

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

Support to AU/NEPAD (Period of July 2009 to June 2010)

Introduction

ITU actively participated in the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) of UN agencies working on Africa towards accelerating the implementation of NEPAD and UN-AU cooperation programme. The ITU professionals actively participate in the cluster dealing with infrastructure and ICT, and provided professional advice in the meetings.

Finally, ITU is involved in the UN System Delivering as One project. In the African pilot countries, the Union identifies projects and activities which can be implemented jointly, increasing synergy in the planning and implementation processes.

Capacity-building activities

ITU continued to strengthen human and organizational capacity in Africa in order to facilitate the adaptation to an ever-changing telecommunications and ICT environment. Policy makers and regulators, corporate executives and senior managers of telecommunication operators are the priority target of ITU's training and human resource development efforts.

ITU has organized regional forums on human capacity development. The latest one has been held in Kampala in July 2009. ITU continued to support the regional high level training centre called "Centre of Excellence". The Centre offers advance training to decision-makers and senior executives in policy, regulation, management and network architecture. In addition the Centre serves as regional focal point for professional development, research and information. A Centre of Excellence for Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries is also being established with funding from ITU and governments of Spain and Portugal.

In the region, ITU strengthened the Internet Training Centres (ITC) Initiative, intended to help developing countries meet their human resource requirements for skilled Internet and "new economy" professionals through the establishment of Internet and IP-related training programmes in training and/or educational institutions.

ITU has funded the establishment of an African network of excellence to link premier training providers on the continent. This will assist with resource sharing in terms of facilities, expertise and training materials among institutions.

Connect Africa Initiative

To mobilize resources and forge partnerships, ITU organized on 29-30 October 2007 the Connect Africa Summit in Kigali, Rwanda.

Participants in the Connect Africa Summit examined key success factors for ICT investment and development and identified areas for collaboration:

The Connect Africa Summit decided to bring forward ICT connectivity goals for 2012 to enable the achievement of the broader Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

Up to 55 billion USD was committed to interconnect all African capitals and major cities with ICT broadband infrastructure and strengthen connectivity to the rest of the world by 2012.

By 2015, broadband and ICT services will be extended to all African villages. The Summit also sets out to meet the World Summit on the Information Society goals for capacity building, establishing an enabling environment for investment, and e-government services.

The role of governments in setting a level playing field for industry to compete was highlighted. The decision to ensure harmonization of the regulatory framework to stimulate cross-border integration in large-scale projects was also made. Capacity building was identified as one key area for cooperation among all stakeholders.

In response to the commitments from the Summit, ITU has initiated a number of projects with partners. These projects include:

Harmonization of ICT Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa (or HIPSSA)

With the support of the European Union (EU), ITU is conducting work on harmonizing policy and regulations for information and communication technologies (ICT) across Sub-Saharan Africa. This ITU-EU project, estimated at 6 million USD, is known as Harmonization of ICT Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa (or HIPSSA). ITU via the HIPSSA project provided direct support to the AU and NEPAD in the assessment of the current level of harmonization of ICT/telecommunications in the different African regional organizations by commissioning three studies:

- 1) A comprehensive review of all regional ICT regulatory harmonization initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa
- 2) A review of regional harmonization initiatives' legal bases, legal instruments and enforcement mechanisms
- 3) A comparative study based on the analytical orientations identified below including summary tables and a gap analysis

These studies were completed in the end of year 2009 and the report published in January 2010.

To further strengthen ICT regulatory frameworks in the continent, ITU assisted Benin and Sierra Leone to transpose ECOWAS Supplementary Acts for ICT into their national legislation and trained staff from ICT sectors in both countries through a Cooperation Agreement with Germany's GTZ. Senegal and Burkina Faso received similar support through a Cooperation Agreement between ITU and France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ITU also assisted Niger in transposing the ECOWAS Supplementary Acts into their national legislation, and Mali in updating the regulatory framework on radio and TV broadcasting. The process will be followed by a regional workshop in migration from analogue to digital TV for francophone broadcasters in preparation for 2010.

Infrastructure development projects

ITU's aims are to:

- Insist in bridging the digital divide by facilitating the development of fully interconnected and interoperable networks to promote global connectivity
- Give priority to the development of infrastructure in least-served countries and areas
- Assist developing countries in migrating towards new-generation technologies and to lower their cost of access
- Facilitate the creation of regional Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) as a measure of lowering the Internet high tariffs still prevailing in most of the African countries

In that respect a number of projects have been launched:

- ITU in partnership with Craig and Susan McCaw Foundation is implementing a 6.4 million USD wireless broad infrastructure project.
- In partnership with UPU and the government of South Africa, ITU has developed rural telecommunications, ICT services and entrepreneurship in South Africa.
- ITU has pursued the “multipurpose community telecentre” projects for marginalized communities. Three centres for persons with disabilities in Ethiopia, Mali and Burkina Faso have been established.
- ITU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have facilitated collaboration between Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone to connect their national backbone infrastructure to submarine fibre-optic cables.
- ITU and the African Development Bank (AfDB) jointly carried out a pre-investment gap analysis in the region, with AfDB allocating 500,000 USD for the East Africa Community Broadband Information Infrastructure (EAC-BIN) and 490,000 USD for the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Information Infrastructure (or SRII) backhaul system to the submarine cable. Reports for the gap analysis in the EAC and SADC countries have been finalized.
- ITU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) are jointly implementing an e-employment project in Congo.
- ITU with the Spanish government are jointly implementing an Internet Exchange Point in Equatorial Guinea and Cape Verde.