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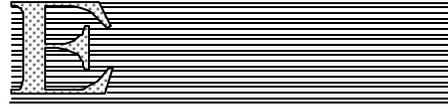
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Second Meeting of the Fifth African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)
On the African Information Society Initiative (AISI)

Report of the Retreat

**Fifth African Technical advisory
Committee (ATAC-5)**

Maputo, Mozambique
30–31 May 2007

Table of contents

Page

Annexes

Annex I : Agenda
Annex II: List of Participants
Annex III: Relationship between 'ICT' and 'S&T'

Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
AAW	APC-Africa-Women
ACSIS	African Civil Society Network in the Information Society
ACS	African Centre for Statistics
AFREF	African Geodetic Reference Frame
AHI	Africa Health Infoway
AISI	African Information Society Initiative
AMCOST	African Union Ministerial Council on S&T
ANSTI	African Network of Scientific and Technological Institutions
APC	Association for Progressive Communications
ARICEA	Association of Regulators of Information and Communication for Eastern and Southern Africa
ARN	Academia Research Network
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
ATAC	African Technical Advisory Committee
AUC	African Union Commission
AWICH	African Water Resources Clearinghouse
AYIN	African Youth ICT4D Network
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CEMAC	Central African Monetary and Economic Community
CEPRC	Canadian e-Policy Resource Centre
CODI	Committee on Development Information,
CODIST	Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CONGO	Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations
CPA	Consolidated Plan of Action
CRE-CO	Constitution and Reform Education Consortium
EAC	East African Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa/UN
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
ENRAEMED	Ethiopian Natural Resources Metadata base
ePol-Net	e-Policy Resource Network
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
FEMNET	African Women's Development and Communication Network
GAID	Global Alliance for ICT and Development
GIS	Geo-information Systems
GKM	Global Knowledge Manager
GKP	Global Knowledge Partnership
GNSS	Global Navigation Satellite Systems

GPS	Global Positioning System
GTZ	(German Technical Assistance)
ICT	Information and communication technology
ICT4D	ICT for Development
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGF	International Governance Forum
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
ILO	International Labour Organization/UN
IPR	International Property Rights
ISTD	ICTs and Science and Technology/ECA
ITCA	Information Technology Centre for Africa
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IXP	International Exchange Points
KLIS	Knowledge, Libraries and Information Services for Development/ CODIST.
MAFA	Mapping Africa for Africa programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MTSP	Medium-term Strategic Plan
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NAFGIM	National Framework for Geographic Information Management
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFP	NGO Policy Forum
NICI	National Information and Communication Infrastructure (Plan)
NSO	National Statistical Office
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSS	Open Source Software
PDCT-AC	Plan Directeur Consensuel de Transport en Afrique Centrale (Master Plan for Transport in Central Africa)
PICTA	Partnership for ICT in Africa
PPP	Public Private Partnership
R&D	Research and Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIMS	Students' Information Management
S&T	Science and Technology
SCAN-ICT	IDRC/ECA/EU/NORAD Project
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SMART	Sustainable Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Transformation
SRO/CA	ECA Subregional Office for Central Africa
SRO/NA	ECA Subregional Office for Central Africa
StatCOM-Africa	Committee on Statistics
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
TIDB	Transport Infrastructure Database
TIGA	Technology in Government in Africa
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNGIWG	United Nations Geographic Information Working Group
UNEP	United nations Development Programme to pilot an innovative spatial data
UNGIS	United Nations Group on the Information Society
UNSDI	United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure
WHO	World Health Organization/UN
WOUGNET	Women of Uganda Network
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

INTRODUCTION

In May 1996, the ECA Conference of Ministers adopted the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). In resolution 812 (XXXI) adopting the Initiative, the Conference of Ministers (CoM) mandated ECA to institute an African Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) made up of African experts in all aspects of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the Information Society to provide advice on the implementation of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI). ATAC members were also expected to play an advocacy role, identifying best ICT practices, and assisting ECA to mobilize resources for its work programme.

Since 1997, five committees have been established (ATAC-I, II, III, IV and V). ATAC-V held its first meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 12-14 December 2006. The meeting recommended that a retreat be organized to further discuss the programme of work of the repositioned DISD into the ICT and Science & Technology Division (ISTD) of ECA in order to provide appropriate advice on implementation. Accordingly, a retreat was organized in Maputo, Mozambique 30-31 May 2007 back to back with the e-Government and Gender workshop organized by ECA and Industry Canada.

1.   Session I – Opening Session: Welcoming and introductory remarks

In her opening remarks, Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD introduced and welcomed the Hon. Minister of Science and Technology, Mr. Venancio Massingue and thanked him for according his time to grace the opening. She advised participants that the presence of the Hon. Minister at the meeting was significant given that he had been the Chairman of the first ATAC.

The retreat, being held on the 10th anniversary of AISI, provided an ideal opportunity to reflect on the future of the initiative. The Director briefed participants on the ECA repositioning exercise that had resulted in the transformation of the former Development Information Services Division (DISD) to ISTD. Although, "Harnessing information for development" remained the overarching mandate for ISTD, the focus also encompassed the new orientation in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).

She highlighted the important role that ATAC members would play in assisting ECA to realize its new work programme and business plan and advised that one of the major objectives of the meeting would be that of soliciting advice on programme focus areas in light of the reorganization. In this regard, the discussions of the meeting should focus on mapping out the implications of ISTD and on examining the work programme.

The Director proceeded to introduce the ATAC members attending the retreat to the Hon. Minister:

- Prof. Clement Dzidonou - Chairperson
- Ms. Olive Chikankheni - Vice-chairperson
- Dr. Ahmed Hussien - Rapporteur
- Ms. Opportune Santos
- Mr. Ebrima Jobe
- Mr. Mzwandile R. Mabuza
- Mr. Moses Bayingana

Apologies had been received from Mr. Abdoulaye Ndiaye (Senegal), Dr. Nagwa El Shenawy (Egypt) and Ms. Natalie Sunker (South Africa).

The list of participants and their addresses is attached in Annex 2.

In his opening remarks, the Hon. Minister welcomed participants to the meeting and congratulated ISTD for its sterling work in the policy development area and ATAC for its continued important role as an independent vehicle for programme validation. He stressed that the destiny of Africa lay in the hands of Africans themselves and that self-belief was key to ensuring the successful delivery of set goals.

The Hon. Minister advised that STI heralded development with ICT as an enabling technology, catalyzing new dynamics to the development of all the other areas. In Mozambique, Science and Technology (S&T) was regarded as a cross-cutting element that was relevant for all sectors.

The challenges in the process were identified as human resource development and financing. This called for prioritization of projects with a high impact. The Hon Minister pledged his support to the Division and urged the meeting to continue its good work in delivering tangible results towards Africa's development.

2.   Adoption of Agenda

The provisional agenda was adopted with modifications and is presented in Annex 1.

3.   Session II – Setting the Scene: From DISD to ISTD – Mapping-out the implications of the reorganization of ECA on the Division's mandate and programmes including AISI in the post-reform ECA:

Prof. C. Dzidonu, Ghana, Chairperson of ATAC

In his presentation, Prof. C. Dzidonu explained the background and how the activities of the former DISD had been transformed into the new ISTD that now manages the functional areas of ICT, S&T and Geoinformation. To chart a way forward, it was therefore important to establish whether (a) these functional areas were independent but grouped under the same Division for administrative reasons or (b) they are functionally fused areas. The ATAC Chairperson made reference to the aim of ECA for setting up the new Division, which was to bring science-related activities together in one cluster and promote synergies among the various sections. Further, the Chairman asked whether the Division's mandate has changed fundamentally or marginally as a result of introducing the new functional areas.

The presentation touched on five scenarios (illustrated in Annex 3) representing the possible relationship between ICTs on one hand and S&T on the other. This served as a basis for deliberations leading to the identification of the most viable links bearing in mind the Division's work towards its subprogramme mandate: "Harnessing information for development". The five scenarios reflected the links between ICT and S&T thus:

A: 'ICT' and 'S&T' are not linked – they are separate entities

2

B: 'ICT' and 'S&T' can co-exist side-by-side
C: 'S&T' is part of 'ICT'
D: 'ICT' is part of 'S&T"
E: The 'T' in 'S&T' is part of 'ICT' – meaning all technology is ICT
F: 'ICT' is part of the 'T' in 'S&T' – meaning ICTs are technologies and there are   some technologies which are not ICTs. In other words, the 'T' in 'S&T' consist of ICTs and non-ICTs as well.

The presentation highlighted the Division's activities, which were the basis for mapping the activities in the constituent sections. In analysing the new functions, it was prudent to determine whether the core activities of the Division were not expected to change that much or whether the Division would continue to discharge its roles and carry out its core activities in the ICT and the S&T related Geo areas but extend these to support S&T – related undertakings (policy formulation, implementation, stakeholder meetings, studies, etc.).

In the discussions which ensued, the members were advised that the mandate of the Division had not changed in terms of Subprogramme 4 and that the work on policy formulation would now encompass ICT, Geoinformation and S&T i.e. development of STI policies. An advisory body to cater for S&T would likely be established on the same lines as ATAC.

On the issue of whether the Division's mandate had changed fundamentally or marginally, the meeting was advised that the changes were marginal as they did not impact on the prescribed programme of work. It was generally agreed that S&T was cross-cutting and within the ECA, some components were housed in other Divisions. This therefore called for prioritization and focus on elements that would add value and have a significant impact on harnessing of information for development to fulfill this marginally extended mandate.

The meeting concurred that whilst it was important to define the mandate of the Division clearly, it was prudent to be mindful of what was happening in African countries on the demand side, that is, the reality on the ground. Generally, on the demand side, a S&T Policy and also a National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) existed as separate entities. Would countries require a separate or integrated ICT/S&T policy?

The conclusion of the discussions was a proposal to adopt option F of the five-presented scenarios of the ICT, S&T relationship. This proposal assumed fused functional areas (ICT/S&T) and the unbundling of S&T into: 'science' & 'technology' clusters. By so doing, ICTs could be considered as part of the 'technology' cluster. (re: Scenario F) focusing on the technology component of S&T (Option F). The rationale was that Science could exist without technology but there was no technology which was not science-based.

4. Session III – The ISTD Work Process, Procedures and Work Programme

A. Presentation on the Elements and the Action Points of ISTD Strategic Plan
Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD

In her presentation, the Director of ISTD highlighted the S&T challenges for Africa. She focused on the unattractive working conditions prompting brain drain, lack of physical infrastructure and limited access to ICTs, limited capacities to develop, adapt and exploit scientific and technological solutions, limited knowledge and expertise on the role that Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) systems could play in fostering innovation, knowledge diffusion and competition, and limited resources to create viable and competitive physical/virtual networks of excellence between African / International institutions of higher education and STI institutions. She further advised on research, research and development (R&D) expenditure and activities on the continent citing examples from various African countries.

In discussing the S&T mandate of the United Nations system, she cited General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/204 on the important role of science, technology and innovation in enhancing economic well-being. She further informed the meeting that S&T formed the basis for the Knowledge Economy and as such, STI was singled out in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) processes, as well as in the outcome document of the Millennium Summit.

She further dwelt on the role of the new subprogramme in the repositioning of ECA, the initiatives to support programme implementation and the means for delivering Work Programme 2008-2009 on ICT and Science and Technology through three separate programme elements (ICT, Geoinformation and S&T), with cross-cutting activities. In this context, the Director underlined the delivery mechanisms and expected results.

She advised that ISTD was part of the internal change management process of the entire Commission and that it was essential to create niches and comparative advantages for the new Division through strengthening information and knowledge sharing, facilitating establishment of an enabling environment for the knowledge economy, supporting economic development in member States and harnessing STI in the development process. As the ICT programme element was already viewed as one of the strengths of the Division, it was essential to find a niche for S&T without having to slow down the pace of ICT activities.

In this regard the Director put forward immediate major initiatives for S&T as establishment of an on-line discussion list with African scientists on current state of S&T on the continent, building of an African S&T Repository, launch of the Access to Scientific Knowledge (ASKIA) Initiative, convening of an African Conference on S&T and establishment of the S&T Advisory Group (STAG). She further advised that S&T was extremely broad, it was 'everything and anything' with a lot of specialists (energy, medical sciences, agriculture, etc.) but there was need to not stray far from what the Division was doing earlier. She emphasized the need for the Division to define its scope of S&T in order to fit this scope within the work of the Division as far as possible. Accordingly, she emphasized the need to review the knowledge base in Africa in terms of production of knowledge resources to promote development, S&T in promoting economic entrepreneurship, and S&T in the use of ICT.

B. **Presentation on the Outcome of CODI-V on the Work Programme of the ISTD:**
Makane Faye, Regional Adviser ISTD

In his presentation, he compared the old ECA machinery and the new one adopted by the 2007 CoM. In this context he explained a Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology (CODIST) had been created and its Terms of Reference finalized by the fifth session of the Committee on Development Information (CODI-V), which it would replace in 2008. He advised on the CODIST membership and objectives. CODIST would guide the overall programme implementation by, among other activities, strengthening the role of ECA in assisting its member States to develop their national information and communication infrastructure (NICI), geographic information technologies, integrating S&T in development programmes and strategies, and promoting exploitation and use of knowledge and information services.

On CODI-V resolutions relevant to ATAC members, the presenter put emphasis on resolutions which had a bearing on the newly created S&T programme element as follows: establishment of National CODIST Committees, follow-up of CODIST activities with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), adoption of innovation systems that would strengthen public-private partnerships (PPPs) and development of linkages among research institutions, universities and enterprises. He requested ATAC members to be fully involved in implementation of the resolutions.

In the discussions which followed the two presentations, ATAC members agreed that many of the queries from the previous day on the possible scope of activities of the new Division had been answered. They noted that ISTD was narrowing the scope of S&T by defining what S&T was and defining areas in which it would be applied. ATAC members agreed that S&T was broad, and for the work of Division to be practical, focus on specific areas was necessary, to add value to the work of the Division. They noted that ISTD was a small Division with a small budget and needed to add value to whatever new activities it would embark on. It was suggested that it should concentrate on S&T activities, projects and initiatives that were defined within a narrow scope that would ensure that the Division could deliver on its programme mandate in the area of 'Harnessing Information for Development'. The focus should be on adding value and making impact within the budgetary constraints and the programme mandate of the Division.

The meeting also suggested that in view of ISTD's comparative advantage and excellent work in ICT, the S&T activities should add value and not break the existing momentum. They further suggested that 80 per cent of ECA's ICT policy development activity should go to NICI implementation, while 20 per cent could go to the development process of new and on-going NICIs as recommended by the first meeting of ATAC-5. They requested ECA to develop a scoring card on NICI implementation in member States in order to monitor development and impact, to better advise countries on where focus should go, and how to attract partners to countries in need of support.

Participants agreed that although the mandate of the Division had been extended to include S&T, the 'bread and butter' roles, responsibilities and core activities of the Division were not expected to change much. It would continue to discharge its roles and carry out its core activities in the ICT and the Geoinformation area and extend these to support S&T-related undertakings (policy formulation, implementation, stakeholder meetings, studies etc). In this context, the meeting recommended that

S&T activities to be undertaken should be geared to actions which would have high impact on the African situation.

The meeting noted that Science covered lot of issues and was a basis for Technology, including ICT and other technologies. Hence, in order to understand the relations between ICT and S&T, it was important to unbundle the issue of S&T by dissociating the Science aspect from the Technology one and clearly underscore the intersections between ICT and S&T.

5. Session IV – ISTD in the Post-Reform Era: Concrete Programmes and Actions

Mapping out Concrete Actions and Programmes for ISTD and ATAC in the Post-Reform Era

In terms of the way forward, the meeting developed the matrix below to map out activities on ICT, Geoinformation and Science and Technology for ECA's activities in the coming years.

Mapping out Concrete Actions and Programmes for the ISTD in the Post-Reform Era			
	ICT	**GEO**	**S&T**
Policy Formulation and Implementation Support	Guidelines, templates & score cards on implementation	X	X
Resource Mobilization Support (Weight should be put to characterize intensity)	X	X	X
Capacity Development Support Services	Emphasis to be on implementation of NICI	Training of technical staff on land management	Emphasis to be on Science project management
Advocacy and Awareness Raising	X	X	X
Stakeholder Engagement & Outreach Services and Activities	Stakeholders engagement on ICT should be geared to support of implementation	To be done within the context of NICI process	Outreach on S&T to the scientific community and policymakers managing science, during online and face-to-face meetings
Engagement with Development Partners List of partners should be provided	Engagement should be in implementation	X	Conference on Science in Africa & support to implement other identified activities
Engagement with Private Sector	There is also need to engage private sector to mobilize resources on how best they can facilitate implementation. Need for models, templates and	X	Incubation process needs a series of studies on models and best practices to sensitize government. Capacity building on linking science to enterpreneurship

	guidelines on engaging local and international private sector in implementing NICI. Need to provide portfolio of implementation tools, e.g. score card, document on case studies and best practices on implementation to sensitize government and guide private sector. Implementation of the NSDI component of Geoinformation		
Organization of Forum and major initiatives	AISI, ATAC, ARAPKE, GAID, GK3, ADF, Measuring ICT for Development, UNGIS	CODIST-Geo, EIS Africa, AFREF, ATAC, UN-SDI, UNCSTD	ANSTI, Science in Africa, Science and Technology Advisory Group (STAG), ASKIA
Representation at Global/Continental level (NEPAD, RECs, AU)	X	X	X
Consensus building and Facilitation	Internet Governance Forum	X	X
Conducting Studies, Exploring Best Practices and Case Studies, and Identifying Centres of Excellence	X	X	Status of scientific research in Africa. Status of level of R&D in African universities, research institutions and industry. Study on industrial and agriculture prototype developed in African universities and African universities and research institutions.
Production and Distribution of Knowledge and Information Products	X	X	X
Policy Documents (produced by countries), Studies	On thematic and emerging issues. Guidelines and templates as described earlier to facilitate implementation		
Facilitating International Collaborative	X	X	Support research within

Initiatives			African universities through collaborative arrangements
Guidelines, Methodologies and Templates	X	X	On policy coherence and also from some of the studies which would generate models. Compendium of S&T Best Practices
Conference Proceedings, Others (NICI implementation technical briefing papers, guidelines and indicators, Outcomes of meetings and conferences)	X	X	X

While mapping the above activities for ISTD, ATAC members discussed activities that were ICT only, Geoinformation only and Science and Technology only. Following this mapping, it was noted that most of the Geoinformation activities could be undertaken in the ICT framework in term of policy and action plan, and that Geoinformation was typically an application in ICT. The cases of policy in Rwanda, Malawi and Ghana where raised, as instances where Geoinformation was fully integrated in the ICT policy. Accordingly, and in order to register a discernible impact in the delivery of advisory services, ATAC recommended that ECA should not send Geo and ICT staff separately to member States for policy advice but as one single team. In addition, countries requesting for the development of S & T policies, should be assisted by a multidisciplinary team.

6.   Session V.   Wrap up and closing:

A.   Recommendations on how best the ISTD can function to effectively deliver on its mandate and programmes in the post reform ECA

ATAC members discussed AISI vision, goals and objectives and found them more than relevant and up to date as a framework for spearheading development of the knowledge economy in Africa. They recommended its continuous use and asked the Chairperson of ATAC-5 to prepare a statement to this effect.

B.   Date and venue of next meeting, and Any Other Business (AOB)

Under Any Other Business, the meeting agreed on the following delivery schedule of ATAC-5 output:

31st May:	Meeting ends
8 June:	The first cut and the rough cut of the report to be discussed between Chair, Rapporteur and ISTD staff
12th June:	Draft report to be sent to the list for comment by ATAC members
15th June:	Draft report to be finalized by ATAC members
19th June:	Final report to be finalized by the Chairperson
22th June:	Summary and Recommendations to be finalized by the Chairperson and transmitted to the ECA Executive Secretary

C.   Closing remarks

ATAC participants individually expressed their satisfaction for the work achieved during the two days.

The Director of ISTD thanked participants for their useful contribution. She advised that she was happy to have the current selection of ATAC membership because they were very knowledgeable about the Commission's activities as NICI focal points. She commended their understanding of the work of ECA and ISTD and their willingness to share with some of their needs and constraints in terms of the work programme. She pointed out that some consultants had been working for ECA for several years or had served as members of ECA's various stakeholders networks; hence the recommendations they provided were highly relevant to ISTD work.

The Chairperson of ATAC, Prof. Clement Dzidonu, thanked all the participants for their active participation, especially in advising ISTD on implementation of its work programme for the coming years. He said all members were committed to supporting ECA in implementing the activities of the newly created Division. He agreed to prepare a summary of the outcomes for the ECA Executive Secretary.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm on 31st of May 2007.

Annex I

AGENDA

Wednesday, 30th May 2007

Session I:	**Opening Session**

14:30 – 14:50   Welcoming and introductory remarks
Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD

14:50 – 15:10   Discussion and Adoption of Agenda and Programme of Work

15:10 – 15:30   Brief Statement on the Purpose of the ATAC/ISTD Retreat
Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD

15:30 – 16:00   Plenary Discussion

16:00 – 16:30   *Coffee Break*

Session II: **Setting the Scene**

16:30 – 17:00   From DISD to ISTD: Mapping out the Implications of the Reorganization of the Division on its mandate and programmes including the AISI in the post reform ECA.
Prof. C. Dzidonu, NICI Consultant, International Institute for Information Technology (INIIT), Ghana

16:30 – 17:00   Discussion

Thursday 31st May 2007

Session III: **The ISTD Work Process, Procedure and Work Programme**

9:00 – 10:00   Presentation on the Elements and the Action Points of ISTD Strategic Plan
Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director, ISTD

10:00 – 10:30   Presentation on the Outcome of CODI V on the Work Programme of the ISTD
Makane Faye, Regional Adviser ISTD

10: 30– 10:45   **Coffee Break**
10:45 – 13:15   Plenary Discussion on the ISTD Strategy Plan and the CODI Action Lines and Work Programme

13:15 – 14:15	**Lunch Break**
Session IV:	**The ISTD in the Post-Reform Era: Concrete Programmes and Actions**
14:15 – 15:45	Mapping out Concrete Actions and Programmes for the ISTD in the Post-Reform Era Rapporteur (Based on the Session I to III Discussions)
15:45- 16:15	Plenary Discussion
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee Break
Session V:	**Closing**
16:15– 16:45	Recommendations on how best the ISTD can function to effectively deliver on its mandate and programmes in the post-reform ECA.
16:45 - 17:30	Date and venue of next meeting and AOB
17:30 – 18:00	Closing remarks

Annex II

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Annex III

Relationship Between 'ICT' and 'S&T'