas. The sectors identified for development of sectoral e-strategies are e-government; e-education; e-health; e-services for rural development; and e-commerce.

Mali

23. In December 2008, Mali adopted sectoral strategies on health, education and e-government. The e-government strategy has the following pillars: regulation and enabling environment; government commitment; resources; internal procedures and conformity to the

subregional and regional environment. The e-education strategy pillars are the enabling environment; infrastructure and equipment; applications and usage; and human resource development. The e-health strategy pillars are infrastructure and equipment; content and applications; and human resource development.

Niger

24. The Niger adopted an e-government strategy in 2008—one of its six pillars of the NICI plan. The strategy was aimed at facilitating procedures and exchange of information within the central and local governments as well as between government and users by enabling the latter to access public services without distance limitations. The strategy pillars are infrastructure and equipment; applications and content; and standards and innovation and capacity-building.

25. Within the framework of the ePol-Net, ECA, in cooperation with the Mozambique Ministry of Science and Technology, CePRC and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, organized a workshop on ICTs, gender and e-government in Maputo, Mozambique from 28 to 30 May 2007. The main objective of the workshop was to encourage dialogue among ICT and gender experts and to analyze and evaluate the efforts made by African countries to include a gender dimension in e-government policies and programmes that address the specific needs of African women. The outcome of the workshop was a framework for an African action plan for ICTs, gender and e-government.

26. Furthermore, through the ePol-Net programme, ECA also undertook a unique study on ICTs, trade and economic growth in Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa with the aim of building Africa's capability and capacity to create policy frameworks that set out pre-conditions for use and adoption of ICTs in trade. The results and outcomes were synthesized and a consolidated report developed to feed into national ICT policy development processes.

27. ECA, with support from IDRC and in cooperation with the World Health Organization commissioned a joint regional needs assessment and scoping study entitled "The Africa Health Infoway: a district-based public health information network and geospatial health system for African health". The objective of the study, was to provide affordable access to reliable health information and knowledge for policymakers, health providers and citizens; improve population health by unifying public health surveillance systems, streamlining the monitoring of health quality and status, and using epidemiological surveillance information for analysis and application as soon as it is collected; and to support data and knowledge mining. In order to review the data requirements of the study, ECA and the World Health Organization organized needs assessment studies in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania and Uganda.

IV. Development of regional information and communication infrastructure policies and plans

CODI-V recommendation

- ECA should organize follow-up meetings with the regional economic communities (RECs) to develop subregional work programmes of CODI in coordination with national CODI groups;

- ECA should provide technical and financial support to the RECs to enable them to harmonize ICT policies and strategies at subregional level and to enhance regional integration; and
- ECA should identify African-related regional initiatives that promote employment in the field of ICTs.

28. With respect to regional information and communication infrastructure policies or regional e-strategies aimed at developing and harmonizing strategies among the RECs, ECA and its partners, namely, the Government of Finland and Industry Canada, provided support to Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Economic Community of West African States, East African Community, and Central African Monetary and Economic Community. ICT experts from ECOWAS adopted new guidelines on combating cybercrime in the subregion following a workshop that concluded on 11 December 2007 in Lome, Togo. As a result of this process, ministers in charge of ICTs adopted on 16 October 2008 in Praia, Cape Verde, important legal texts on cybercrime and personal data protection in ECOWAS member States.

29. The ministers also adopted a legislative text on e-commerce in the ECOWAS space and another Act on a model ICT framework. These texts were aimed at modernizing the instruments for promoting e-commerce, preserving personal data and curbing cybercrime through subregional and national legislations. While adopting the texts, the ministers appealed to ECA and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to provide support to member States to help them establish national laws on cybercrime as well as national cybercrime surveillance centres.

30. Accordingly, ECA has commissioned a consultant to work in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique to develop national cybersecurity frameworks within ePol-Net. The consultant would assist the countries in proposing appropriate cybersecurity frameworks after reviewing their current policy regimes.

31. ECA is also supporting the Economic Community of Central African States and the Central African Monetary and Economic Community (CEMAC) to develop an ICT strategy for Central Africa. In this regard, a document was produced following a workshop in Douala, Cameroon from 24 to 25 January 2007, which extends the e-CEMAC 2010 programme to all countries of the Economic Community of Central African States and forms the framework for the establishment of the information society in the subregion.

32. In North Africa, a study was undertaken in collaboration with the Union du Maghreb Arabe on the status of e-commerce development in the subregion, to examine the feasibility of launching of a subregional e-commerce platform that would facilitate e-commerce activities among member States. The process started with a joint workshop organized by ECA, and ICT for Development in the Arab Region Programme, followed by the constitution of a team of consultants in Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia to study the subregional platform. The final document was submitted to UMA for adoption.

V. Development of information society indicators

33. ECA has been involved in the identification, development and collection of ICT4D indicators to assess the status of the information society in Africa through an initiative called Scan-ICT, which started in 2001. The first phase of the project involving six pilot countries ended in 2004. Phase II of Scan-ICT was launched in July 2005 in five countries: Cameroon, the

Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius and Rwanda. Each of the countries identified the core ICT4D indicators and the related methodology, and made the institutional arrangements necessary for increased stakeholder involvement, with national statistical offices taking the lead in the process. The Gambia, Ghana, and Mauritius completed the project and submitted their final report in 2007 while Rwanda finalized its activity in 2008. Cameroon completed the project in 2006. The full report on all these projects is available at:

http://www.uneca.org/aisi/docs/RWANDA_SCAN_ICT_REPORT.pdf.

34. During this second phase, ECA also established a comprehensive framework for the development of information society status and impact monitoring, assessment and measurement indicators. The framework was based on the details of the methodology developed for phase I and included proposals for the development of suitable indicators for assessing the status of the development, deployment and the use of ICTs in African countries and for guiding the NICI policy and plan development and implementation processes.

35. At the international level, ECA and the other United Nations regional commissions and agencies, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and other organizations such as the Organization for Economic Corporation and Development, the World Bank and EuroStat are actively participating in the partnership for measuring ICT for development established in June 2004. Within the partnership, ECA is leading the task group on e-government indicators and participating in other task groups on ICT4D indicators, capacity-building and database development.

36. In order to review progress made with regard to the implementation of Scan-ICT phase II as well as to review the status of ICT measurement in Africa, ECA and its partners organized a regional workshop in March 2007 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The workshop built on the work by the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development and Scan-ICT and was aimed at making comparable data on ICT more readily available in the region. The workshop allowed representatives of national statistical offices, ministries and regulatory agencies – producers and/or users of ICT statistics - to discuss the need for comparable data on information society developments and to share best practices in ICT measurement at the regional level. This has helped countries in the region to develop comparable ICT statistics and indicators for effective ICT policymaking using networks and statistical tools.

VI. Building of ICT research and innovation capacity in Africa

37. With support from the Government of Finland, two of the four academic research networks (ARN) activities were implemented in 2007-2008: (1) information society indicators for Tunisia; and (2) promotion of local languages in Cameroon.

38. With regard to the first activity, the ARN group on indicators coordinated by Tunisia builds on the good practices and lessons learned from the first phase of the research activity. Research has been undertaken with special focus on the socio-economic impact of the ICTs based on a core list of indicators that could help to assess the links between investment in ICT and poverty reduction and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

39. A review workshop was organized in collaboration with the Government of Tunisia, from 5 to 6 April 2007, to share with statistics experts the identified core list of information society indicators to measure and benchmark the socio-economic impact of ICT suggested by the ARN. The workshop brought together more than one hundred senior government officials, practitioners, statistics experts and researchers from Tunisia, Mauritania, Morocco, France, Canada and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The meeting increased participants' understanding of the challenges of measuring the socio-economic impact of the information society.

40. The second ARN research activity undertaken in 2007-2008 focused on the development of a rural electronic schools model in African languages in the Obout and Metsah Villages in Cameroon. The ARN group working on promoting African languages and local content in cyberspace started implementing its research outputs in two primary schools in the two villages under an initiative called "Generalizable Model for Rural Electronic Schools in African Languages". The initiative was based on the Operational Research Programme for Language Education in Cameroon known as PROPELCA and spearheaded by the National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees. Its goal is to have local languages taught in primary and secondary schools in Cameroon.

VII. Capacity-building for information society stakeholders

41. With support from the Government of Japan, ECA continued in 2007-2008 to support member States in capacity-building for the information society through its Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA).

42. The African e-Learning Initiative, an extension of the on-site capacity-building activity of ITCA for African policymakers and other stakeholders in information society issues in general and ICT policymakers in particular, has started offering courses. In collaboration with the Diplo Foundation of Malta, the African e-Learning Initiative offers an online course on Internet governance. CePRC of Canada has also supported ECA in sharing experiences and expertise on developing online training modules. As a result, other online courses will soon be available in areas such as ICT policies. An e-learning capacity-building workshop was conducted at ITCA from 13 to 17 August 2007, with the aim of developing the capacity of ISTD staff engaged in the development and maintenance of an online learning system. More information is available at <http://www.epolafrica.org/elearnafrica/>

43. ITCA is also involved in a series of capacity-building activities in many areas, ranging from basic ICT skills to ICT policy training both on-site at ITCA and online through its African e-Learning Initiative. To this end, a - capacity-building training for fifteen Ethiopian women media professionals was conducted at ITCA from 27 to 31 August 2007. The training, supported by the Africa node of ePol-Net and the Government of Japan, included discussions on services and tools used for searching the Internet for different types of content (text, audio, picture and video), explanation of advanced search techniques and features, and extensive hands-on training on web page development and blogging.

44. In addition, a series of activities to build the capacity of the staff of the Ethiopian Customs Authority were delivered to 41 participants from 20 September to 29 November 2007. The training was part of the support that ECA provides to the Government of Ethiopia to implement and maintain the Automated System for Customs Data created by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The system handles manifests, customs declarations,

accounting and transit and suspense procedures, and also generates trade data for statistical economic analysis. In addition, it provides electronic data interchange between traders and customs. The current courses are designed to increase the capacity of the Ethiopian Customs Authority staff to design, develop and implement a system that would allow users to interface with the existing automated system for customs data through the Internet.

45. ITCA also uses exhibition events to interact and attract with visitors. These exhibits provide information on key activities that may result in a partnership between ECA and the various stakeholders. Details of the exhibitions are described under the “Outreach and communication” section of this document.

VIII. Consultations with stakeholders

CODI-V recommendation

- *ECA should document and showcase ICT best practices at the regional, subregional and national levels to enhance knowledge sharing and avoid duplication of efforts*

46. As part of its commitment to create and manage knowledge at the continental level, ECA has been facilitating the activities aimed at building the capacities of stakeholder groups for the implementation of AISI, including participation in policy formulation and analysis, consensus building, workshops, forums, research and access to information and knowledge resources. More than five hundred ICT4D actors or network coordinators have benefited from these capacity-building activities.

47. Some of the consultations with major stakeholders organized with support from partners such as the Government of Finland, Industry Canada, IDRC and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) are highlighted below.

The Gambia

48. A workshop held in Banjul on 24-25 August 2008 brought together experts from various stakeholder groups, including government ministries, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, academia and the media, to review and endorse “The Gambian ICT4D-2012 Plan”. The document is the product of a series of activities which started in 2003, based the AISI which led to the adoption of the Gambia National Information and Communication Infrastructure Policy in 2006.

Nigeria

49. Following a workshop held in Lagos on 17 January 2008, over 100 experts from various stakeholder groups endorsed Nigeria's Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD) Plan. This was as a result of a series of activities which started in January 2006 following a 2005 memorandum of understanding between ECA and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in the framework of AISI.

50. The work was coordinated by the National Information Technology Development Agency, which established the National Strategic Action Plan Committee mandated by the

Federal Government to draw up an e-strategy action plan and programme in line with the country's development objectives and priorities, especially the "Vision 20-20-20" aimed at positioning Nigeria amongst the 20 leading economies in the world by 2020".

Southern African Development Community Parliamentarians Forum, 8 – 10 April 2008, Johannesburg, South Africa

51. ECA provided support for the organization of a subregional workshop entitled "Validation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)-Parliamentary Forum ICT Strategy" which was held from 8 to 10 April 2008 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The workshop brought together over 20 participants from 13 countries (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), the SADC-Parliamentary Forum, the SADC secretariat and ECA. The workshop culminated in the adoption of an ICT strategy for parliaments; the formulation of a time-bound action plan to operationalizing the strategy; the sensitization of parliamentarian on ICT capabilities; and the establishment of a network of SADC parliamentarians within the context of the information society.

Second Information and Communication Technology Best Practices Forum, 21 – 23 April 2008, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

52. ECA participated in the second ICT Best Practices Forum held from 21 to 23 April 2008 in Ouagadougou, Burkina-Faso, attended by over 500 delegates. The Forum allowed high-level officials from the different subregions in Africa to share specific experiences and demonstrate practical examples on successful technology solutions in their respective countries. The Forum also allowed for such solutions to be more easily replicated (particularly given the skills shortfall in the region) and for overall technology investment to be increased.

Global knowledge partnership regional coordinators meeting

53. The 16th World Congress on Information Technology took place from 18 to 23 May 2008 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In conjunction with the congress, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Global Alliance on ICT and Development meeting was held from 18 to 20 May 2008. In addition, the Global Knowledge Partnership Forum on Social Entrepreneurship was held on 21 May and the GKP regional coordinators meeting was held from 23 to 25 May 2008. ECA, being the regional node for both Africa and GAID Africa, participated in these events and presented its activities in the respective areas.

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and free and open source software workshop, 26 -28 May 2008, Tripoli, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

54. COMESA and the Free and Open Source Software Foundation for Africa, in collaboration with ECA, organized a workshop on free and open source software from 26 to 28 May, 2008 in Tripoli, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Thirty-six participants from 14 countries (Burundi, the Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and representatives of regional and international organizations attended the workshop. Following the workshop, the Free and Open Source Software Foundation for Africa established a strategic framework for the use of free and open source software in the member States of COMESA.

Knowledge networks for disadvantaged communities

55. The five regional commissions of the United Nations, including ECA, launched a project for creating knowledge networks through ICT access points for disadvantaged communities. The aim of the project was to explore ways of re-designing community ICT access points in the form of nodes of knowledge networks, while continuing to operate according to a flexible structure that supports non-formal processes as sustainable and autonomous operation. Following the country assessments in the East African Community in early 2007, ECA conducted a regional stakeholders' workshop on knowledge network strategies, mechanisms and tools in December 2007. Following the workshop, a regional knowledge network strategy for the Africa region was developed in December 2008. A knowledge network comprising up to ten community ICT access points (telecentres) will also be piloted in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda and launched at the end of the first quarter of 2009.

ICT standards for African teachers–training institutions validation meeting

56. A ministerial review meeting was co-organized by ECA and the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative in Accra, Ghana in May 2008, prior to the e-Learning Africa 2008 Conference on the theme "ICTs for development, education and training". Participants were drawn from 21 countries and international and regional organizations.

Follow-up to the World Summit on Information Systems

CODI-V recommendation

- ***ECA should use the Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology to follow-up and evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS)***

57. During the WSIS process, the African continent developed and adopted the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy. Efforts by ECA to implement the recommendations and decisions of WSIS are being carried out at subregional level in collaboration with the subregional offices of ECA and the RECs, especially, SADC, Central African Economic and Monetary Community and ECOWAS. Furthermore, finalization of the action plan development process, in cooperation with the African Union Commission, is an important part of the WSIS follow-up process in the continent. All these activities were documented and led to the publication of a report that was distributed to more than 400 CODI participants and is available in English and French at:

<http://www.uneca.org/codi/codi5/content/WSISfollow-codi5-doc9.pdf> and
<http://www.uneca.org/codi/codi5/content/WSISfollow-codi5-doc9-FR.pdf>

58. In addition, ECA conducted a questionnaire survey circulated to NICI focal points in the 53 member States to assess the Status of implementation of the WSIS outcomes. Eighteen member States (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, the Sudan, Togo and Uganda) and one REC (COMESA) responded. The responses have formed the foundations of a WSIS monitoring database. The findings from this survey has

been published and would be presented at a workshop on Tunis +3 to be held in Ethiopia in April 2009 prior to the first session of the Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology. A follow-up mechanism and roadmap on the implementation of the WSIS action lines by 2015 would be developed during the session.

IX. Outreach and communication

AISI Media Awards 2007

59. The 2007 edition of the AISI Media Awards ceremony took place during the Third Global Knowledge Conference (GK3), on 11–13 December 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The categories included print, radio, television, reporting on ICT policy, ICT research, and local content applications. Over 1, 000 participants, including the Malaysian Minister of Energy and Communication as well as the directors of AISI Media Awards partners, attended the ceremony. Partners participating in this activity included IDRC, the International Institute for Communication and Development, SDC and GKP. There were a total of over 125 candidates in the eight categories. Winners and finalists were from Benin, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. See: <http://www.uneca.org/aisi/mediaaward.htm> Technology in Government in Africa (TIGA) Awards 2007.

60. The first-ever Technology in Government in Africa Awards ceremony was organized as a side event of the CODI-V meeting in 2007. The TIGA Awards are co-organized by ECA and CePRC. Twelve innovative projects in the field of information technology were rewarded, and they fell into four categories: public service delivery to citizens or communities; improved health services through the use of ICTs; improved educational services through the use of ICTs; and public private partnerships in economic and financial e-services delivery. The TIGA initiative received strong backing from the Finnish and Italian Governments, Ethiopian Airlines, Microsoft and the Nokia-Siemens Networks which all stressed that the continent's future lay in the development of information technology and education (http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/2007/tigaawards.pdf).

Publications

CODI-V recommendation

- ***ECA should review the process surrounding the study on ICTs and employment to ensure that it is multidisciplinary and includes major stakeholders. ECA should also undertake an in-depth study on the role of ICTs in regional integration in Africa to supplement its publication on regional integration.***

61. A number of publications were produced in 2007-2008 with support from partners such as the Government of Finland, Industry Canada and the Government of Korea, including the following: (a)–ECA-ITU report on ICT trends in national policy implementation: the impact of ICTs on employment and poverty alleviation in Africa (opportunities and challenges); (b) African Information Society Initiative (AISII): A decades perspective; (c) National information and communication infrastructure (NICI) good practices and lessons learned; (d) WSIS implementation guidebook; (e) A study on private-sector support investments for ICT research and development in Africa.

Other outreach materials

CODI-V recommendations

- *ECA should create an online discussion list for the ICT sub-committee to strengthen information and knowledge sharing.*

62. Information-for-development video programmes, web resources and newsletters, Internet, databases and discussion lists were produced. During the reported period, ISTD facilitated dialogue among various stakeholders on information society development issues (Dgroups). More than 100 new subscribers were added to the existing Dgroups, for a total of over 600 members. Several exhibitions for policymakers were organized during major meetings, and a clearing house gateway was maintained at ECA for member States to search and review available data and information products.

X. Partnership and networking

CODI-V recommendation

- *ECA should participate actively in the activities of the Global Alliance on ICT and Development (GAID), coordinate its African regional node and promote its activities in the continent, taking into account the multi-stakeholder nature of GAID.*

63. The AISI activities of ECA have always been supported and implemented through a collaborative network of partners sharing the common goal of promoting connectivity and information technology development in Africa. Building and strengthening partnerships in the information society is therefore integral to the strategic orientation of ECA.

64. Bilateral partnerships continued to be strengthened. The second phase of the “ECA-Finland cooperation on ICT development in Africa” programme for the period 2009 to 2011, which is a continuation of the first phase from 2004 to 2007, is now under implementation. The programme will focus on three activities: (a) developing NICI plans in selected countries; (b) evaluating and monitoring the ICT sector and its impact on the information society (Scan-ICT) in selected countries; and (c) supporting ICT/STI stakeholders’ capacity-building. In all the three areas, apart from providing support to a few newly selected countries, the second phase will also continue providing support to countries for the development of implementation plans and capacity-building.

65. An important vehicle for AISI partnership is the Partnership for ICTs in Africa. In 2007-2008, the joint programmes continued from previous years included the Scan-ICT project, development and implementation of national ICT strategies, and publication of a monthly bulletin. The members of the partnership also organized joint conferences and meetings to promote ICT4D in Africa.

66. The ePol-Net network was launched in December 2003 at the WSIS meeting held in Geneva, with ECA as the African regional node of the network. In 2007-2008, ECA continued to provide support to countries and RECs in addressing policy issues, regulations and strategies

in such areas as e-commerce, legal and policy frameworks, telecommunications policy and regulation, Internet governance, e-government and connectivity strategies.

67. ECA also continued its collaboration with GKP and SDC in serving as the African regional node for GKP. In this regard, ECA organized a GKP Africa GK 3 preparatory meeting on knowledge and access, from 5 to 6 June 2007 prior to the first ICT Best Practices Forum, which was jointly organized by ECA, AfDB and Microsoft and held from 7 to 9 June 2007 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. ECA also showcased best examples of delivering e-government services in Africa through the 12 winners of the TIGA Awards in 2007. It also participated in the second ICT Best Practices Forum held from 21 to 23 April 2008, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

68. In addition, ECA, GKP and SDC collaborated in ensuring that Africa participated actively in the GK 3 conference that took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 10 to 13 December 2007. ECA organized two panels and participated in a number of others focusing on the themes of GK 3: Emerging people, emerging markets, and emerging technologies. ECA and its partners GKP, IDRC, the International Institute for Communication and Development, SDC delivered awards to deserving African journalists during the AISI Media Awards ceremony.

69. GAID was launched following the successful convening of WSIS in Tunis in 2006. In 2007-2008, ECA continued coordinating the GAID Regional African Network in order to ensure the adequate reflection of regional perspectives and needs in the activities of the GAID. Collaboration among continental institutions, United Nations agencies and development partners is key to harnessing the required resources, ensuring coherence and avoiding duplication of activities.

70. ECA works in partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in a number of joint initiatives, including the following:

- ECA, UNDESA and the Parliament of Rwanda, under the aegis of the Pan-African Parliament, are collaborating to strengthen the capacity to promote a people-centred and equitable information society in Africa. This partnership started with an international conference in Kigali, Rwanda from 3 to 5 March 2009 to provide a platform for parliaments to dialogue on legislative and financial issues and priorities for the development of an equitable information society at national and subregional levels;
- Prior to the conference, ECA collaborated with the United Nations Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development to launch the online platform of the *Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders in Africa*. Members and ICT staff of parliaments were introduced to the platform, which consists of a core ICT4D curriculum with eight stand-alone modules ranging from basic to more advanced topics of ICT4D. Participants were also trained on knowledge management and the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (www.apkn.org), an initiative of African parliaments launched in June 2008; and
- ECA, UNDESA and the United Nations Public Administration Network organized a workshop entitled “Electronic/mobile government in Africa: progress made and challenges ahead”, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 17 to 19 February 2009 for

African senior policymakers, practitioners, experts, the private sector and other stakeholders. The workshop explored regional knowledge on issues and challenges of electronic and mobile government development in Africa and the possibilities of developing partnerships for capacity-building in the region. The workshop concluded by identifying priority areas for Africa to promote electronic and mobile government, including infrastructure, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, citizens engagement, enabling environment and funding. These would be followed up through the United Nations Public Administration Network, ECA and other partners.

71. Other partnerships included:

- Support for e-policy formulation and implementation – Government of Canada on the ePol-Net project, of which ECA was the African regional node from December 2003 to March 2008;
- Partnership with the International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa on the study entitled “ICT Standards for African Teachers” published in June 2008;
- Partnership with International Telecommunication Union on the 2008 joint study entitled “The Impact of ICTs on employment and poverty reduction in Africa”, which examined the situation in five countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Nigeria); and
- Support for outreach and building of stakeholdership for the information society – SDC.

72. As part of its commitment to create and manage knowledge in the continent, ECA continues to partner with African universities and research institutions as well as civil society, youth and media organizations and African parliaments in activities that foster policy analysis, consensus-building and advocacy on information society issues.

XI. Priority areas for the work programme for 2010-2011

73. During 2010-2011, the objective of the ICT sub-programme will be to strengthen and sustain an African information society and knowledge economy, as well as to develop capacity for the formulation, adaptation, implementation and evaluation of ICT policies and programmes.

74. The subprogramme will focus on supporting the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national, subregional and regional ICT, science and technology policies and strategies, and integrating spatial data infrastructure and geoinformation strategies into requests from member States and regional economic communities (RECs). Sectoral strategies will be implemented based on national and regional priorities such as health, agriculture, climate change, energy, industry, government, education, trade and finance. Impact assessments will entail comprehensive policy analysis, and evaluation and benchmarking to monitor progress and identify gaps to be addressed for balanced and sustainable socio-economic growth in Africa.

75. In addition, other efforts will be directed towards securing networks and infrastructure for the knowledge economy (e-commerce, mobile commerce and e-security) and strengthening the role of entrepreneurs, start-ups, small, medium-sized and micro enterprises. There will be continued support to create conducive environments by establishing effective legal and

regulatory frameworks, e-legislation, cyberlaws, enhancing the role of ICTs in trade, and fostering regional economic integration.

76. In support of these efforts, research and development activities on selected emerging issues and topics of importance to member States will be reviewed, documented, disseminated and advocated to member States, RECs and others. Existing knowledge networks will be strengthened and new ones established to provide a forum for policy dialogue and sharing of national experiences and best practices on policies and strategies, including the organization of capacity-building workshops.

77. Through the work of ITCA and other field projects, the subprogramme will use exemplary databases and other information resources to demonstrate the application of innovations and technologies to real – world situations. Activities in this area will include continuation of ICT literacy enhancement programmes for various levels of policymakers (parliamentarians, women’s groups, civil society organizations, etc); implementation of the African Reference Frame; assistance to member States for the development of spatially enabled e-government services; and development of online applications and streamlined electronic delivery of products and services for more informed decisions in member States.

78. The subprogramme will also engage in the development of geoinformation databases for priority areas defined by regional initiatives of AU, the RECs, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, the United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure and other regional organizations; enhancement of the capability of African countries to effectively use geospatial information through long- and short-term courses, workshops, seminars, conferences and e-learning. It will also develop training tools and materials, continue to provide support to existing centres of excellence, and develop new centres and technoparks.

79. The subprogramme will be implemented in close collaboration with ECA subregional offices and other organizations within and outside the United Nations system, as well with other key stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, women, youth organizations, the media and academia and other knowledge networks. Existing partnerships and coordination mechanisms, such as those involving the RECs in the respective subregions and other United Nations bodies operating at the regional and subregional levels will also be strengthened.

80. The subprogramme is expected to achieve its objectives on the assumption that:

- (a) Government development policies will continue to focus on information and communications technology, and science;
- (b) Governments will prioritize budgetary allocations for identified activities in IST for development;
- (c) Partners will continue providing support for various activities; and
- (d) Stakeholders will continue their involvement at national, subregional and global levels.