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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Third Meeting of the Committee
on Development Information (CODI)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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**Notes and Guidelines for Chairs, Speakers, Panellists,
Rapporteurs, Delegates and Observers at the Third Meeting of
the Committee on Development Information (CODI.3)**

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Background

The Committee on Development Information (CODI) is composed of statisticians, librarians, information and geo-information specialists, who are government officials of the members States of the Economic Commission for Africa. The broad mandates of the Committee are to:

- a) Promote the growth of an information society in Africa through the utilisation of information and communication technologies for the organisation, management and dissemination of information in Africa;
- b) Advise on measures to improve all aspects of statistical development of member States including international comparability having regard to the recommendations of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations;
- c) Advise on the building, maintenance and dissemination of regional development databases, including bibliographic, textual and spatial databases, and assist in strengthening the capacity of member States to improve their national information systems;
- d) Promote the development and utilization of geographic information technologies as decision support tools for the socio-economic development of member States;
- e) Foster regional cooperation and integration among members States, with the participation of key stakeholders in the field;
- f) Offer a platform for African participants to interact with their counterparts from the developed world and promote negotiation on bilateral and multilateral technical assistance.

The Committee meets every two years, organising its work in plenary meetings and in three subcommittees for:

- Information and communications technologies;
- Statistics, and
- Geoinformation.

At the beginning of each session, the committee elects a Chair, two Vice-Chairs and two rapporteurs, and the each subcommittee appoints a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a rapporteur.

Specific Objectives of CODI.3

Under the theme of "Information for Governance", the specific objectives of CODI.3 are:

- To discuss and recommend strategies to member States and the Commission for providing information for good governance; and
- To review the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of CODI-II.

The meeting is also expected to discuss and recommend 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 in a form that is ready for use.

Contents of the Report of CODI.3

With the above background and specific objectives in mind, the report of CODI.3, which will be addressed to the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa, shall contain:

- A draft plan of action for member states to identify, develop and maintain relevant information policies, services, systems and institutions to make relevant information available and accessible to decision makers and the general public in a form that is ready for use;
- Specific recommendations for action to be taken by government agencies responsible for statistics, libraries, geoinformation and information and communications technologies towards developing and maintaining the identified information resources for good governance;
- Specific recommendations for action to be taken by inter-governmental organizations towards developing and maintaining the identified information resources for good governance;
- Specific recommendations for action to be taken by non-governmental and civil society organizations towards developing and maintaining the identified information resources for good governance;
- Specific recommendations for action to be taken by academic and research institutions towards developing and maintaining the identified information resources for good governance;
- Specific recommendations for action to be taken by United Nations agencies towards developing and maintaining the identified information resources for good governance;
- Recommendations of activities to be undertaken by ECA to make the use of information services, systems and technologies visible in its work programme to provide good examples to member States on the use of information services, systems and technologies to enhance good governance;
- And evaluation of progress made by member States and by ECA in the implementation of the recommendations of CODI-II.

Responsibilities of Session Chairs

The chair presides over the sessions and sees to it that the sessions follow the programme. Specifically, the Chair:

- Introduces the session topic or theme;
- Introduces the programmed presenters for the session;
- Ensures that each presenter keeps to allotted time, and if necessary interrupts the presenter to advise them of time remaining, or stop them when time is up;
- Acknowledges participants who wish to contribute to discussions on presentations and decides on the order and length of the interventions;

- Ensures that the same participants do not monopolise the discussions and that interventions are relevant to the topic under discussion by interrupting when an intervention strays from the topic; and
- Sums up the presentations and discussions at the end of the session.

Responsibilities of Session Rapporteurs

Rapporteurs have a key role to play in producing a suitable report for CODI.3. They will therefore be advised to keep in mind the overall objectives of CODI, specific objectives of CODI.3 and the proposed contents of the report. Specifically, a session rapporteur:

- Takes notes during the sessions;
- Identifies action and recommendation items as itemised in the section on “contents of the report” above;
- Compiles and word-processes these notes using templates and formats to be provided; and
- Submits the report to the secretariat focal person during the meeting of rapporteurs on the following day.

To facilitate the coordination of the work of the Rapporteurs, meetings have been scheduled for Rapporteurs every morning before the first session, and every evening after the last session.

Responsibilities of the Keynote Speaker

The keynote speech will set the tone for the meeting, and provide a backdrop against which information specialists will cast their roles in achieving good governance in Africa. The speech will essentially present challenges for Africa on such issues as decentralisation of governance, transparent systems for both financial and legal accountability and the role of the private sector, among others. Specifically, the keynote speaker shall:

- Prepare a 15-page¹ background paper discussing governance challenges for Africa;
- Present a summary of the paper in 20 minutes during the opening session of the meeting; and
- Participate in discussions during the opening session and the three plenary sessions on governance sub themes.

Responsibilities of the Panellists

The opening session features a panel discussion on “Information and Governance.” The keynote speaker will present a speech outlining the governance challenges and visions for Africa. Thereafter, three panellists will respond, providing solutions to the challenges from the perspectives of information and communications technologies (ICT), statistics and geoinformation. Specifically each panellist is expected to:

¹ Typed single-spaced on A4 page; margins 2 cm top, bottom, left and right; Times New Roman font size 12

- Read the background paper prepared by the keynote speaker, which shall be provided before hand;
- Prepare a concise response of two to five pages² to the issues and challenges raised in the background paper, outlining how their particular discipline will contribute towards dealing with them;
- Make a 10-minute oral presentation during the opening session responding to the keynote speech; and
- Participate in discussions during the opening session and the three plenary sessions on governance sub themes.

Responsibilities of Session Presenters

Presentations have been programmed for plenary and some sub-committee sessions. These presentations are designed to provide background material to lead into the discussions on the sub-themes or topics of the sessions in which they will be presented. The presenters of these papers are expected to:

- Prepare an executive summary of two to five pages³ of the presentation;
- Make a 10-minute oral presentation, using PowerPoint, on the assigned topic; and
- Participate in discussions following the presentation.

Responsibilities of Official Delegates

Every member State is represented at the meetings by an official delegation comprised of statisticians, information and geo-information specialists and librarians. In addition to government officials, member States are encouraged to include in their delegations, representatives of user organizations, research and institutions of higher learning and the private sector. Delegates are expected to:

- Familiarise themselves with the mandates of CODI as contained in its terms of reference;
- Provide feedback and suggestions to the secretariat during the planning stages of CODI meetings;
- Prepare and submit reports on the activities of their countries in the areas they have been assigned to speak on, according to guidelines provided by the CODI secretariat;
- Attend the plenary sessions and the subcommittee sessions corresponding to their areas of responsibility and contribute to the discussions;
- Present their countries' official positions on topics discussed during the sessions;
- Report back to their countries on outcome of the meeting, especially on action plans proposed for member States; and

² See note 1.

- Assist in implementing recommended programmes in the countries and prepare for the countries' participation in the next meeting of CODI.

Responsibilities of Observers

It is recognised that there are stakeholders in the work of CODI outside the government agencies in ECA's member States responsible for the various aspects of development information it deals with. Provision is therefore made for observers from States that are not members of the Commission, inter-governmental organizations, academic institutions and research centres, agencies of the UN and non-governmental organizations. Observers are expected to:

- Provide feedback and suggestions to the secretariat during the planning stages of CODI meetings;
- For observers from ECA member States, provide advice in their areas of expertise to members of the government delegation during the preparation for CODI, and during the meetings;
- Attend the plenary sessions and the subcommittee sessions corresponding to their areas of responsibility and contribute to the discussions;
- Present the official positions of the agencies, organisations and countries they represent on topics discussed during the sessions;
- Report back to the agencies, organisations and countries they represent on outcome of the meeting, especially on action plans proposed for them; and
- Assist in implementing recommended programmes in the Africa.