

Press Releases

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African Information Society Initiative (AISI) Meetings Get Underway Next Week

Addis Ababa, 18 October 1997 -- The African Information Society Initiative (AISI) will be the focus of two major meetings scheduled to take place at the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) next week.

The first meeting, to run from 20-21 October, is the Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of AISI -- a framework for the establishment in of a development-serving information and communications infrastructure in Africa.

The experts will meet for the first time under the umbrella of the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC), mandated by the ECA Conference of Ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning in May 1996 to advise on AISI programmes and projects and to evaluate results.

ECA was charged by the Ministers in 1996 to lead AISI, working in coordination with UN and other agency partners and institutions.

Among other issues, the experts meeting will review ATAC's terms of reference; report on AISI implementation to date; discuss an ECA framework for AISI implementation; brainstorm possible methodologies for AISI project support and approval; and debate the role of ATAC in resource mobilization.

The second AISI-related event of the week will be a meeting of AISI partners from 22-24 October. The Regional Coordination Meeting of Partners in Promoting Information Technology for Development in Africa, brings together AISI partners from various sectors.

Organizations scheduled to attend include: the African Development Bank, Bellanet International Secretariat, British Council, Government of Canada, Carnegie Corporation of New York, U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, Global Information Infrastructure Commission, Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNDP, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), World Bank, UNESCO, WorldSpace Foundation and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The meeting is expected to add impetus to the current debate on implementation of AISI, particularly in light of the restructured ECA -- which now has as one of its 5 programme divisions the Development Information Services Division (DISD), responsible for AISI.

Its focus will be on how ECA can build and strengthen partnerships to further the aims and objectives of AISI. Participants will report on-going and planned projects and programmes to promote information and communications technology in Africa, and consolidate the 1997-1998 Partners in Information and Communication Technologies in Africa (PICTA) work programme.

ATAC members will be involved in the partners meeting as resource persons.

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