Joint ECA-ITU-UNCTAD Regional Workshop on Information Society Measurements in Africa
7-9 March 2007, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
UN Conference Center (UNCC)

Organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), under the International Partnership for Measuring ICTs for Development.

1. Background

ICT statistics and indicators are crucial for formulating policies and strategies concerning ICT-driven or ICT-enabled growth, for social inclusion and cohesion, and for monitoring and evaluating ICT-related economic and social developments. They help companies take the right investment and business decisions and allow developing countries to benchmark their information economies against those of other countries, both developed and developing. They also contribute to documenting the impact of different technologies in achieving internationally agreed goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

But only few countries collect official statistics on the Information Society, and most of the available data and indicators are not internationally comparable. Some National Statistical Organizations (NSOs) have started to compile data on ICT use, but much remains to be done. Therefore, the international community has taken a number of steps to enhance the availability of comparable ICT data and indicators. An international, multi-stakeholder *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development* was launched during UNCTAD XI in June 2004. Current partners include the ITU, the OECD, UNCTAD, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the UN Regional Commissions (ECLAC, ESCWA, ESCAP, and ECA), the UN ICT Task Force, the World Bank, and EUROSTAT.

The Partnership aims at:

- 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.

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

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Geneva Plan of Action called upon all countries and regions to develop tools so as to provide statistical information on the information society, with comparable basic indicators and analysis of its key dimensions. The WSIS Tunis Agenda for the Information Society calls for periodic evaluation based on appropriate indicators and benchmarking, and using an agreed methodology, including that developed by the *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development*. It furthermore invites the international community to strengthen the ICT-related statistical capacity of developing countries.

A WSIS thematic meeting was held in Geneva in February 2005 under the umbrella of the *Partnership*, where the first set of core ICT indicators was adopted. The "*Core ICT Indicators*" publication, which presents the indicators, definitions, model questions and suggestions on data collection for developing countries, has been launched during WSIS Tunis, in November 2005, as well as the publication "*Measuring ICT: The Global Status of ICT Indicators*", which presents the results of a stocktaking of statistical measurement of ICT in all countries.

In Africa, 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 information and communication technologies (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.

The Scan-ICT project aims to assist member States in their efforts to develop their information society and economy through developing and compiling suitable Information Society/ICT4D indicators that will guide their ICT policy and plan development and implementation process. It will also monitor assess, evaluate and measure the impact of the development of the their Information Society/Information Knowledge Economy on the socio-economic well-being of their citizens, the performance of their businesses (the economy) and functioning of the public sector.

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

The Advisory Board on Statistics in Africa (ABSA) on its May 2004 meeting made this recommendation: "ECA should cooperate with the National Statistical Systems to begin the collection of statistics on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) using a harmonized framework". In addition in the repositioning of ECA, the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) was established in 2006 to undertake research, carry out studies, and provide technical assistance to improve the range and quality of data for policy analysis and decision-making. Cooperation arrangements are being put in place to enable ACS integrate ICT measurement in its activities.

2. Objectives and expected outcome

The workshop builds on the work by the *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development* and ECA's ICT Measurement project (Scan-ICT), and aims to advance the availability of comparable data on ICT in the entire African region. The event will allow representatives of NSOs, as well as representatives of ministries and regulatory agencies who are producers and/or users of ICT statistics, to discuss the need for comparable data on Information Society developments, and share best practices in ICT measurement at the regional level.

To achieve its aim, the workshop will:

- Present and discuss the list of core ICT indicators that was agreed upon at the 2005 global meeting organized by the *Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development* and presented during the WSIS Tunis, along with definitions, and data collection issues.
- Discuss a preliminary list of Core indicators for e-Government
- Address challenges related to Information Society measurements in the African region, present possible solutions to overcome these challenges and identify technical assistance needs in this area.
- Increase awareness both at the political and technical level for the need to measure information society developments and for linking the national policy agenda with the e-measurement agenda, requiring effective cooperation between policymakers and national statistical systems.

The meeting will also present the results achieved and challenges encountered in the implementation of the second phase of ECA's ICT measurement project in five countries: Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritius, and Rwanda. In addition, the preliminary results of the AISI Academia Research Network (ARN) research team currently working on Information Society indicators in Africa will be reviewed.

It is expected that the outcome of the meeting will provide practical suggestions on policies and programmes to develop and apply mechanisms for monitoring and measuring information society developments in African countries, and learn from experiences of the Scan-ICT process. This will help countries in the region produce

comparable ICT statistics and indicators for effective ICT policy making, through networks and statistical tools.

3. Participation

Representatives of the national statistical organizations responsible for ICT measurement in ECA member States are welcome to participate in this workshop, as well as representatives of Ministries and regulatory agencies who are producers and/or users of ICT statistics.

4. Financial assistance

ECA, ITU and UNCTAD will cover the cost of the participation of a limited number of experts. Requests for financing must be received not later than **13 February 2007**, and should be addressed to Mr. Afework Temtime (atemtime@uneca.org) of the ECA secretariat (see his details in section 6 below). Participants are requested to complete the attached **Registration form**, and return it to ECA by 13 February 2007 if they wish to be considered for sponsorship. No request for sponsorship would be considered beyond this date.

5. Logistics

REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION BADGES

Participants are requested to register and obtain meeting badges at the Registration Counter, located on the ground floor, UNCC, between **9:00 to 9:30** on **7 March 2007**. Participants who are not able to register on the opening day are requested to do so on subsequent days, to ensure that their names appear on the list of participants. Without registration, names of participants will not be included in the list. For identification and security reasons, all participants are requested to wear the meeting badges at all times during the meeting, at social functions and in the United Nations complex.

VENUE

The meeting will be held at the UN Conference Center (UNCC) located at the ECA compound.

VISA

All participants are requested to have a valid passport, and, if required, to obtain appropriate entry visa from the Ethiopian diplomatic or consular missions at the point of origin or en route prior to entering Ethiopia. Applications for visas should be made as soon as possible, with reference to the Regional Workshop on Information Society Measurements in Africa.

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Meeting participants are expected to arrange for their own travel and accommodation. However travel arrangements of sponsored participants will be done by institutions,

which are sponsoring their travel. ECA protocol staff will meet participants on arrival at the Bole international airport if their arrival dates and flights are known in advance.

6. Further information and contact details:

Mr. Afework Temtime
Information Officer
ICTs, Science and Technology Division (ISTD)
Economic Commission for Africa
P. O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 11 5445320
Fax: 251 11 5510512
E-mail: atemtime@uneca.org

Ms. Elizabeth Getachew
Administrative Assistant
ICTs, Science and Technology Division (ISTD)
Economic Commission for Africa
P. O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 11 5445320
Fax: 251 11 5510512
E-mail: egetachew@uneca.org

Mr. Makane Faye
Senior Regional Adviser
ICTs, Science and Technology Division (ISTD)
Economic Commission for Africa
P. O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: 251 11 5445320
Fax: 251 11 5510512
E-mail: mfaye@uneca.org