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on Development Information (CODI)

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ECA's activities in the area of ICTs in 2005-2007 and work programme for the biennium 2008-2009, including highlights on the implementation of the Fourth Meeting of the Committee (CODI IV) recommendations

I. Activities in the areas of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in 2005-2007 (Highlighting the implementation of CODI IV recommendations)

1. The fourth meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI) was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 23 – 28 April 2005, on the theme of "Information as an Economic Resource." The Committee was preceded by workshops from 23 - 24 April. CODI IV recommended strategies to ECA and member States for harnessing information for economic growth. Over 400 participants attended, drawn from national statistics offices, national libraries, archives and documentation centres, information and communications technology agencies, national mapping agencies and other geoinformation management organizations.

2. The meeting of the Subcommittee on Information and Communication Technologies and Library was attended by delegates and observers from the following member States: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia. Regional and international organizations and other institutions that participated were the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Free and Open Source Software for Africa (FOSSFA), African Civil Society on the Information Society (ACSIS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia.

3. The following Pre-CODI IV Workshops were organized

a.	Meeting on Situs Addressing in Africa
b.	Workshop on Use of Geoinformation in Development (Human Sciences Research Council)
c.	e-Economy (ECA/e-PolNet)
d.	Meeting on Creating and Managing Digital Content
e.	Using Open Source Software for Information for Development (ECA/Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie/FOSSFA)
f.	Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for WSIS II: developing a Regional Plan of Action
g.	African Virtual Library Information Network (AVLIN) Meeting
h.	Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA) Meeting

4. Participants at the CODI IV meeting acknowledged that information and knowledge have emerged as new economic resources and factors of global competitiveness; that lack of access to information flows and knowledge systems and processes in this context could be considered a source of poverty; and that the only way out of Africa's predicament was to urgently achieve the goal of becoming a key player in the Information Society.

I.1   Increased assistance to member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the harmonization of policies and regulations

5. ECA is working with the ECOWAS and the UEMOA in drafting a legal framework for ICT development in West Africa. The aim is to put in place an enabling legal environment for e-commerce and for an enhanced cyber crime control. A workshop organized in December 2006 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso by ECA's sub regional Office in West Africa (SRO-WA) and the division for ICTs, Science and Technology (ISTD); discussed the issue with ICT experts, lawyers, trade specialists and economists. Two studies on the issue commissioned and discussed by the ECA were also discussed. These are a harmonized legal framework for e-commerce and a harmonized legal framework on ICT in general.

6. Collaborative arrangements for the adoption of a common regulatory framework on ICTs for West Africa, as a way of attracting foreign direct investments, are expected at the end of the exercise. The final legal framework for ICTs in West Africa is expected to be ready by May 2007. These activities are funded by the Government of Canada under the Global ePolicy Resource Center (ePol-NET).

7. Additional information on the status of national and regional e-strategies available in the document entitled: *Status of Development Information in Africa* (E/ECA/CODI/5/16).

http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/2007/070115ICT-West.htm

I.2   Assisting member States to raise awareness on the challenges and opportunities of e-commerce: ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth

8. ECA convened the Forum on ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth initiative from 14 - 16 March 2006 to address the role ICTs play in enhancing trade leading to economic growth. The Forum was held under the auspices of the Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePol-NET), established by Canada in 2002 as part of the G8 African Action Plan in support of NEPAD. The Forum concluded by launching the African ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth Initiative. The goal of this initiative is to build African capability and capacity in creating policy frameworks and e-strategies to create the pre-conditions for use and adoption of ICTs in trade. As a follow up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the initiative also aims at measuring the impact of ICTs on macro-economic growth in African countries.

9. An experts meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 29 - 31 May 2006 was attended by trade and ICT experts from six African countries (Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa). The experts meeting launched country studies on ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth in the six countries. By the beginning of March 2007, the country studies in all six countries were completed. A round table of stakeholders to discuss the findings of the studies so as to enrich the content before coming up with the final version for use by the countries were conducted in Kenya and Ethiopia by the end of February 2007. The recommendations have singled out the need for a legal framework for the use of ICTs in trade and economic growth, among others. This activity is also funded by the Government of Canada under the ePol-NET.

http://www.uneca.org/e-trade/index.html
http://www.uneca.org/disd/events/2006/e-trade_fu/index.html
http://www.epolafrica.org/events/2007/kenya-roundtable/
http://www.epolafrica.org/events/2007/ethiopia-roundtable/

I.2.1 e-finance industry in Africa

10. E-payment, the transfer of value electronically, depends on secure ICT infrastructure, efficient legal and regulatory regime, and widespread awareness among the public and business. In the e-Payment study for Ethiopia, issues from global, African and Ethiopian perspectives were examined.

11. The objective of the project was to study e-payment practices in developed countries, Africa and Ethiopia. In addition an e-payment model that is appropriate to Ethiopia was proposed. A prototype that demonstrates the proposed model was also developed.

I.2.2 Cybersecurity

12. An African Cyber Security Strategy programme that looks at the policy, legislative, regulatory and infrastructure requirements was initiated by the ePol-NET African Regional Node. The Policy Requirements will set out the duties and responsibilities of the various domestic, regional and international stakeholders and beneficiaries of this security policy.

13. The legislative and regulatory requirements will support the policy requirements by setting limits, establishing a code of conduct, defining standards and some of the technical issues which may be imposed on some stakeholders (such as service providers, financial institutions, vendors and merchants), as well as work towards building the necessary trusts and confidence demanded by users and key stakeholders, both within Africa and from around the world.

14. The Infrastructure Requirements will provide for minimum-security standards and ensure providers are able to address the evolving demands of users and protect their networks against increasingly sophisticated attacks originating from around the world. The policy will look at who is best suited to provide the investments necessary to meet those challenges i.e.: governments, international organizations, domestic and foreign investors, and manufacturers. The policy will outline their roles and responsibilities in meeting these ever changing and increasing requirements.

15. A presentation on Network Security and Applications: a global perspective was delivered to the Forum on ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth that took place from 14 – 16 March 2006 in Addis Ababa. Elements of the African cyber security strategy that stressed the need for a strong policy were part of the presentation. According to the presentation, there was a need to ensure that laws, regulations and policies provided the necessary support and focus that can complement cyber security endeavours. A strong legal framework was said to be able to send a message that cyber crime would be dealt with seriously and that limits on online conduct would be imposed.

16. The East African Community (EAC) convened two consultative workshops on Cyber laws and e-Justice and on Information Security from 25 - 28 April 2006 in Kampala, Uganda. The objectives of the Forum were:

a.	To distil the output of the Cyber Laws workshop into actionable items in terms of technical aspects on information security for e-Government;

b.	Constitute a technical committee to propose a roadmap towards a Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) policy and implementation framework for EA;

c.	Develop an action plan and budget for the team's operations; and

d.	Provide expert input to raise the profile of on-going regional initiatives on PKI

**I.3	Support to the implementation of initiatives to enhance capacity of member States in the area of monitoring and evaluating progress made through Information Society indicators**

17. The Scan-ICT programme was launched in November 2000 as a collaborative project between the Acacia programme of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), with financial support from the European Union (EU) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD). Scan-ICT monitors the penetration, impact and effectiveness of ICT applications in pilot countries across Africa, providing added value to the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) implementation at the national, regional and global levels. The first phase of the Scan-ICT programme, which involved six countries ended in 2004 and the concluding workshop was organized in February 2004.

18. For the second phase of the Scan-ICT initiative, national statistical offices (NSOs), and national observatories for ICTs, and ICT ministries from participating countries have been identified as implementing partner agencies to undertake country studies. These countries are Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius, and Rwanda. The initiative is implemented with financial support from the Government of Finland.

19. An international, multi-stakeholder Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development was launched during UNCTAD XI in June 2004. Current partners include the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, United Nations Regional Commissions (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for West Asia, Economic and Social Commission for the Asia-Pacific Region, and Economic Commission for Africa), the UN ICT Task Force, the World Bank, and EUROSTAT. Current Scan initiative provides ECA's contribution towards the Partnership.

20. The Partnership aims at:

a.	Achieving a common set of core ICT indicators, to be harmonized and agreed upon internationally, which will constitute the basis for a database on ICT statistics.

b.   Enhancing the capacities of NSO in developing countries and building competence to develop statistical compilation programmes on the information society, based on internationally agreed upon indicators.

c.   Developing a global database on ICT indicators, available online.

http://www.uneca.org/aisi/scanict.htm

I.4   Support to member States to develop capacity in FOSS: Harnessing the potential of Open Source Software (OSS) to provide cost-effective ICT applications

21. CODI IV recommended that ECA strengthen its support of Free and Open Source initiatives. This has continued through support to a consensus-building forum, research and development activities for provision of cost-effective applications, and human capacity development for building a critical mass of skilled human capital in this domain. ECA supported the Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA) second Idlelo Conference, on FOSS for the MDGs, which took place at Safari Park, Nairobi, from 23 - 25 February 2006. Lively debates surrounded the effectiveness of FOSS in accelerating the eight objectives of the MDGs, which today represent a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st century. Best strategies for meeting the MDGs in terms of innovative practices, policy and institutional reforms and means of policy implementation, based on FOSS were tabled and reflected on.

22. In the research sector, the Inter University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) VarsityNet project jointly implemented by the Universities of Nairobi (Kenya), Makerere (Uganda), Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania) and the Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (Kenya) has scaled up research and development activities based on OSS, and the knowledge and expertise accumulated during the first phase where an inter-university Students' Information Management System (SIMS) was developed. The system has been implemented, tested and operational within universities of member States. The Addis Ababa University, Department of Computer Science through ECA's VarsityNet programme has demonstrated using OSS how the mobile telephone infrastructure can be used for two areas, health and commerce. In addition, it followed-up on research done in the area of on-line character recognition for Ethiopic characters, which is crucial for the use of local languages on mobile devices. An Open Source based multimedia/kiosk application for health, governance, education and financial issues has been developed by two students in collaboration with ECA/ITCA.

http://www.uneca.org/disd/news/03072006dnadisd.asp

I.5   Financing mechanisms for ICT businesses and initiatives: Involvement of the Private Sector

23. In line with CODI IV recommendations, ECA undertook a number of initiatives with the African private sector. The aim is to develop strategies to facilitate better involvement of the private sector in building the African knowledge economy and to strengthen local actors through knowledge sharing. On-line discussions, and a sub-regional forum on Africa Private sector and

the Knowledge Economy organized alongside the 2006 International Services Salon in Tunis were activities supported by ECA during the period.

24. Main recommendations from these activities include:

a.   Support for the development at sub-regional and national levels of adequate legislative and regulatory policy conducive for local private sector development, and favourable for fair competition, foreign and local direct investments;

b.   Development of business models for techno parks and nurturing technology innovation on the continent;

c.   The promotion of a private sector best practice portal showcasing innovation in the knowledge economy.

http://www.uneca.org/disd/news/0608200601dnadisd.asp
http://www.uneca.org/aisi/ps.htm

I.6   Supporting member States to set up a mechanism at the national, regional and international levels to implement and evaluate the activities and initiatives derived from WSIS Plans of Action and the Accra Commitments: WSIS Tunis and the Role of ECA

25. On 21 December 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 56/183 on the organization of a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), recognizing "the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology for promoting the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and to find effective and innovative ways to put this potential at the service of development for all". The Summit was held in two phases: the first phase was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 10-12 December 2003; and the second phase in Tunis, Tunisia from 16-18 November 2005.

26. The major decisions of the Tunis Phase are related to financial mechanisms, Internet governance and implementation and follow up. Decisions were agreed upon based on the following 3 major issues: Financial Mechanisms; Internet Governance; and, Implementation and Follow-up. The Summit reiterated the need for adequate financial mechanisms to support Information and Communication Technology (ICT) deployment in developing countries in order to provide access to all. In this regard, the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF), which was introduced in the context of NEPAD by President Wade of Senegal as a worldwide voluntary funding mechanism, was adopted to complement existing mechanisms for funding the Information Society.

27. ECA, with its partners, assisted Africa's participation in the Summit, including support to the African Civil Society on the Information Society (ACSIS) network.

http://www.uneca.org/aisi/wsis2005/index.htm .
http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/it_for_development/documents/WSIS%20Report_Final.
pdf

I.7 Scaled up support to member States in the area of institutional and individual capacity building

I.7.1 Empowering MPs in building an inclusive Information Society

28. ECA is promoting the use of ICTs as a tool for democratic governance through increased access by Parliaments to enable effective debate, sharing and enhanced public participation in the legislative and policy making process, with capacity building programmes for Members of Parliaments. Capacity building activities have been conducted with the parliaments of the Gambia, Niger, Swaziland and Kenya as well as the SADC parliamentary Forum. One result was the establishment of an ICT for Development Network of Member of Parliaments. Activities are planned in Rwanda and Uganda as well as the ECOWAS Parliament.

http://www.uneca.org/aisi/parliamentarians.htm
http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/it_for_development/news/2007021901_dna_istd.asp
http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/it_for_development/news/1212200601dnadisd.asp
http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/it_for_development/news/03282006dnadisd.asp

I.7.2 Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders in the Development and implementation of ICT policies in Africa

29. As a follow up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), ECA, the Canadian e-Policy Resource Centre (CEPRC), the e-Policy Resource Network (ePol-NET), NetTel@Africa network and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and New Technologies of Sénégal, convened from 16-19 October 2006 in Dakar a workshop under the theme "Development and implementation of ICT policies in Africa: Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders". The workshop, mainly targeted at French-speaking African countries was the second of a series of four seminars being held in various sub-regions of Africa.

30. Fifty-one participants including representatives of Governments, regulators, institutions in charge of implementation of national ICT policies, operators and service providers, private sector, civil society and research institutions attended the workshop. The participants were from Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, République Démocratique du Congo, République du Congo (Brazzaville), Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinée, Madagascar, Mali, Maroc, Niger, République centrafricaine, Rwanda, Sao Tomé & Principe, Sénégal et Tunisie. The workshop was also attended by the following institutions: ECA, ECOWAS, Impact Africa, NEPAD, NetTel@frica, OIF, PANOS/CIPACO, SADC and UNDP.

31. The workshop concluded with recommendations on the need to put in place favourable regulatory environment in African countries to enable access for all to an inclusive Information Society, strengthening of existing cooperation networks, capacity building of regulators and policymakers, and ensuring inclusion of women.

http://www.epolafrica.org/dakar06/

I.7.3 Support to the African Youth in ICT for Development Network (AYIN)

32. Over 100 youth delegates from all over Africa deliberated on ICT & Youth entrepreneurship during the ADF V Breakout Session, which was held on 16th November 2006 organized by the ICT, Science and Technology Division. During the session, participants discussed best practices in using ICTs as a tool to promote youth initiatives and leadership and to foster broader economic development process. Participants shared a number of exciting and innovative ideas and activities undertaken by African youth in the areas of entrepreneurship, ICT and Youth-led social enterprises as well as job creation.

33. The Forum's consensus recommended the following actions in the area of employing Information and Communication Technology for the development of Africa's youth:

    a.   Governments should mainstream youth employment and entrepreneurship in broader national ICT policies and align them with strategic development objectives.

    b.   Governments should expand training and access to ICT to all schools through public-private partnerships.

    c.   ECA in collaboration with the African Union (AU), African Development Bank (AfDB) and ICT partners in Africa should support programmes at national and sub-regional levels.

    d.   The African Union and NEPAD with the support of ECA, AfDB, UN agencies and partners should establish a Pan-African ICT Youth Programme to support youth entrepreneurship and development of the sector.

    e.   Together with NEPAD, African governments should develop and implement a Pan-African ICT youth programme.

http://www.uneca.org/adf/

I.7.4 Capacity building activities at the Information Technology Centre for Africa (ITCA)

34. Addressing the CODI IV recommendations that called on ECA to support capacity building and training of various stakeholders, and as part of its activities, the ITCA undertook the following:

I.7.4.1 Capacity building for Ethiopian Customs Officers

35. Following a request from the Government of Ethiopia to build the capacity of the staff of the Ethiopian Customs Authority to "effectively implement and maintain an UNCTAD-created Automated System for Customs Data", commonly known as ASYCUDA, ITCA launched a

series of technical training workshops divided in three phases. The first phase was completed in September 2006. The second phase is expected to start shortly.

http://www.uneca.org/itca/asycuda.htm

I.7.4.2 Capacity building of African policy-makers in Internet Governance

36. To build capacity of African policy-makers in Internet Governance, ITCA, in the framework of the UN Development Account, launched a series of training courses, supported by the Diplo Foundation of Malta, the Canadian e-Policy Resource Centre (CePRC) and ICANN. The first course was held in Addis Ababa from 2-6 July 2006. Thirty-one delegates from 18 member States including 5 diplomats attended the course. The member States represented were Angola, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/it_for_development/news/0704200601dnadisd.asp

I.7.4.3 Capacity building of Ambassadors

37. ECA, through SRO-SA, received a request from Ambassadors from SADC countries accredited to the Republic of Zambia for a capacity building training programme on ICT skills. A questionnaire was then developed in collaboration with SRO-SA to identify the level of ICT skills of the Ambassadors and to develop customized modules to suit their profiles. Following these, the training was delivered from 27-29 November 2006 in Lusaka, Zambia.

I.7.4.4 Capacity building of African youth

38. ITCA provided an intensive skills building training on Blogging and e-commerce to African youth who participated in the Fifth African Development Forum (ADF). More than 55 African youth, representing all of ECA's member States participated in the training. It was part of ISTD's effort to provide basic understanding of the links between ICT and enterprise development. Its specific objectives are to introduce the participants to the creation and management of blogs and use of the CatGen Software to create e-commerce sites, build product catalogues and promote businesses through the Internet.

http://www.uneca.org/itca/exhibits/ADF_5_DNA.html

I.8   Assisting member States to mainstream gender in e-strategies

39. A review of the NICI policies formulated so far clearly showed that the role of women in the information society through the inclusion of a gender perspective as one of the pillars of the NICI policy document is lacking. Several NICI review meetings, including the Fourth Meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI) and the meeting on strengthening the capacity of national machineries through the effective use of ICT highlighted this and

recommended that ECA should assist the NICI countries in integrating a gender perspective in the NICI policies and plans.

I.8.1   Inclusion of Gender Perspectives in NICI policies and plans

40. ECA has provided consultancy services to support the NICI policy and plan development processes in Chad and Togo through the inclusion of gender perspectives to enable the countries to put in place guiding frameworks for the exploitation of information and communication applications to accelerate the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in support to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The overall exercise is aimed at enhancing the role of women in the country's socio-economic development through effective implementation of various sectoral information and communication projects and programmes in education, health, trade and industry, etc., that have a gender perspective.

http://www.uneca.org/disd/events/2006/atac/

I.8.2 Gender and e-Government

41. The ECA, under the ePol-NET, and in collaboration with the Government of Tunisia held a workshop on Gender and e-Government for Francophone African countries at the Hôtel Renaissance, Tunis from 19 to 21 June 2006. The workshop was attended by both ICT and Gender focal points from thirteen countries. Addressing the gender gap in access to government services provided online through e-Government initiatives was one of the issues discussed. The close involvement of women in the planning and implementation of national e-Government strategies, plans and services was also highlighted.

http://epolafrica.org/genre-tic/

42. Gender perspectives continued to be highlighted in all ECA's activities, including the ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth Forum that launched the African ICTs, Trade and Economic Growth Initiative.

I.9   Strengthening and harmonizing regulatory frameworks: Study on Convergence in the ICT sector in Nigeria and Sierra Leone

43. ECA commissioned a study on Convergence in the ICT sector in Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The objective of the study was to assist ECA in assessing the current status of ICT policy and regulatory framework in both countries taking into account the various policy statements and action plans enacted by the Governments and implemented by ministries and state agencies. The study came up with a well-documented report on ICT convergence in both countries with clear recommendations on integrated institutional mechanisms and the way forward.

I.10   Compendium of CODI recommendations

44. Following CODI IV recommendations, ISTD prepared a "CODI compendium of recommendations and resolutions" (E/ECA/CODI/5/27) including all CODI previous sessions

recommendations and resolutions. The Compendium will be distributed during COD V meeting and will also be available at http://www.uneca.org/codi/codi4/

I.11   Synopsis of Member States report on CODI IV recommendations

45. The ICT Sub-Committee of the Fourth Session of the Committee on Development Information (CODI) came up with a total of forty-two recommendations addressing general areas of the Sub-Committee activities, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Creating an enabling environment for the development of the E-economy, Mobilizing stakeholders and partners, and support to Free and Open Source Software (FOSS).

46. The ICT Policy Development Section of ECA sent questionnaires to assess the implementation of the recommendations by member States. Questionnaires were received from Rwanda, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and Mali. Sixty three percent of the countries were able to implement the general recommendations; all the countries were able to implement the recommendations on the WSIS; eighty percent of the countries were able to implement the recommendations on the creation of an enabling environment for the development of the E-economy; eighty two percent of the countries were able to implement the recommendations on mobilizing stakeholders and partners; and sixty two percent were able to implement the recommendations on support to Free and Open Source Software (FOSS).

II. Work priorities for the biennium 2008-2009

47. Activities in the area of ICTs for development in 2008-2009 will focus on supporting strategies for the African Digital Economy (e-finance, e-transactions, e-commerce, e-trade, e-content); enabling environment for the knowledge economy (legal and regulatory frameworks - e-legislation, cyber laws and strategies); securing networks and infrastructure for the knowledge economy (e-security); strengthening the role of SMMEs and other stakeholders in the digital and knowledge economy; and regional economic integration and the knowledge economy with applications to assist facilitate intra-regional trade.

II.1   Fostering regional economic integration using ICTs

48. The role of ICT in fostering regional economic integration, including facilitating intra-regional trade, will also be enhanced. To facilitate dialogue and sharing of experiences among countries, ECA will support harmonization of policies and regulations at the regional level, based on the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) and NEPAD frameworks, and will work in all sub regions to develop a harmonized sub regional ICT policy and monitoring framework.

II.2   Monitoring implementation of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) commitments

49. The WSIS outcome reiterated support to regional and international integration efforts aimed at building a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society in which

people everywhere can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge. ECA will provide support to member States by organizing consultations, providing advisory services, monitoring and reporting on progress towards bridging the digital divide, and coordinating implementation of the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE).

II.3 Promoting awareness on the information society and knowledge economy

50. To prepare African countries for effective participation in the knowledge economy, ECA will promote awareness of the importance of the information society and knowledge economy among key stakeholders. Activities will address the following themes and issues: the digital economy, ICT in trade, commerce, industrialization, Internet governance, and intellectual property rights in the knowledge economy. Advocacy and consensus-building in this area will be undertaken through CODI, which brings stakeholders together from all parts of the continent.

II.4 Measuring ICT for Development

51. Emphasis will also be placed on ICT statistics and the knowledge economy, and supporting pilot applications for ICTs and socio-economic development in sectors such as health, education, local government, agriculture, science and technology. ECA will also continue to be active in the work of the *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development*, a global partnership initiative comprised of ITU, OECD, UNCTAD, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank; aimed at defining and collecting a set of common ICT indicators for countries to produce information society statistics.

II.5 Partnership and Networking

52. ECA will continue to provide the secretariat for the *Partnership for ICTs in Africa (PICTA)*, an informal group of partners working to leverage resources and expertise to build Africa's Information Society and the *Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP)* by ensuring African stakeholders' participation in GKP activities on resource mobilization, poverty reduction, access to knowledge and education. This includes strengthening relationships with the Governments of Finland, Canada and Switzerland and exploring partnership opportunities with the Digital Solidarity Fund and other bilateral and multilateral organizations.