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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on their efforts in  
2013 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

Submission by

**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa**

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

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# United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

## Implementing the WSIS outcomes in Africa - Tunis + 7

December 2013

### 1. Executive summary

Although the magnitude of its contribution is still unknown, a widely held view is that information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been one of the main drivers of recent and consistent improvements in economic, social and governance outcomes in Africa. As Africa .It is also believed that ICTs will play an important role in the renewed efforts to radically transform African economies and in the achievement of the African Union's Agenda 2063. In 2013, considerable improvements have been achieved in Africa with respect to certain aspects of ICT – including the spread of mobile telephony, broadband connectivity and an increasing number of national ICT strategies as well as regional initiatives. According to a recent report by the McKinsey Global Institute<sup>1</sup>, as of 2013, Africa has an estimated 63% mobile penetration and 16% Internet access rate. The mobile broadband penetration has increased from 2% in 2010 to 11% in 2013. The international bandwidth, which was of 25 terabytes (TB) in 2012, should exceed 50 TB in 2014.

The same report estimates that Internet represents 1.1 per cent of GDP, against 1.9 per cent in emerging countries and 3.7 per cent in developed countries. The contribution of the Internet to the annual GDP of Africa could go to \$18 billion today to \$300 billion in 2025. Social media has recently recorded a spectacular growth on the continent. Facebook has over 17 million subscribers. In comparison, more than 15% of African Internet users use this platform, against 11% of Asian Internet users.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) continues to support its member States in the implementation of the Tunis Agenda and to improve their capacity to design and implement policies and programmes to promote ICT to better leverage it to address the continent's development challenges and priorities. Furthermore, ECA continues to work very closely with the African Union Commission (AUC) and Africa's Regional Economic Communities in various areas, including the articulation and development of the African Convention on Cyber Security, harmonization of cyber-legislation, and e-Government indicators etc. ECA also hosts the Secretariat of the African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) and along with partners and the Government of Kenya organized the second AfIGF in Nairobi in September 2013.

Similarly, the African Union Commission and its regional economic communities continue to drive policies at the continental and regional levels that directly contribute to progress on the WSIS action lines. A good example of the AUC's efforts in this regard, in addition to the draft Africa Cyber Convention is the ICT week. African countries are not actively participating in the setting of standard on many of the WSIS Action lines, for example, e-health due to capacity constraints and need to be encouraged to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, 2013, "Lions go digital: The Internet's transformative potential in Africa"

## **2. Analytical overview**

This document focuses on the key activities in relation to ECA's direct involvement and participation with other stakeholders in selected follow-up activities and WSIS action lines.

### **2.1 Development and implementation of ICT Policies, Plans and Strategies**

In response to implementing the WSIS Action Line C6 – Enabling environment, ECA has provided policy support through technical assistance, capacity building as well as awareness raising activities to four countries in 2013. With ECA's support, Guinea reviewed its “e- Guinea national Strategy” and recently adopted it; - Tanzania completed the review of its national ICT4D strategy; - Seychelles developed its national cyber security framework and model law and Zimbabwe completed the review of its national ICT policy and plan.

At the sub-regional level, ECA and the African Union Commission (AUC) coordinated the development of a regional convention on cyber legislation based on the continent's needs. The draft convention adheres to international legal and regulatory requirements on electronic transactions, cyber security, and personal data protection. The guidelines and the Convention have been reviewed by each of the five sub-regions of the continent and is scheduled to be adopted by African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government (AU Summit) in 2014.

### **2.2 Innovative policies, programmes and projects**

In response to implementing the WSIS Action Line C7 – ICT applications and C5 – Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, ECA has undertaken a number of innovative policies, programmes and projects. Some of these include:

- ***e-commerce facilitation for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME):***

ECA implemented a project on e-commerce facilitation for SMEs with the aim of enhancing the implementation of ECA-supported ICT policies and plans in Ethiopia and The Gambia including enhancing SME's access to national and regional markets. Implemented in two phases, it undertook an e-commerce readiness assessment on phase 1 of the project which identified critical issues for the growth of e-commerce in both countries. In its second phase, the project developed an e-commerce platform which will be piloted in by number of selected SMEs in both countries.

- ***Cloud computing<sup>2</sup>***

ECA, in collaboration with UNCTAD organized a seminar on “cloud computing and e-government in Africa” on 2 and 3 December 2013. The purpose of the Seminar was to introduce African policy members to cloud computing and to discuss the legal and trans-boundary implications of this new tool.

- ***Open Government Data***

ECA has just launched a study on Open Government Data (OGD) in Africa. It is expected that the outcome of this study will be the development of Guidelines on Open Government Data for consideration and adoption by African governments.

- ***Tele-innovation centres***

Requested by the government of Ghana and Rwanda, ECA has been working in transforming the existing community ICT access points into tele-innovation centres. The aim is to transform community ICT access points into instruments of economic and social change with a view to evolving the management and ownership structures of the centres beyond access points. The centres would therefore be able to introduce ICT-enabled development services, thereby providing among others small business support to low income communities, agricultural support services, e-government and e-health services, etc. To this effect, three main activities were undertaken, namely, a baseline study to determine the nature and characteristics including the management and ownership of the telecentres; the development of strategic business plan for transforming telecentres into tele-innovation centres; and development of a manual or toolkit.

- ***Promoting and creating awareness on cyber security issues in Africa***

With the evolution of the Internet, the promotion of cyber security and the protection of essential information infrastructure are fundamental to the security of every country. In this context, ECA has , during the period under review, undertaken several initiatives to support member States to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

- In collaboration with Africa Union Commission (AUC), ECA organized a regional consultation on cyber Security in Africa from 23-24 September 2013 in Nairobi., Kenya. This regional consultation aims to assess the development of cyber laws in the continent and to enact comprehensive legal frameworks to combat cyber crime and enhance cyber security in the continent during the two days, over 50 experts in cyber security and cyber legislation from member States as well as Regional Economic Communities (RECs), legislative bodies, courts, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs.), private sector, academia and civil society recognize that all regions must harmonize regional efforts to come up with one harmonized regulation and principle for Africa and agreed on the consensus on the way forward in particularly in the emerging issues.

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<sup>2</sup> This event is included in this report because it would have occurred by the time the Secretary-General submits his report to the Commission in early 2014.

- In collaboration with the SADC Secretariat, the ECA Sub Regional Office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA) organised the SADC Cyber Security Awareness Workshop from 4 – 6 November 2013, in Lusaka, Zambia. The objective of this workshop was to increase the awareness on cyber security, cybercrime and develop a culture of cyber security across the sub-region. The workshop also discussed the way forward on cyber security, Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), and recommended the need for the establishment of CERTs at the regional level as well as CERT and PKI at the national level.
- In the post Snowden-era and in the context of increased terrorist actions on the continent, internet governance has become a central cyber-security issue. Many countries are beginning to strengthen and tighten their internal surveillance laws. This raises tension between national security and individual freedoms and liberties, including the right to face. The debate on this matter is just beginning on the continent and its outcome will have enormous implications.
- *Measuring the information society development*

In the area of measuring and evaluating the Information Society, the Scan-ICT project is currently under implementation in Namibia in collaboration with that country's Ministry of ICT (MICT). Following its work in 2012 on developing a framework for a set of globally comparative e-government core indicators as a member of the international Partnership for Measuring ICT for Development, ECA has prepared a manual on the use of the set of 7 e-Government indicators. Training was organized on the manual from 16 – 18 April 2013 in Algiers, Algeria. Furthermore, an assessment study on ICT policy implementation has been completed in five selected countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gambia, Morocco and Mozambique). Country reports as well as a synthesis report comparing the outcomes from the national surveys were prepared.

- *Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology (CODIST) and Science with Africa*

ECA organized in March 2013 the CODIST and Science with Africa to provide for a for capacity building through knowledge sharing and experience sharing on challenges and best practices. With respect to e-learning and and e-science, ECA has set up the "Access to Scientific and Socio-economic Knowledge in Africa" (ASKIA) to serve as a framework for bringing together scientific and socio-economic knowledge on Africa. The purpose of ASKIA is to strengthen knowledge discovery in Africa

### **2.3 Second African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF)**

In response to implementing the WSIS Action Line C11 – International and regional cooperation, and WSIS theme on Internet Governance Forum (IGF), ECA, in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), and the Government of Kenya through its Ministry of Communication, has organized from 23 – 26 September 2013, the 2nd African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) (<http://afigf.uneca.org/>) under the general theme of "Building Bridges – Enhancing Multi-stakeholder Cooperation for Growth and Sustainable Development", in accordance with the global Internet Governance Forum. Supported by ECA and African Union Commission (AUC), the African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) aims to be a platform for an inclusive multilateral, multi-stakeholder and multilingual discussion on issues pertinent to the Internet in Africa in general and Internet Governance issues in particular. The event drew participants from across the continent to define Africa's collective

common position on Internet Governance and share best practices based on the results of national and sub-regional consultations. The outcomes of the AfIGF were very useful in shaping the African IG agenda and Africa's participation in the global IGF in Bali.

### **3. Trends and Experiences in Implementing the WSIS at National and Regional level**

Many African countries have taken the right steps and mainstreamed ICTs in their key policy and strategic frameworks. This is evident in the increase in the number of countries with national ICT policy from 27 in 2005 to 48 by end of 2011. Further, although the evidence is not firm, it is safe to stipulate that Africa is making tremendous effort in bridging the digital divide not only with respect to socio-economic strata but also with respect to geography. Progress on this score has been immensely facilitated by the wide availability of smart phones. .

However, challenges remain. The first is capacity development in all aspects of the WSIS process outcomes. The second is access. Inadequate bandwidth remains a problem especially in countries where the ICT sector, including mobile telephony, is dominated by government. Efforts by the private sector to provide broadband access on the continent remain insufficient and require government support. Rising incidence and prevalence of cyber crime and cyber-facilitated crime such as terrorism represent another challenge and no single country has the capacity to single-handedly successfully tackle this menace.

Overall, based on the data available, the trend on the continent is in the direction of speeded up implementation of the WSIS outcomes in all countries. There is urgency as evidenced by the recent ICT Summit in Rwanda in October 2013, by the decisions of countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt and Algeria to expand broadband access; and by the increasing reliance on e-government tools in many countries. With respect to e-health, many countries on the continent have accepted the possibilities that this presents for addressing the myriad of health challenges that they face. South Africa leads the way. In 2012, it began to implement its 2012-2016 e-Health strategy which presents a model that countries in the region can emulate.

In conclusion, progress on the African continent on the WSIS outcome indicators remains gradual but very encouraging. Progress could be faster if the financing, infrastructure and capacity constraints that many countries on the continent face can be attenuated. Enhanced international and regional cooperation is needed to not only fill the financing constraint (especially with respect to broadband insofar as progress on ICT-applications is constrained by limited bandwidth), the infrastructure gap but to also deal with rising cyber-crime and terrorist acts that are cyber-facilitated.