Economic Commission for Africa

Briefing Note
ECA and the WSIS process

October 2005
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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1. Overview: ICT4D & ECA

ECA's Information for Development (currently subprogramme 4: Harnessing information for development) activities began in 1979 with the *Pan African Development Information System (PADIS)* aimed at establishing development information databases in Addis Ababa and other participating centres in African countries. The project significantly improved access to information for enhanced governmental and institutional planning on the continent. Within a decade, 41 countries and 49 sub-regional and regional institutions had joined the network. In 1987, ECA started a series of computer networking pilot projects towards improving information exchange. In 1992, ECA initiated the *Capacity Building for Electronic Communication in Africa (CABECA)* project, which led to the establishment of communications nodes in 24 African countries. Other projects soon followed, including activities funded by some partner countries from the North.
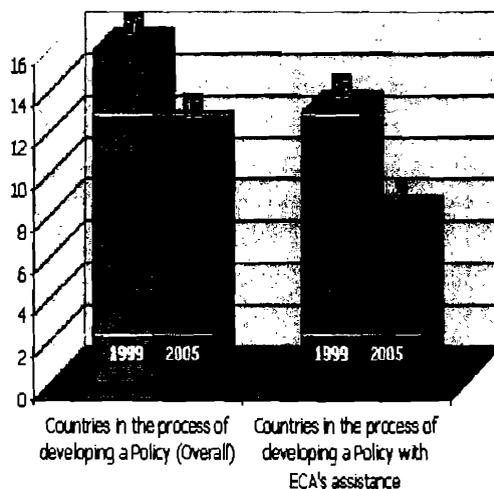
Following on from this the Commission has since 1996 pioneered the implementation of the first regional digital agenda of its kind, known as the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). This regional framework originated from a resolution of the 22nd meeting of ECA's Conference of African Ministers of Social and Economic Planning in 1996. It was adopted the same year by the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity and supported by the then G7+1 as Africa's major ICT initiative in its 1997 Denver Summit. Canada's Acacia Initiative, which is an international programme to empower sub-Saharan communities with the ability to apply information and communication technologies (ICTs) to their own social and economic development was developed to compliment the efforts of AISI............

................*Acacia supports Canada's contribution to the African Information Society Initiative (AISI), which was endorsed by African governments as an action framework to build Africa's information and communication infrastructure:* http://www.idrc.ca/acacia/

Consequently, ECA in 1997 created the Development Information Services Division (DISD) to implement the AISI agenda, and pioneered ICT4D programming among Regional Commissions. For instance, ESCAP introduced a similar division 'Information, Communication and Space Technology Division' (ICSTD) in July 2002, and ESCWA established in mid-2002 the Information and Communication Technology Division – ICTD as part of the restructuring of the Commission. However, ECLAC and ECE's ICT4D and Information Society programmes are part of the Division of Production, Productivity and Management, and the Trade Division respectively.

As a result, the implementation of AISI has had some profound and dramatic impact in shaping the ICT African landscape, especially with respect to the formulation of national e-strategies, known as the National Information and Communication Infrastructure Plan (NICI). The first African Development Forum (ADF '99) on the theme: 'The Challenges of Globalization and the Information Age inspired the launching of NICI policies and plans in several Africa countries. By the time ADF'99 was held twenty-two countries[1] had started developing their NICI plans and policies with some of them presenting their finalized documents to a Forum initiated by ECA, UNDP country offices and IDRC. The chart below presents the level of involvement of ECA in national e-strategies up to date: more than 30 countries (out of 53 States) have embarked on a policy known as National Information and Communication Infrastructure – NICI plans, with the support of ECA.

Status of NICI Policy Development (1999 - 2005)

Countries in the process of
developing a Policy (Overall)

Countries in the process of
developing a Policy with
ECA's assistance

During the last two years the key highlights of ECA work on information society issues include the following:

- Strengthening ICT policy formulation and implementation (National Information and Communication Infrastructure plans – NICIs) at the national level covering most member States.

- Linking of the NICI process to national Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) & MDGs.

- Development and implementation of sectoral e-strategies, especially e-government, e-health and e-commerce.

- Initiating Information Society programmes and activities of the Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, CEMAC, EAC, ECOWAS, UMA)

- Effective mobilization of Member States for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

- Strengthening the capacity of Member States to apply geoinformation systems in various sectors of the economy.

- Development of an outreach and communication programme to raise awareness and build stakeholders capacity on Information Society issues including groups such as parliamentarians, media, academia, CSOs, women's groups and youth.

- Undertaking on-site and virtual training as well as development of multimedia material through the Information Technology Centre for Africa.

2. ECA's preparations for WSIS

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is an initiative of the 1998 Plenipotentiary Conference of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) aimed at providing a global platform where key players, such as Governments, UN agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations come together to develop a common vision and activities for Information Society. It was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 56/183) as an effective means to assist the United Nations in fulfilling the goals of the Millennium Declaration. In the Resolution, the General Assembly urged the effective contribution and active participation of all the UN institutions and indicated that the WSIS process should follow the UN format of meetings. In this regard a High Level Summit Organization Committee (HLSOC) was put in place by the UN Secretary General to include several Heads of UN specialized organizations and all the Executive Secretaries of the UN Regional Commissions. Its mandate was to coordinate the work of the UN System to organize the WSIS and to ensure its success.

In this context it was agreed that the WSIS would take place through a series of official mechanisms, including the Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) thematic global conferences and the Regional Preparatory Conferences. The first phase of the WSIS was held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003 and adopted a Declaration and a Plan of Action. The second phase of the Summit will be held from 16-18 November 2005 in Tunis.

2.1 WSIS Phase 1

Three Preparatory Committee sessions took place in the first phase as well as a series of Regional conferences and thematic workshops. The UN Regional Commissions organized all the Regional Preparatory Conferences. ECA was in charge of the two African Regional Conferences and also coordinated other African thematic meetings.

2.1.1 Bamako 2002 Conference

In collaboration with the Government of Mali ECA organized the African Regional Conference as a preparatory meeting for African participation and input to the WSIS process under the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). Known as Bamako 2002, the Conference was attended by all African countries, most of them at ministerial level from 26-30 May 2002. The conference was preceded by 14 pre-conference workshops supported by ECA and some key development partners. The conference adopted the Bamako Declaration, which was used by the African Group as a negotiating document during Prepcom1, Precom2 and Prepcom3 of the Geneva phase. The Conference elected an African Bureau (Bamako Bureau) in which ECA was requested to be the rapporteur and secretary. The Bamako Bureau's mandate was to coordinate Africa's technical participation in the WSIS process culminating in Tunis in 2005.

2.1.2 Meeting of the African Ministers in charge of Information and Communication Technologies

As the Coordinator of the NEPAD Infrastructure Cluster ICT President Wade convened a meeting of the African Ministers in charge of ICTs, in Dakar, from 19-20 April 2004. The

meeting adopted the Protocol establishing an African ministerial committee, composed of 15 member countries, to oversee the WSIS process. The ministers cheered ECA to serve as their secretariat and the Bamako Bureau as their technical advisory body.

2.1.3 Preparation of African Stakeholders for Participation in WSIS

To ensure the effective participation of all Africans stakeholders, ECA in collaboration with its partners organized a series of capacity building workshops for civil society organisations, academia, media and the private sector to enable them appreciate their role more fully in the Information Society in their respective countries as well as in the overall WSIS process. In this regard and in order to enable the continent exchange information and prepare for the Summit efficiently, ECA through the AISI electronic discussion lists engaged various stakeholders to discuss issues concerning the Information Society.

2.1.4 The Geneva Summit

During the Geneva Summit, ECA organized, coordinated and participated in a series of events including the following:

- Two exhibition stands where ECA showcased activities and distributed the Commission's publications

- Four Panel Discussions on "National Strategies for the Information Society: the Role of Regional and Global Organizations" jointly organized by ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, UNCTAD, UNDP, UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank.

- A round Table on "Creating Digital Opportunities" chaired by the President of Senegal and moderated by the Secretary-General of the International Chamber of Commerce with the participation of several African Head of States and Governments as well as Secretary/Director Generals of UN institutions.

- Launch of the African Academia Research Network (ARN) with support from the Ford Foundation to build the research capacity of academia on key policy issues with respect to African needs and to strengthen scholarship in various areas that were of significant importance to Member States.

- Launch of the African Media and ICT4D: Documentary Evidence which was a baseline study on the state of media reporting on ICT and information society issues in Africa in 9 African countries in collaboration with the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA).

- Launch of the Global ePolicy Resource Network (ePol-NET) with the Governments of Canada, Ireland, ECA and the UN ICT Task Force, designed to marshal global efforts in support of national e-strategies for development.

The Geneva phase of the Summit witnessed participation of over 900 people from 48 African countries represented by the High-level delegates included: 16 Head of States and Governments, 79 Ministers, Vice-Ministers and Permanent Secretaries as well as 51 Ambassadors from various African diplomatic missions.

The two main contentious issues carried over from the Geneva phase to the Tunis Summit were "Internet Governance" and "Financing Mechanisms" for which the UN Secretary General established two working groups to discuss and narrow the differences between countries and between stakeholders.

3. WSIS Phase 2

The second phase follows the same process with the Africa Regional preparatory conference being coordinated by ECA striving for a Common African Position. In addition several forums have been organized where key issues related to Africa's participation have been discussed.

3.1 First meeting of the Preparatory Committee on WSIS

The first meeting of the Prepcom of phase 2 was held in Hammamet, Tunisia, on 24-26 June 2004. The objective of the meeting was to brainstorm on the process, content and outputs of the Tunis Phase and lead the way to Prepcom2. The major outputs of Prepcom1 can be summarized as follows:

- On process, there will be a document on "follow up and implementation" to be carried out by stakeholders at national, regional and international levels, with particular attention to challenges facing Least Developed Countries.

- On output, it was agreed that a concise political document and an operational one, both of which reflecting the areas of focus of the Tunis phase and reaffirming and enhancing the commitments undertaken in the Geneva phase should be available to the meeting.

2.2 The second African Regional Preparatory Conference for the WSIS

It was organized by the Government of Ghana and ECA in Accra, Ghana on the theme '*Access: Africa's key to an inclusive Information Society*', from 28 January – 4 February 2005. The conference theme was divided into six sub-themes: policies/strategies, infrastructure, ICTs/ socio-economic development, Internet Governance, ICT Indicators, and financing mechanisms. Participation reflected all African countries at ministerial level with a strong representation of stakeholders: CSOs, Women's groups, MPs, Private Sector, Medical practitioners, Youth. ECA's preparation for this event was made possible with support from the Governments of Canada, Finland, and Switzerland. Outputs were as follows:

- 14 Pre-Conference Workshops, three plenary meetings and one Round Table.

- The African Common Position was reached through the "Accra Commitments for Tunis" and related resolutions.

- African Ministers of ICT strategized to speak with one voice at global preparatory meetings.

- The Ministers of ICT of Ghana, Senegal and Tunisia were accordingly charged with the responsibility of spearheading Africa's position in close collaboration with a 15-member African Ministerial Committee on ICT supported technically by ECA.

The main output of the conference was "*The Accra Commitments for Tunis 2005*" which was adopted as the African Common Position for the second phase of the WSIS. It was used as negotiation document by the African delegations in Geneva for the second

and third preparatory committee meetings of the WSIS, held in Geneva, respectively in February and September 2005.

3.3 Second meeting of the Preparatory Committee on WSIS

The key issues relating to the outcome of the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee, held in Geneva in February 2005, could be summarized as follows:

3.3.1 Financial Mechanism for ICT Development

Based on the decision of the African Union adopting the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF), Africa made a strong case for the establishment of a complementary financial mechanism that would pay special attention to the needs of the developing world, particularly those living in remote, rural and marginalized urban areas. Africa strongly urged in the four WSIS Regional Groups support for the African initiative for the creation of a Digital Solidarity Fund as a complementary financial mechanism. After a series of consultations and negotiations the meeting agreed upon a proposal for the creation of the DSF. With the Geneva conference welcoming the creation of the DSF, the official launching of the DSF was performed in Geneva by His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Chairperson of the African Union on 14th March 2005.

3.3.2 Internet Governance

The conference agreed by consensus for the need to apply the principle of effective multilateralism to manage Internet Resources globally in an open, transparent and participatory manner to create Internet access unlimited for all. In that respect the Working Group On Internet Governance (WGIG) set up by the United Nations Secretary-General was charged with the responsibility of ensuring that a management arrangement would evolved to harmonize technical and policy issues related to Internet Governance (IG) for the benefit of the global community. However, as the WGIG did not complete its report, IG discussions were left for later Prepcom meetings.

3.4 Third meeting of the Preparatory Committee on WSIS

The main issues related to the outcome of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee, held in Geneva in from 19-30 September 2005, could be summarized as follows:

- It reemphasized the need to consider the two phases of the WSIS as one Summit and requested delegates to take into full consideration the Geneva Declaration and Plan of Action, which were adopted by Head of States and Governments in 2003.

- It focused on the preparation of a political chapeau and an operational part, both of which were to include contentious issues which were left out of Geneva as well as implementation and follow up mechanisms.

- The African Group held discussions with several groups and countries to try to make them rally to its position. Several countries and institutions, including the USA, ITU and UNESCO made presentations during the African Group meetings.

- While the WGIG submitted its conclusions on Internet Governance issues, Prepcom3 did not use its report as a negotiation document. Hence discussions and negotiations continued for the entire duration of Prepcom3 on the basis of a new document prepared by the Group of the Friends of the Chair of Prepcom without a breakthrough. The positions of the USA and the EU on the one hand and that of the developed could on the other prove irreconcilable. The USA delegation rejected any involvement of Governments in the oversight of the current Internet Governance system.

- For lack of time, the chapter on Financing Mechanisms" was not discussed.

- On the implementation and follow up mechanisms there were several discussions supported by a negotiation document from the Group of the Friends of the Chair of Prepcom. The document was amended many times by most of the regional groups and countries. Some supported follow-up under the normal implementation and follow up mechanisms set up by the United Nations General Assembly, through ECOSOC, while others requested the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to lead and coordinate implementation and follow up. No agreement could be reached on issues pertaining to follow-up.

Finally, Prepcom3 decided to convene a negotiation group composed only of Governments in October in Geneva for two days. However Prepcom3 will resume for an additional three days meeting in Geneva before the Tunis Summit. In this regard, the African Group will organize a two days meeting before Prepcom3 resumes in order to review the various contentious issues and agree on a common position. Egypt has offered to host such a meeting.

3.5 The African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy

The Accra Commitments for Tunis 2005 declared: "*Africa should develop a plan of action containing specific ICT development projects, which are properly costed to be presented at WSIS 2005 for financial resource mobilization*". In this regard, ECA is coordinating the development of the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE), based on the "Accra Commitments for Tunis 2005" and on the vision defined by both the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). After discussions at the experts and ministerial levels in several forums, the Plan was finally adopted on 21 September 2005 at an African Ministerial meeting held in Geneva where the African Union Science and Technology Commissioner in her speech stated: "*We are grateful for the sterling work done by the Committee of Experts of the Bamako Bureau, the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC), the support of the Ministers' committee and the coordination of the ECA to produce this Action Plan.*"

A meeting on ARAPKE will be organized on 16 November 09H00 in Tunis by ECA and the African Union Commission to be followed by a partnership announcement the same day at 15H00. In a side meeting in Geneva with the Vice-President of the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) to review suitable elements of the ARAPKE for support by the DSF, the Vice-President proposed to fund the implementation of the various Regional Plans developed by the Regional Commissions during the WSIS process. In this regard he proposed an amount between 1 million and 2 million dollars for Africa.

3.6 Collaboration with the African Union

The African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa in July 2004 passed two resolutions on the acceptance of the Digital Solidarity Fund by the Head of States and on support for the Government of Ghana for hosting the 2nd African Regional Preparatory Conference for the WSIS (February 2005).

Since then the African Union has taken in the WSIS process on board, providing political leadership whilst ECA has provided technical support and back up. Cooperation between the two improved institutions did not go smoothly in the beginning. Coordination has since especially during the last Geneva Prepcom3 meeting where the African ICT ministers under the aegis of the African Union Commission adopted the African Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy developed by ECA. It was also agreed that the AU and ECA would prepare a joint note on Prepcom3 requested by the Chairperson of the African Ministerial Committee on ICT for submission to President Wade as Coordinator of the NEPAD Infrastructure Cluster and to the Chairperson of the AU Commission. Also following consultations held in Geneva between AU and ECA, it was agreed that the two institutions would jointly organize the meeting on the African Action Plan on 16 November in Tunis.

On implementation and follow-up to the WSIS decisions, the African Group has suggested that the two institutions work together and tasked ECA to carry out technical coordination in cooperation with regional and sub-regional intergovernmental institutions under the political leadership of the African Union as provided the African Regional Action Plan.

At the meeting with the Vice-President of the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) held during Prepcom3 in Geneva, the Vice-President made a commitment to fund the African Regional Action Plan and that a letter jointly signed by the ECA Executive Secretary and the AU Chairperson be sent to the DSF before the Summit, to enable the DSF make an announcement and sign a financing agreement for the Action Plan in Tunis.

3.7 Collaboration with other UN agencies during the WSIS process

ECA has been working with several UN institutions within the framework of the WSIS, especially during the first phase. It held closely with several national consultations as well as the Bamako Conference organized with the support of ITU, UNDP and UNITAR. Also during the Geneva Summit, the UN Regional Commissions, UNCTAD, the UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank jointly organized several Round Tables.

Cooperation between the UN Regional Commissions has been exemplary during the first and second phases of the Summit. Under the coordination of ECE, during the first phase, and ECA, during this second phase, they have been working together, preparing common positions and issuing joint statements. It was in this regard that they agreed to work with other key institutions to create the "Partnership on measuring ICT for Development" which involved ITU, OECD, UNESCO, the UN ICT Task Force and the World Bank. It aims at building enough capacity for developing countries to collect, process and disseminate ICT indicators for planning and decision-making purposes.

4. The Tunis Summit

The Tunis Summit will be composed of three main elements: ICT for all activities, an Exhibition and the Summit.
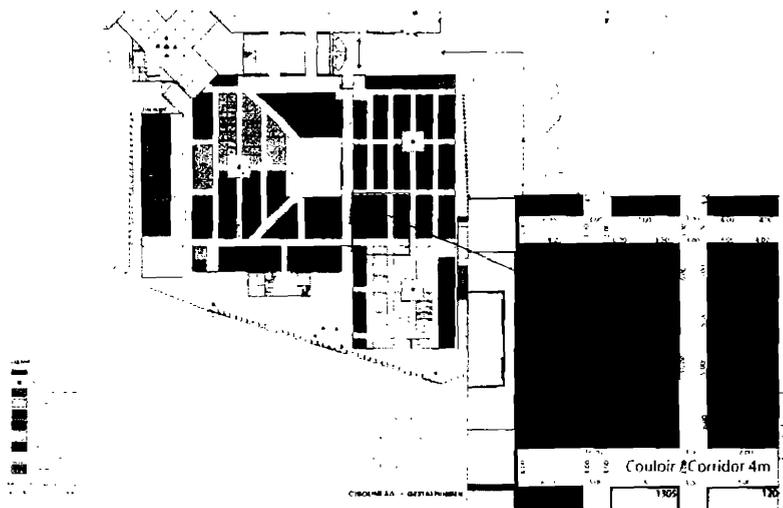
4.1 The ICT for All

It is composed of parallel events, including workshops, round tables and expert meetings. Various Governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and international organizations have planned over 200 events in Tunis. ECA is participating in the following events:

- Workshop on the Partnership on Measuring the Information Society
- GKP Round Tables/Workshops and Award Ceremony
- UNDP workshops
- ARAPKE workshop (with the African Union)
- African Partnership announcement meeting
- SDC/IDRC Panel
- IFAD Panel
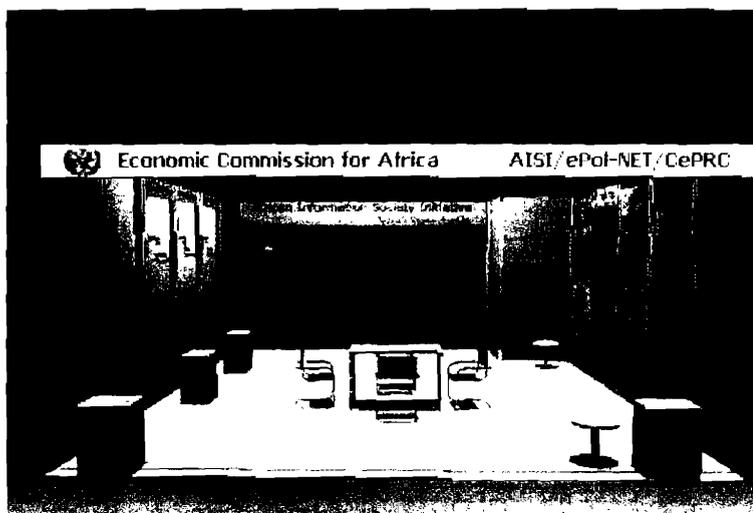- IDRC/Association of African Universities (AAU) Panel

In addition, in cooperation with its African Media network members' ECA will publish a daily paper on the WSIS activities and work with the African branch of the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) provide online radio coverage.

4.2 Exhibition

ECA is playing a coordinating role in setting up a joint exhibition pavilion for all UN Regional Commissions. Its activities in this regard involve the submission of registration

The hall plan and location of the stands

ECA's exhibition space will be shared with its partners, namely Industry Canada and the Canadian Electronic Policy Resource Centre (CePRC). ECA, Industry Canada and CePRC collectively work on ePol-Net activities led by the Commission.

ECA has requested a 50m² pavilion and secured a 49.2 m² for the Regional Commissions. The number assigned to the pavilion is 1307.4 and is located in the development and solidarity quarter.

requests, processing rental requests for a modular pavilion, updating all the RCs on the status of the registration process, calculating and distributing shares of space and pavilion fees, receiving invoices and distributing to the RCs, following up on payment, answering queries by the RCs in relation to the pavilion, etc.

4.3 Summit

The Summit is composed of plenary sessions and Round Tables.

4.3.1 Plenary Sessions

Heads of States and Governments as well as international organizations, civil society and private sector organizations will make brief statements. It should be noted that statements by international organizations are delivered from 12H00 to 13H00 and 20H to 22H00. As acceptance of speakers will be on a first come first serve basis, temporary booking has been made for the ECA Executive Secretary to make his speech on 17 November in the slot between 12H00-13H00.

3.3.2 Round Tables:

There will be a limited number of Summit Round Tables. Participation will be limited to 10 people: the Chair, 3 Government representatives, 3 CSO participants and 3 from the private sector. No audiences will be allowed into the Round Tables. There will also be a High Level Panel to be held in a room seating 150, however, the Tunisian authorities have not yet firmed modalities up their last commitment.

4.4 Documentation

ECA has put in place a dissemination strategy aimed at presenting up-to-date analysis, publications, briefing papers and policy briefs on ICT for development issues. Maximum visibility and showcasing of ECA's work will be accomplished through exhibiting its documentation and publications in 3 separate exhibition stands–the joint Regional Commissions Stand, GKP and the ECA/AISI/ePol-Net stand.

A catalogue, listing all ICT-related information resources available in hardcopy, CD-Rom and web format will also be disseminated during the Summit. An online version of this booklet can be found at the following address: http://172.22.15.104/disd/wsisresources_results.asp

Among the priority documents to be disseminated during the Summit are:

4.4.1 The African Regional Action Plan on Knowledge Economy (ARAKPE) -

This document was developed to create the necessary conditions for the establishment of the Information Society in Africa and in support of the attainment of the Millennium Declaration Development Goals. It is based on the "Accra Commitments for Tunis 2005" and on the vision defined by both the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It was developed under the auspices of the African Union by a Committee of Experts of the Bamako Bureau, the African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) and various stakeholders under the technical coordination of the Economic Commission for Africa.

4.4.2 Benchmarking the Plan of Action of WSIS in Africa

DISD has compiled the results of a questionnaire sent to all ECA Member States that evaluates progress made with regard to the recommendations of the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action. The document provides graphical representations, conclusions and future challenges. It is one of the key ECA outreach documents.

4.4.3 iConnect Africa Quarterly (WSIS edition)

This quarterly web, email and print newsletter aims to raise awareness within the wider African development community on ICT4D and the Information Society issues. It is produced by ECA and the Netherlands-based International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD). This edition is being prepared exclusively for the WSIS meeting.

4.4.4 Regional Commission booklet

ECA is coordinating submissions from the five UN regional commissions describing events and initiatives designed to promote the development of the Information Society in each region.

4.4.5 Information Society Policy Briefs

The policy briefs provide ICT4D snapshots based on African experiences 1) Building an Information Society: the case of Rwanda; 2) E-government: the case of The Gambia; 3) Democratizing Access: Initiatives in Ethiopia; 4) -commerce challenges in Africa: issues, constraints, opportunities; 5) Using Geoinformation for Policy Formulation. Other policy briefs give an outline of key programmatic areas of measuring the impact of ICTs in development (SCAN ICT), partnership initiatives and the advent of digital libraries in Africa.

4.5 Media Outreach/Communication Strategy

ECA's focus on Media and the Information Society is aimed at creating awareness of issues arising out of the AISI framework and reporting responsibly on the use of ICTs to enhance development. A 3-pronged strategy is therefore envisioned as follows:

4.5.1 Production of WSIS Africa Agenda

Daily Conference Newspaper in collaboration with Highway Africa and Rhodes School of Journalism; Several issues of an online and hardcopy daily edition of an 8-page bi-lingual (French and English) daily newspaper known as WSIS Africa Agenda, as well as an onsite radio broadcasting station whose purpose has led to the provision of a daily information to constituents that may not have the opportunity to attend the conference.

4.5.2 Onsite broadcasting in partnership with the World Association for Community Broadcaster (AMARC)

The newspaper and the radio broadcast will provide balanced reportage on the conference and will carry in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and opinion-makers on the challenges of building an information society in Africa.

4.5.3 Online dissemination of press releases, media advisories, and speeches

This will include background material and presentations made by ECA staff during the Conference as well as online dissemination of the conference newspaper and the radio broadcasts.

Further, the media/outreach activity will serve as a capacity-building exercise for the 24 print and radio journalists ECA has supported through its work in African Media and Information Society development. Through this activity, the journalists will gain extensive experience in in-depth analysis and reporting on ICT-4D issues.

5. Role of Executive Secretary as Leader of ECA Delegation

Given the enormous amount of work undertaken by ECA in preparing Africa for WSIS phases 1 and 2, and given the its work programme on building an Information Society in Africa through the AISI, the Executive Secretary in Tunis will:

5.1 Represent ECA on key high-level panels and sessions

This is to showcase the work of the Commission and its achievements to date as well as to provide solutions to some of the challenges that the continent faces in its Information Society initiative. Below is a table that provides the ES with the various panels that he will be involved in. Most of these topics relate to areas in which ECA has experience as well as activities on the ground. Other panels will involve launching ceremonies for ECA and its partners aimed at follow-up to Tunis. An example is a launch programme between ECA, Industry Canada and the International Trade Centre (ITC) on a programme for e-Trade activities in Member States. Below is a table highlighting the key sessions where the Executive Secretary will speak.

Date & Time	Venue	Activity	Organizer(s)	Nature of involvement
15/11/ 1700-1900	GKP Pavillion	AISI/GKP/SDC Media Awards ceremony	ECA, SDC, GKP	Present Award
16/11/ 0900-1000	Le Kram	AU-ECA Discussion on Regional Plan of Action	AU, ECA	Opening Remarks ECA ES
16/11/ 1000-1100	Le Kram	ePOL-NET	ECA, Canada, ITC	Opening Remarks: ECA Executive Secretary on new e-Trade Programme for Africa
16/11/ 1300-1500	Le Kram	UN Regional Commissions Round Table 1	RCs, UNCTAD, UN-ICT TF	ECA ES is Panelist with other RC ES Chairperson: H.E. Paul Kagame, President, Republic of Rwanda Moderator: Mr. Talal Abu-Ghazaleh, UN ICT Task Force
16/11/ 1500-1700	Le Kram	UN Regional Commissions Round Table 2	RCs, UNCTAD, UN-ICT TF	-
16/11/ 1700-1900	Le Kram	Partnership announcement	AU, ECA, Digital Solidarity Fund, Canada, SDC, etc.	ECA ES makes speech
17/11/ 1200-1300	Plenary	Statements by Head of delegations	WSIS	ECA ES makes speech
17/11/	Side Event	GKP Panel on " Financing Knowledge in Africa"	GKP	ECA ES Is Panelist with AU, NEPAD, ADB and SDC (Chair)

5.2 ICT Ambassador for ECA and Africa

This includes signaling key messages on Africa and the Information Society, based on ECA's work programme, especially as it concerns the Information Economy and the need to form a united front in order to finance the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy.

5.3Networking

Consolidate ECA's current partnership activities and consider possible new initiatives that may come out of Tunis. In particular the ES is encouraged to network with: 1) ECA partners, both existing and potential; b) Network with other Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions; c) Promote AU-ECA partnership; d) Solidify partnerships with other UN agencies.

5.4 Consulting with African Leaders

This includes bilateral meetings with African leaders, particularly those whose national e-strategies ECA supports, and to solicit their views on how ECA could help in implementing the Tunis Action Plan.

(Footnotes)

[1] (Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cap Verde, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Ethiopia, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda)