

United Nations  Nations Unies

**Division for the Advancement of Women
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

**In collaboration with the
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP TO ESTABLISH THE AFRICAN E-NETWORK FOR
NATIONAL MACHINERIES AND ITS SUPPORT MECHANISMS**

FINAL REPORT

Addis Ababa
5-8 December 2006

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1. BACKGROUND

1. A regional workshop to establish the African e-network for national machineries and its support mechanisms was organized, in collaboration with the African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 5-8 December 2006.
2. The workshop followed a series of sub-regional and regional capacity-building activities undertaken in 2004 and 2005 as part of a project to strengthen the capacity of national machineries through the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT).
3. To date, the project has enhanced the capacity of national machineries in Africa to use and benefit from ICT; increased awareness of, and involvement in, ICT policy processes at national level; further developed strategies for using ICT for advocacy, information sharing and as an overall resource for gender equality work; facilitated the sharing of good practices in using ICT for the achievement of gender equality; and, strengthened understanding of and commitment to networking among national machineries and sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Objective of the regional workshop

4. The primary objective of the regional workshop was to establish the regional e-network for national machineries, which had been discussed at previous sub-regional workshops and regional meeting. The e-network will serve as an important tool to enhance knowledge management and communication strategies, as well as strengthen networking between national machineries at the sub-regional and regional levels. It will enhance the capacity of national machineries to utilize ICT to better accomplish their roles as advocates and catalysts for the achievement of gender equality. In particular, it will provide enhanced potential for the sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices between national machineries.

Participation

5. A total of 58 participants attended the regional workshop (see Annex 3), including:
 - ▶ Representatives from Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe;
 - ▶ Two representatives of women's networks in Africa;
 - ▶ A consultant from the World Bank;
 - ▶ A national consultant (web-designer);
 - ▶ A representative of INSTRAW;
 - ▶ Ten staff members from the Economic Commission for Africa and four gender focal points from ECA sub-regional offices; and
 - ▶ Two staff members from the Division for the Advancement of Women.

Documentation

6. The documentation of the workshop consisted of:
 - ▶ Aide-memoire;

- ▶ Programme of work;
- ▶ Participant list;
- ▶ Introduction to the e-network for national machineries in Africa;
- ▶ Working group discussion guides; and
- ▶ Presentation handouts.

7. This report and all documentation relating to the workshop are available online at the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women:

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/TechnicalCooperation/tcprog_natmach_bg.htm#enetwork

Methodology

8. The four-day workshop was convened in plenary as well as in working groups (see Annex 2). The plenary sessions were conducted in English with interpretation to French. Separate working groups were conducted in English and French.

Opening session

9. The workshop opened with introductory statements by the Economic Commission for Africa and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

10. Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Officer-in-Charge of the African Centre for Gender and Social Development of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), welcomed the participants to Addis Ababa and emphasized the timeliness of this opportunity to make new ICT an important and practical tool to facilitate networking among national machineries and share information and knowledge. She emphasized that while ICT have become crucial in facilitating partnerships, it is up to each individual to fill it with content and make it a useful tool.

11. Ms. Joanna Skinner delivered an introductory statement on behalf of Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW). In her statement, Ms. Hannan gave an overview of the project and noted the leading role of national machineries in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women at the national level. She emphasized how ICT could be a powerful strategic tool for promoting the empowerment of women through enhancing communication and networking. She noted that the e-network should be seen as part of broader communication strategies within national machineries, which aim to increase access to and use of relevant information by national machineries, as well as strengthen their outreach to their constituencies at all levels by increasing dissemination of important information to the general public, line ministries, civil society, academia, donors and other important stakeholders in the efforts to promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

2. EVALUATION OF PAST WORKSHOPS, SUBSEQUENT ACTIVITIES AND CURRENT ICT CAPACITIES: RESULTS OF A QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO NATIONAL MACHINERIES PRIOR TO THE WORKSHOP

12. In preparation for the workshop, questionnaires were sent to national machineries in August 2006 to enable the organizers to evaluate past workshops, subsequent activities and current ICT capacity. By the first week of December 2006, 18 of 53 national machineries had sent their responses. Results

of the questionnaire were presented to the participants to review the status of ICT in national machineries.

13. Responses showed that many of the 18 national machineries had developed draft action plans or were in the process of doing so. National machineries also reported using ICT as a tool in their work to research, collect and share information, to provide online services for advocacy, and to communicate with relevant stakeholders. Few of the national machineries responding to the questionnaire had developed and implemented ICT strategies and action plans to improve communication and dissemination of information to relevant stakeholders.

14. Several of the 18 national machineries noted they have been involved in national ICT policy processes, including through highlighting gender dimensions of ICT in national action plans and promoting gender mainstreaming in ICT strategies. However, only a few national machineries had been involved in regional ICT policy processes and most national machineries had not participated in international policy processes on ICT. Respondents highlighted a number of challenges in becoming involved in policy processes, including a lack of gender sensitivity in national ICT policies, where such policies exist; inadequate understanding of the linkages between gender equality and ICT by various stakeholders, including those promoting gender equality and development; and, a lack of relevant sex-disaggregated data.

15. While most national machineries responding to the questionnaire noted the need for external support (see Box 1), some noted that successes had already been made in establishing internal and external partnerships and receiving budgetary allocations and funding support, including for computer equipment and training. External partners included UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA, African Development Bank as well as donor countries. During the workshop, the ECA sub-regional gender focal points also noted their keen interest to support national machineries in their region to acquire ICT equipment.

Box 1: National machineries noted the need for external support for:

- Training and building staff capacity, as well as technical support;
- Provision of more ICT equipment and resources;
- Financial support;
- Facilitating national, regional and international networking;
- Improving internet connectivity and regulating internet connection fees.

16. Many national machineries reported that access to ICT supported their networking, but noted that limited or no internet connection within the national machineries was a major challenge. Some national machineries reported that they networked with civil society organizations but not specifically on ICT-related issues. Some countries reported occasional networking with other national machineries in their sub-region through exchange of electronic messages and documents, and some reported networking with other government agencies.

17. The responses revealed that all national machineries had some computer equipment which staff had access to, but most national machineries reported only occasional access to the internet. 11 out of 18 national machineries reported having a website, which were mostly used for disseminating information about the national machinery. Problems with keeping websites up-to-date were also mentioned.

3. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES, NETWORKING AND THE USE OF ICT

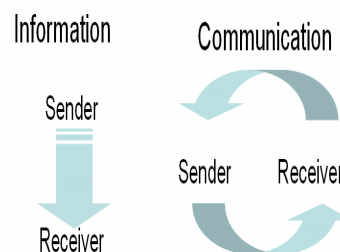
18. To ensure that discussions on the e-network took place within a broader conceptual framework on information and communication, the workshop provided participants with an introduction to knowledge management. Knowledge management is the systematic process of identifying, capturing, and transferring information and knowledge within and between organizations. It leads to greater efficiency, sharing of good practices, and equal access to knowledge across an organization, as well as many other benefits. During the workshop, communication strategies and networking were emphasized as key components of knowledge management.

Communication Strategies

19. The distinction between communication and information was emphasized (see Box 7¹). “Communication” is a two-way relationship, whereas dissemination of “information” occurs if there is no dialogue. While information is passive and unidirectional, communication is multidirectional and involves dialogue, sharing and a participatory process.

20. The key elements of a communication strategy and the importance of identifying target audiences were discussed during the plenary as well as the working groups. The key issues to consider in developing a communication strategy include (i) setting communication goals and objectives, (ii) identifying and knowing who the target audience is, (iii) determining the content/form of the message, and (iv) selecting the most appropriate media (see Box 8).

Box 7. Communication vs. information



Box 8: What matters in a communication strategy?

- WHAT FOR? Setting communication goals and objectives
- TO WHOM? Identifying and knowing the target audience
- WHAT? Determining the content/form of the message
- BY WHAT CHANNEL? Selecting the most appropriate media

21. In setting communication goals and objectives, it is essential that national machineries have specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time bound objectives to be able to evaluate progress and results. For national machineries, communication strategies play a crucial role in knowledge management and are useful in planning and decision-making processes. It was also emphasized that communication strategies should take the gender digital divide into consideration when assessing the most appropriate means to disseminate information and communicate with their constituencies.

22. In identifying the target audience, organizations sometimes fall in the trap of vaguely defining the “general public” as their main target audience. Attempts to reach everyone can result in reaching no one. Therefore, it is important to identify specific target groups and develop communication strategies to reach them. Audiences can be categorized as: (i) primary audiences (those who will be informed and influenced) and (ii) secondary audiences (those who can influence the decision made

¹ Source: Laurent Duvillier’s (INSTRAW) presentation.

by the primary audience). Secondary audiences can provide national machineries with an alternative way to reach the primary audience.

23. Participants identified possible target groups for national machineries, including other national mechanisms, national machineries in other countries, line ministries, local governments, women's groups, gender activists, researchers, development partners, regional bodies, private sector companies and media organizations. It was noted that several target groups can be identified by a national machinery and it is crucial to prioritize them. Once the target audience is identified, getting to know the exact profile of the audience (information needs, professional expectations, perception of the issue, cultural preferences, educational background, etc.) is essential for planning an effective communication strategy.

24. The importance of matching objectives with the target audience was emphasized. Different target groups can have unique concerns and can interpret and respond to the same message in different ways. Participants agreed that each target group required a different communication strategy. Special attention must be paid to format, tone, angle and style of the message to tailor it to the target audience. Various issues such as cultural sensitivity, choice of language, level of literacy and audio-visual components should be taken into account.

25. The importance of sharing information received from the e-network and repackaging it as needed, depending on the target audience, was highlighted. Criteria for selecting the appropriate media to convey the message include the longevity of the message in a particular media, accessibility of the media to the audience, and social and cultural acceptability of the media. A large variety of outlets can be used separately or in combination, including printed publications (leaflets, posters, newsletter, sketches), traditional broadcast media (television, radio, video), interpersonal exchanges and electronic media.

26. While new ICT have been increasingly used by national machineries, traditional methods still remain important. Participants noted that traditional communication strategies could be information-based, i.e. one-way flow of information (for example, traditional town criers and billboards) and communication-based, i.e. two-way process (for example, market square meetings and focus groups). New ICT, such as telephones, cell phones, internet, radio and TV, can be more appropriate when used in policy dialogue and advocacy with policy-makers and legislators. A website can also be established to link with other organizations.

Networking

27. Participants were introduced to the value of networks and were presented with examples of different types of networks, approaches to assessing results, as well as major challenges and success factors.

28. Networks are valuable mechanisms for sharing information and knowledge both at the organizational level and the individual level. Networks create a number of benefits for their members (see Box 2²), among which, participants identified reduced time and costs at the organizational level as beneficial. At the individual level, participants noted that the benefits of networks depended on the individual job responsibilities of national machinery staff.

² Source: Presentation by Erik Johnson, World Bank Institute (see Annex 6)

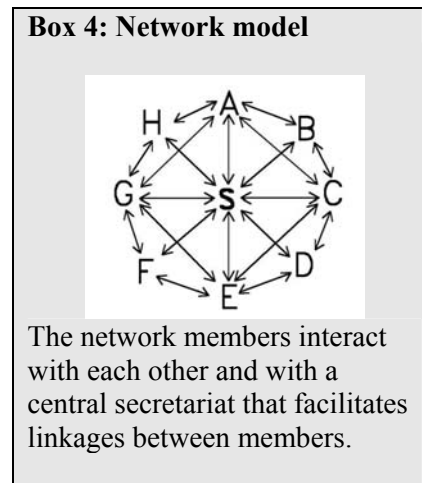
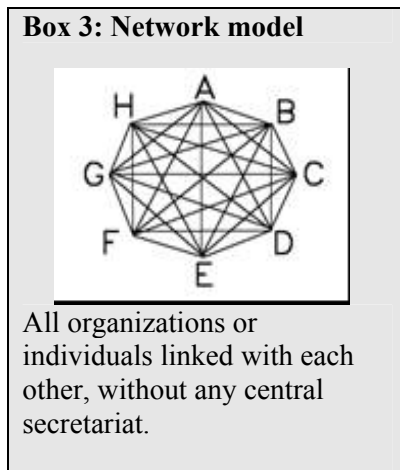
Box 2. Benefits of Networks

Organization	Better, faster problem solving Reduced time and costs Improved quality of decisions	Benchmarking with other institutions Increased retention of talent Catalyst for partnerships
Individual	Improve individual performance Direct access to expertise Confidence building Sense of belonging	Forum for expanding skills and expertise Network for keeping abreast of a field Enhanced professional reputation
	Short term	Long term

29. Information networks are created and sustained by the exchange of ideas, techniques and experiences. The specific design of a network structure depends on its objective. Issues to consider in the network structure include what the network represents, whether the network would take a formal or informal approach and what incentives are provided for participation. On-going evaluation is essential for the success and sustainability of a network. Assessment can be carried out by monitoring the number and diversity of participants, frequency of contributions and interactions, and quality and relevance of contributions. Surveys can be used to

determine if members are connecting and in what ways, and to determine if a different model is needed. Flexibility is critical in order for the network to be able to adapt its structure.

30. Among the various network models presented by Erik Johnson of the World Bank Institute (see Annex 6, slides 13-17), participants found the network model shown in Box 3 as the long-term goal of the e-network for national machineries. In this model, all individuals are linked without any central facilitation or secretariat and members of the network are sufficiently motivated to interact with each other. In the short-term, however, participants agreed that the network with a central secretariat (see Box 4) would be the most appropriate model. In this model, network members interact with each other (not all possible lines shown) and the central secretariat facilitates linkages between members.



31. Participants were presented with the following examples of global, regional and national networks:

- ▶ Aid Workers Network (www.aidworkers.net), is a global learning community of development practitioners who provide mutual support and share practical advice and resources. The network uses discussion forums, email newsletters, advice pages and blogs. Email alerts and bulletins prompt members to go to the website. Facilitators encourage users to respond to questions.

- ▶ The ECANet (<http://www.msif.md/user/ecanet.shtml>), a regional European and Central Asian network, is used for regional cooperation, learning and exchange of information between participating social investment funds. It includes a rotating, self-financing, voluntary secretariat and conducts activities such as conferences, training seminars and workshops, internship programmes, study tours, e-bulletins and publication of papers.
- ▶ The South Africa Cities network (www.sacities.net), a national network, is a network of South African cities and partners that encourages the exchange of information, experience and good practices on urban development and city management. The network updates leaders on current and emerging changes and trends in urban policy across the world and in South Africa as well as fosters cooperation and exchange of good practices. Network instruments used by this network include newsletters, electronic conferences, manuals etc.

32. Various types of government networks were also introduced, including enforcement networks (for example, cooperation between governments on transnational crimes), harmonization networks (such as the European Union) and information networks.

33. A range of instruments used in networks were also discussed (see Box 5). Participants identified seminars, workshops and training as the most useful for the national machineries. Other suggested instruments included peer reviews, electronic newsletters, study tours, documentation of good practices and joint research.

Box 5: Network instruments

- Websites, with regular updates
- Members/experts lists
- Email discussion lists
- Electronic newsletters
- Query and answer services (Help desks)
- Electronic and in-person conferences
- Study tours & training
- Toolkits, manuals and “How-to guides”
- Documentation on good practices
- Recognition for good performance
- Peer review
- Joint research

34. A number of challenges of formal networks were highlighted. A major problem was the risk that the central secretariat would disseminate all information and members would become passive recipients. Exclusion and lack of participation may also occur if members feel inhibition or reluctance to take part, based on lack of interest, perceived value of participation, concern about expressing opinions etc. Other challenges include domination by very active members; seniority differences; language; and lack of time.

Box 6: Lessons from successful networks

- Focus on topics important to network members
- Develop an active and passionate core group
- Get key leaders on a topic involved to stimulate discussion
- Build personal relationships among members
- Make it easy to access and contribute to the network’s knowledge
- Ensure participatory decision making, transparency and representation
- Delegate responsibilities away from the central secretariat
- Maintain a steady flow of activity so that members maintain interest
- Work with complementary networks to leverage resources
- Regularly monitor and evaluate - and evolve.

35. To overcome these challenges and to ensure an effective network, several strategies were introduced and discussed (see Box 6). Encouraging effective participation and having topics of common interest were found to be essential to preempt the problem of passive recipients. Strategies to prevent exclusion and lack of participation included rotation of responsibilities, ensuring that no single participant dominates the network, requesting at least monthly participation, and, providing regular highlights of discussions. To handle

job-turnover, it is necessary to ensure that institutional memory is retained.

36. In response to concerns about the lack of electricity and internet, a suggestion was made to print materials on a regular basis. It was emphasized that electronic networking did not necessarily mean everything should be electronic. Another concern raised was reaching out to people with disabilities. For example, it is a challenge to download audio for blind people because of slow internet connection in Africa. A possible solution was suggested to convert the web material into a CD-ROM and add voice over.

Experiences on communication strategies, networking knowledge management and use of ICT

37. The national machineries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zambia made presentations to share their experiences on communication strategies, knowledge management and use of ICT.

38. The participant from Burkina Faso reviewed the development of the national machinery's website following the sub-regional workshop in Senegal to disseminate information on the advancement of women and to enable stakeholders to exchange views and share experiences. The target audience included women, administration personnel, Ministry staff, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, development partners, media, students and researchers from ministries and institutions. The main challenge was the outdated and insufficient equipment used for updating the site. The national machinery planned to ask the General Information Technology Authority (DELGI) of Burkina Faso to train three national machinery staff and provide the national machinery with computer equipment.

39. The participant from Chad described his experiences in participating in two e-discussions, one on gender-based violence and one on training in gender equality. He presented the findings and conclusions of the online discussions to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which were then used to influence local and international non-governmental organizations to assist victims of gender-based violence. As a result of these efforts, counseling services were provided to women in eastern Chad. Challenges faced by the participant from Chad to participate in the e-discussions included the cost of computers, limited internet connection and the high cost of internet connection. Another major obstacle was language as most discussions were conducted in English.

40. The participant from Ghana noted that the national machinery had used ICT to communicate with both internal and external clients, including women's groups. The participant highlighted that different ICT were used for different audiences. For example, computers were used to share sex-disaggregated data and photos with policy-makers to convince them of the prevalence of gender-based violence in Ghana. Regular radio broadcasts are used by the national machinery to reach rural women, during which speakers discussed critical areas of concern, sensitized the public on gender related issues and had interactive dialogues with callers. The national machinery has also improved internal communication and ICT capacity by providing fax machines to all 10 sub-regional offices. The participant noted that to address the challenge of limited resources, the way forward would be to lobby for financial resources and reliable connectivity, to organize stakeholders and to secure political will from the highest levels of government.

41. The representative of Morocco provided information on their communication strategy, which assisted in determining target audiences, objectives, budget and time constraints. Morocco has used ICT to disseminate information and raise awareness of relevant legal reforms, such as the reform of

family code of 2005. TV and radio are also used to discuss gender-based violence. CD-ROMs are prepared with regular reports on the implementation of CEDAW.

42. In Sierra Leone, the national machinery had been part of a core group for the formulation of draft ICT policies. The Ministry has also established focal points in all line ministries and has gathered information and data on CEDAW articles. ICT has been mainly used for research purposes to collect qualitative and quantitative data through email and internet. The national machinery of Sierra Leone has experienced difficulties in implementing the conclusions and recommendations of the previous workshops because of lack of modern ICT equipment, limited coverage of national radio in rural areas, lack of internet connectivity, lack of power supply, low level of literacy and lack of reliable and affordable communications. The national machinery plans to overcome these problems by lobbying policy-makers.

43. The participant from Tanzania presented the national machinery's ICT strategies to improve communication and dissemination of information to stakeholders within the framework of a project known as "Institutional Strengthening of Community Development, Gender and Children". The Women Information Centre was created to serve as focal point for the production and dissemination of all information on individual projects as well as the Ministry's activities for the advancement of women. An information collection system was put in place and networks were established with other documentation centers and libraries, as well as with relevant stakeholders. A gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system was also established to monitor gender equality issues, poverty and to carry out gender analysis. Challenges included limited technical and financial resources, inadequate capacity in terms of skills and tools for gender mainstreaming and difficulty in transferring knowledge to the rest of the staff. Strategies to overcome these challenges would be training and technical backstopping in ICT-related activities, networking with different stakeholders, and preparing the Ministry's ICT strategic plan to promote effective use of ICT.

44. The representative of Tunisia noted that the national machinery had provided training on ICT, gender and e-governance. A portal for women was created that covered gender and ICT activities (www.femmes.tn) and provided a forum for dialogue and promoted women's use of ICT. The website of the national machinery provides information on the national machinery's mechanism and structure, plans of action and strategies, as well as information on progress made in public life. Another website (www.csp.tn) was established to assist rural women access the information society.

45. The representative of Zambia presented the website of the Gender in Development Division at the Cabinet Office (<http://www.gender.gov.zm>). The website includes the national gender equality policy in seven local languages, gender resources, and information on gender focal points in line ministries, provinces, government commissions and departments, as well as in the private sector and the media. The national machinery also has a national gender equality information database which includes gender equality reports from the district level.

4. ELECTRONIC NETWORKING

46. Following the discussions on networking and communication strategies, participants were introduced to the use and value of electronic networking (e-networking) as a communications strategy. E-networking is a key component of any knowledge management strategy and provides opportunities for improved communication, exchange of experiences and knowledge-sharing. E-networking provides a virtual space where groups can communicate, collaborate, and share

information, regardless of their geographic location and distance. It also provides visibility to members regardless of the size of their organizations.

47. Various electronic tools that support the sharing of communication and information in networks were discussed in the plenary and working groups. E-networking tools include e-mail, computer networks, web portals, blogs (see Box 9), listservs, electronic conferencing, collaboration management tools (see Box 10) and discussion lists. It was emphasized that for an electronic network to be sustainable and effective, it was crucial that the electronic network was supplemented with other tools such as annual face-to-face meetings.

Box 9: Blogs

A blog is a website for which an individual or a group generates text, photographs, video, audio files and/or links on a daily or otherwise regular basis.

Box 10: Collaboration management

Collaboration management tools facilitate and manage group activities. Examples include electronic calendars, project management systems, workflow systems and knowledge management systems.

48. National machineries noted that they already used a variety of ICT, including radio, TV, telephones, mobile phones, websites and email, for networking in awareness campaigns, communication and information collection and dissemination. National machineries used their websites mainly for information sharing, receiving feedback on services, training, events, conferences and e-marketing. Areas in which electronic networking would be most useful to national machineries include coordinating and monitoring activities, collection of sex-disaggregated data and information, advocacy, capacity-building and networking with other national machineries. South-south cooperation was highlighted by participants as an area where e-networking could be used for national machineries to benefit from technical advancements of other countries, for example, by sharing expertise in website development.

49. Electronic mailing lists are a common form of e-networking used for collaboration on projects and as a way of distributing news and information. They can take the form of a "discussion list" in which a subscriber uses the mailing list to send messages to all the other subscribers, who may answer in a similar fashion. Participants were introduced to Dgroups "Development through Dialogue" (<http://www.dgroups.org/>), a membership service for development groups and organizations, used to form an online community to facilitate dialogue among key stakeholders in international development and access discussion lists on development topics. As a member of Dgroups, ECA has over 25 discussion lists with over 2,000 subscribers.

50. Participants were also introduced to women's electronic networks at the national, sub-regional and regional level. Representatives of Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), Protégé QV and APC-women-Africa highlighted how networks can be used effectively for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by (i) providing women with relevant information and opportunities to share experiences, acquire new skills and build knowledge; (ii) building capacity of network members to effectively influence the formulation and implementation of gender sensitive ICT policies and programmes; (iii) improving rural women's access to ICT; and (iv) working with development partners, including governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector.

51. WOUGNET outlined a number of areas in which the organizations uses ICT to enhance its operations. For example, it has set up two email discussion lists, one of which is used for general discussion and the other is used solely to distribute the monthly newsletter. The newsletter list was specifically aimed at reaching those people who did not have regular access to email so that they would only receive one email a month giving an overall update on the organization, rather than 10-15 emails a day on the general discussion list. It was also used as an advocacy tool to target decision-makers and high-ranking officials. WOUGNET noted a number of other strategies for communication and information sharing, including online conferences, brochures, and radio programmes recorded on audio tape. It was stressed that e-networks can transform how an organization shares information and therefore how its work can be enhanced.

52. Protégé QV noted that its strategies aim to promote technology for the improvement of quality of life in rural areas of Cameroon, with a particular focus on rural women. Rural women in Cameroon do not have access to information, which increases their marginalization. Through access to the power of information, it is possible to reduce poverty among rural women. Protégé QV also stressed the importance of being part of network, which allows women in rural areas to improve their quality of life through a sense of belonging and improved access to information. Protégé QV achieves its goals by increasing information dissemination, including through the establishment of radio stations in rural areas. Capacity-building and training programmes are also important, for example, support to women micro-entrepreneurs and training in computer science and in using mobile phones for more than making and receiving personal calls, such as accessing information on prices for local commodities. The organization also established radio stations in rural areas to improve access to information.

53. During the discussions, a number of challenges faced by national machineries in electronic networking were identified, as well as potential ways to address them. In terms of infrastructure, irregular power supply and access to the internet were major constraints in some countries. It was noted that, in some countries, other ministries had full connectivity and therefore national machineries need to lobby the government to secure regular internet connection. Financial resource constraints were particularly acute in the initial start-up period, including costs related to equipment, maintenance, connectivity and website hosting. Human resources were also a challenge, including insufficient expertise among staff and high costs of staff training. The value of volunteers and interns for the work of national machineries was highlighted as a strategy to address limited resources.

54. Challenges were also noted in developing and maintaining a website, including difficulties in updating content, a lack of human and financial resources and a lack of active participation by national machinery staff and other stakeholders, for example, by not sending contributions or items to the webmaster. WOUGNET includes website updates in their regular newsletters in order to attract people to their website. A small number of countries, including Egypt, Nigeria and Sudan were able to regularly update their websites as they had dedicated webmasters.

55. Sustainability was a major concern, including problems with donor funding and high staff turnover. Some countries presented good practices in continuing donor-sponsored projects after the funding ended. For example, Egypt initiated a USAID supported project in 2001 to establish a women's business development center with ICT facilities. After the project ended in 2004, the national machinery capitalized on the good reputation that the center had built and started to generate income to keep the centre open by giving low-cost training to local organizations. The national machinery also established a self-sustaining website for marketing – www.cleostore.com – that

charges an annual fee of approximately \$100 to women entrepreneurs or associations to market their products.

56. It was also noted that establishing partnership with national and international stakeholders is important for sustainability. For example, WOUGNET was able to develop partnerships during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) by convincing policy-makers that they brought value to the ICT policy-making processes. It was recommended that national machineries identify and approach donors with clearly defined gender equality objectives and demonstrate how they can build a mutually-beneficial relationship. It was noted that workshops and conferences are excellent opportunities to build contacts with donors and other partners. Having one-on-one relationships with focal points in line ministries can also help, for example by providing guidance to national machineries on preparing successful funding proposals.

57. Another important obstacle was the difficulty in disseminating information among constituencies, especially in rural areas. In particular, language barriers were noted, as was the difficulty in converting hard-copy/handwritten documents into electronic format to facilitate wide dissemination. The need to expand activities of networks in rural areas was highlighted, as was the need to build women's capacity to strengthen their use of ICT and overcome women's reluctance or fear to use ICT.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE E-NETWORK FOR NATIONAL MACHINERIES

58. Participants were introduced to the structure and activities of the e-network, including the information portal, general discussion list for national machineries and regular thematic e-discussions for national machineries and other stakeholders. Participants also discussed a number of names for the e-network and decided upon "NGM-net Africa" (An e-network of national gender equality machineries in Africa).

59. The aims of the e-network were outlined, as follows:

- ▶ To enhance knowledge management and communication strategies of national machineries;
- ▶ To strengthen networking between national machineries at the sub-regional and regional levels;
- ▶ To enhance the capacity of national machineries to utilize ICT to implement their roles as advocates and catalysts for the achievement of gender equality; and
- ▶ To directly link national machineries to information on and processes connected to important intergovernmental bodies in the United Nations, such as the regional Committee on Women and Development and the global Commission on the Status of women.

Information Portal

60. To introduce the information portal, participants were first familiarized with the concept, function and benefits of a portal and its difference from a website (see Box 11). A major function, and a major benefit, of a portal is its use as a gateway to existing but disparate information on a particular subject, organization or user group. A portal provides a central hub for sharing information and integrates existing but disparate systems, resources and repositories. The content of a

portal can be customized by the portal administrators or users to provide the most relevant information.

Box 11: Websites vs. portals

Website: A collection of web pages all belonging to one central organization.

Portal: A one-stop gateway to knowledge and information on a particular topic or a particular group of people, including links to websites of relevant organizations.

61. INSTRAW introduced their successful portal initiative on political participation in Latin America (www.un-instraw.org/participacionpolitica/), which provided participants with an understanding of how a portal could be used, what functions it could provide and what benefits it could bring to its users. Other examples of existing portals include UNIFEM's portals on gender and HIV/AIDS (www.genderandaids.org) and women, peace and security (www.womenwarpeace.org).

62. INSTRAW also gave a brief introduction to its wiki initiative on gender training (www.un-instraw.org/wiki/training). Wikis are different from websites in two aspects: All users have the power to add and change the content of the wiki. Wiki users must have regular access to the internet and, although no special skills are required, at least a good knowledge of computers and the internet is needed for all users.

63. The information portal of the e-network for national machineries in Africa (www.uneca.org/ngmafrica/) was designed prior to the workshop and was presented by the web designer to participants in plenary session (see Box 12). An overview of the portal was provided, including a brief description of each section of the portal: information on national machineries, including resources, news and events; information on United Nations entities, regional organizations and gender networks in Africa; intergovernmental processes and treaty bodies; and interactive activities of the e-network (discussion list and thematic e-discussions).

64. Hands-on training³ was also provided to participants, during which they explored the layout, content and functions of the portal. Participants also met in working groups to evaluate the various sections of the portal, brainstorm on possible changes or additions, and consider the most useful structure for the resource section.

65. Overall, participants viewed all sections of the portal as useful, particularly the events page, which would help in strategic planning to avoid duplication of events, such as those held on International Women's Day. The news page was also seen as a useful tool to keep national machineries informed of important developments, such as outcomes of workshops or formulation of new laws and policies. It was suggested that the content of news items submitted by national machineries must be carefully considered. In order to provoke user interest in reading the news items, national machineries should aim to extract a human interest story or good practice example within their news item.

³ Optional e-mail and internet tutorials were also provided to participants.

Box 12: The home page of the information portal



66. Participants also discussed a number of options for the resource page, including organizing it by the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, by CEDAW articles, by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and by country or sub-region. It was decided in plenary that the most efficient method would be to organize resources by the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, with additional topics such as trafficking, migration and men and boys.

67. Portal content was an important issue during the discussions. Participants agreed that information on the portal be general information on gender equality issues, which national machineries wish to share among themselves and with other stakeholders. In contrast, information and resources shared via the discussion list should be specific to national machineries, for example, requesting feedback on draft policy documents, seeking experts or partnerships, and sharing other relevant information. The importance of content management on the portal was stressed. It was noted that criteria for posting information on the portal should focus on quality, not quantity, and the portal should not be viewed as a place to store data. The purpose of posting information on the portal should be to

communicate information and to facilitate readers using this information. National machineries should therefore only post what is relevant for the users of the portal.

68. Participants made a number of suggestions for additional functions and content for the portal (see Box 13). The potential for the portal to be updated directly by national machineries was discussed, although it was agreed that, for the time being, it was not a feasible option. In the future, it may be possible for each national machinery to have its own dedicated page on the portal that it would be responsible for updating.

Box 13: Suggestions for additions to the portal

- French interface
- Search function
- RSS Feed
- Counters for visitors and resource downloads
- FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)
- National spotlight - Highlighting the gender equality situation in particular countries as well as the work of the national machineries.
- “Minister, have your say...” – A forum for Ministers to get involved and share their views
- MDG database of gender indicators, to be updated by all national machineries
- Country pages updated by each national machinery

69. The constraints and challenges faced by national machineries in using the information portal were also discussed. Language arose as the major challenge as it is not possible to have all portal content translated due to a lack of funds and resources. However, funding opportunities could be explored to translate the content of the portal, including navigation bars. Sustainability of the portal was another critical area. It will be hosted on ECA’s website and updated by the ECA web manager during the initial phase. However, sustainable options for the future of the portal must be considered. A need for capacity-building at the national level was identified for national machineries to be able to assume responsibility for updating and managing the portal.

Box 14: Critical factors for the success of the information portal

- Strong participation and ownership of the portal by national machineries
- Keeping portal content up-to-date
- Credibility of content and information
- Availability of portal content in relevant languages
- Usefulness of the portal for users
- Effective marketing of the portal
- Effective search tool to find information
- Connectivity of national machineries to the internet
- Capacity-building for national machineries to use the portal and make regular contributions
- Continuous support and assistance from ECA and DAW during initial period
- Adding new features in the future

70. The process of submitting information, validating content and posting on the portal was another major concern. The process, agreed in the discussions, will be for national E-Network Teams to send resources, events and news items to a central email address (nmwafrica@uneca.org). Items should preferably be sent as an attachment, either in Word or PDF format, and the email should clearly state its content, e.g. “news item”, “event” or “resource on gender and HIV/AIDS”. ECA, supported as necessary by DAW, will be responsible for ensuring that the submissions are posted on the portal in a timely manner. National machineries need to ensure a smooth

internal process of approval for information to be sent to the portal.

71. A number of success factors for the portal were highlighted, such as credibility of content and availability of information in different languages (see Box 14). The most crucial success factor is the need for strong participation and ownership of the portal by national machineries. It was noted that the first three months of the portal were particularly important, during which time the priority would

be for national machineries, ECA and DAW to submit information and resources and build up the content of the portal.

Discussion list for national machineries

72. To introduce the discussion list for national machineries, participants were first familiarized with the concept, features (see Box 15) and benefits (see Box 16) of a discussion list. A discussion list is a convenient electronic method for a group of people to share information and discuss issues, such as challenges and good practices, within an area of common interest.

Box 15: Features of discussion lists

- Anyone with an email account can join a discussion list.
- A single group email address is used to send messages to every member of the list.
- Discussion lists can be moderated (each message is reviewed by the administrator, substantive expert or facilitator before posting) or unmoderated (all messages are posted immediately).
- Messages can be accessed either through email or through a website, or a combination of both.
- Messages can be received either in real-time (when they are posted) or in a digest format (one email per day or per week).

73. It was noted that national machineries can also create their own discussion lists, for example an internal discussion list formed of staff from the national machinery and its regional offices, or an external discussion list with members from, for example, local NGOs, women's groups, or line ministry gender focal points. To create a discussion list, national machineries can either install and use software, including commercial software such as Lyris ListManager (www.lyris.com/products/listmanager/), as well as free open source software. They can also use existing programmes available on the internet, of which the most popular free mailing lists are Yahoo! Groups - <http://groups.yahoo.com/> (English) and <http://fr.groups.yahoo.com/>

(French) and Google Groups - <http://groups.google.com/> (English) and http://groups.google.fr (French).

74. The discussion list of the e-network is hosted on Dgroups (www.dgroups.org), a programme used by the Economic Commission for Africa and other development organizations. It is open only to staff of national machineries in Africa. All members belong to a single discussion list, which will operate in both English and French. All participants at the workshop are automatically subscribed to the discussion list. For other national machinery staff who were not present at the workshop to be subscribed, the national machineries must submit a list of all staff names and email addresses to ECA and DAW. Some representatives of national machineries who were not present at the workshop have also joined the discussion list and it is hoped that all national machineries will join in the future.

Box 16: The benefits of discussion lists

- Brings together people from disparate locations.
- Offers the opportunity for members to post information, make suggestions or pose questions to a large number of people at the same time.
- Discussion lists can operate through email only, thereby facilitating participation by those without regular internet connection.

75. During the hands-on training session, participants were introduced to the different methods of accessing the discussion list. The web-based version of the discussion list can be accessed via the homepage of the information portal. This will link members to the Dgroups interface, available in English and French. From this site, members can read and respond to messages, post new messages and view the list of members. Training was also provided on accessing the discussion list via members' own email accounts. In this way, messages

are sent and received as emails and no access to the internet is required (See Annex 4 of Annex 4 for Guidelines on participating in the discussion list).

76. Technical difficulties with passwords and with the Local Area Network created some problems during the training, particularly in relation to accessing the discussion lists via the portal. An optional training session was therefore added to the final day of the workshop, where a small number of participants received further instructions in using the portal and the discussion list.

77. Participants discussed the various ways in which the discussion list could be used to share and seek information. Overall, it was agreed that the content of the discussion list should be specific to national machineries and should be on issues of common interest. Suggested topics include sharing project information, sharing successful advocacy tools and strategies, requesting examples of good practices, seeking feedback on draft project proposals, looking for partnerships, or seeking experts (see Box 17). It was noted that the discussion lists would enable members to become aware of what was taking place in other national machineries and would also help to raise awareness of specific issues, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and to build a strong regional response (See Annex 4 of Annex 4 for an example of a discussion list query).

Box 17: Content of the discussion list

- 1) **Share information.** Send updates and information on the activities of your organization, for example, good practices in programming; outcomes of recent research; upcoming events that may be of interest to other members; good resources that you have found on a particular subject; and, other new developments in your national machinery.
- 2) **Ask questions.** Send a query to the discussion list if, for example, you are looking for examples of good practices on particular programming activities; you would like feedback on a draft project proposal; you are seeking experts in a particular field; or you are looking for information on a particular subject, such as publications and resources as well as opinions or experiences of other members.
- 3) **Respond to questions.** Assist other members of the discussion lists by answering their questions if you are able to provide relevant information.

78. The importance of rules and etiquette for posting messages on the discussion list was emphasized. These include, for example, only sending substantive messages; always using relevant titles in the “subject” field; responding to the group email address only when addressing the whole group, not an individual member; identifying yourself at the bottom of each message (name, position, institution, country etc); and when forwarding other emails, sending only the relevant text and adding an introductory sentence to explain why you are sending it. The discussion list should not be used for sharing personal information.

79. Some challenges of participating in the discussion list were raised by participants as well as ways to overcome them:

- Language remains a key obstacle to unifying the e-network. In order to overcome this, ECA will send out brief discussion list summaries on a regular basis. These summaries will capture the highlights of both French and English contributions to the discussion list within the relevant time

period and allow for sharing of ideas and information between both French speakers and English speakers in the e-network.

- ▶ The lack of skills among national machinery staff in using discussion lists was also a concern. To address this, participants were encouraged to share their training from the workshop with other staff. In addition, brief guidelines on using the discussion list were formulated and distributed via the discussion list and a detailed guide on using Dgroups will also be made available. An FAQ on Dgroups is available at http://wiki.dgroups.org/index.php/General_and_Usage_FAQ
- ▶ Bureaucracy can be a constraint in terms of how information is received and disseminated as there is often a lengthy process to clear internal documents for external distribution. To address this, it was suggested that staff in national machineries could share information on the e-network that has already been cleared.
- ▶ Confidentiality is also a concern as, although the discussion list is a closed list for national machinery staff only, emails can be easily forwarded. This is an issue common to all discussion lists and need not be a barrier to effective participation. Trust in the integrity of network members is needed. Participants discussed the need to ensure that discussion list emails are not forwarded to those outside of the e-network without prior permission.

Thematic e-discussions

80. To introduce the thematic e-discussions, participants were first familiarized with the concept and features of e-discussions (see Box 18). An e-discussion is an electronic discussion to promote and stimulate debate on a particular topic. It is a tool for a group of people, in any geographic location, to exchange ideas and resources and is particularly useful for advancing understanding of key issues, methodologies and good practices, and identifying common obstacles and challenges. The benefits of e-discussions were also highlighted, including their ability to bring together a larger and more diverse group of people than most other learning events, as well as their extended duration, which permits a level of sustained interaction and reflection on the chosen subject that is often not possible with face-to-face meetings.

Box 18: General features of thematic e-discussions

- E-discussions promote and stimulate debate on a particular topic.
- E-discussions are guided by a moderator, who provides a week-by-week outline with specific sub-topics and questions for discussion.
- Each week, participants in the e-discussion receive the questions for that week and can respond with their ideas and thoughts.
- At the end of an e-discussion a summary is produced that highlights some of the major findings and conclusions of the discussion.
- An e-discussion can operate in the same way as a discussion list, with messages sent and received as an email. They can also be accessed via a web-based platform.

81. The needs assessment questionnaire conducted prior to the workshop revealed that most national machineries have not participated in an e-discussion before. As indicated earlier, the representative from Chad was asked to share his experiences in participating in two e-discussions on gender based violence and on gender training. He noted that he used the e-discussion to share his field experiences of gender based violence in Chad. He also highlighted some of the key challenges, such as limited time to participate, lack of equipment and internet connection and language barriers. Despite such problems, a number of benefits emerged, such as enhanced knowledge of the topics. In particular, he noted that he presented the findings and conclusions of the e-discussion to the national

machinery, which in turn used those recommendations to try to influence local and international NGOs who assist women affected by gender based violence. Consequently, counseling services for women were made available in eastern Chad, where many Sudanese refugees were located.

82. The thematic e-discussions of the e-network will be open to all stakeholders, including staff of national machineries, line ministries, NGOs, donors and academia, in order to promote collaboration and cooperation. The e-discussions will operate in both English and French. Three e-discussions will take place annually, for a period of six weeks each, in order to allow for intermittent internet connectivity. During the first year, ECA and DAW will moderate the first two e-discussions. It was suggested that an NGO or an academic institution be invited to moderate the final e-discussion. However, participants felt that by this stage at least one national machinery should have the capacity to take over moderation for the third e-discussion.

83. The e-discussions will operate in exactly the same format as the discussion lists. Members will send and receive messages via email. A web-based version of the e-discussion can also be accessed via the information portal. E-discussions will be guided by a moderator, who will send out a week-by-week outline with specific sub-topics and questions for discussion. Each week, participants in the e-discussion receive the questions for that week and can respond with their ideas and thoughts. At the end of an e-discussion, the moderator will produce a summary that highlights some of the major findings and conclusions of the discussion.

84. A number of themes were suggested for the e-discussions, including men's participation in promoting gender equality, gender equality and NEPAD and gender equality and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). It was decided that the theme of the first e-discussion will be "Women, political participation and decision-making". The other two themes will be decided via the general discussion list. It was also decided that a closed e-discussion will take place at the end of 2007 as a forum for national machineries to conduct a self-evaluation of the e-network and their participation.

85. In order to ensure vibrant and informed e-discussions, national machineries should to actively encourage all national machinery staff to participate in the e-discussions. It is also important for national machineries to encourage participation among other stakeholders. Furthermore, strategies must be put in place to disseminate the findings and conclusions of the e-discussions. The importance of rules and etiquette for posting messages was emphasized in the same way as for the discussion list.

86. Challenges to participation in the thematic e-discussions are similar to those for the discussion list, such as skills, equipment and language. In order to address the restrictions on dissemination of information by national machineries, the themes of the e-discussions will be announced in advance and national machineries should therefore make efforts to have relevant information cleared for dissemination ahead of time.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE E-NETWORK

87. Participants discussed in plenary and in working groups the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the e-network, including national machineries, ECA headquarters, ECA sub-regional gender focal points, DAW, women's networks in Africa and other relevant stakeholders. Management and oversight of the e-network will operate at three levels: national, sub-regional and regional. It was noted that the initial phase of the project would be led by ECA, supported by DAW, but that the effectiveness of the e-network is primarily dependent on the active participation by national machinery staff.

Box 19: Management and oversight of the e-network

National:

E-network Teams from national machineries (2 gender specialists and 1 ICT specialist working with the national machinery)

Sub-regional:

10 sub-regional coordinators from national machineries (2 per sub-region) + ECA sub-regional gender focal points

Regional:

Management Group will consist of 10 sub-regional coordinators, 5 ECA sub-regional focal points + ECA HQ & DAW

National level

88. It was recommended that an **E-network Team** should be established in each national machinery to ensure that the e-network is well known and integrated into the work of the national machinery and that continuity is not compromised due to staff turnover. This team should be comprised of two gender specialists and one ICT specialist working with the national machinery (whether employed directly by the national machinery or loaned from another Ministry). Participants suggested that the team should comprise of those who participated in the previous workshops of this project. Participants discussed the requirements for the e-network team members and it was agreed that they should have expertise on gender equality, with a basic knowledge of computers and email, and should have access to email and the internet (See Box 20 and Annex 4 for more information on the E-network Team).

89. Members of the E-network Team will take lead responsibility for the e-network at the national level and are expected to encourage broad participation in the e-network by other national machinery staff, including by sharing training from the workshop. To do this, participants noted that they should prepare back-to-office reports from the workshop. DAW also noted it would prepare a presentation for participants to give to the national machinery after the workshop.

90. The issue of accountability was raised by participants. They noted that it would be important for the responsibilities of the e-network team members to be incorporated into their job descriptions. Participants also recommended that the e-network team should submit quarterly reports to the Management Group (see following section). In addition to accountability, motivational mechanisms are also

Box 20: Roles of the e-network team

The e-network team should:

- Collect information and news and prepare material for dissemination on the portal and the discussion list.
- Encourage other staff to join the discussion list.
- Communicate upcoming and past activities of the e-network to other staff and stakeholders.
- Disseminate e-discussion summaries and other information to staff and other stakeholders.
- Publicize the information portal.
- Take charge of planning and budgeting for the e-network at the national level.
- Train replacements for the team as necessary.
- Build list of expertise of national machinery staff, as well as other experts in the country, and share this as needed with the e-network.
- When staff members leave the national machinery notify ECA to remove them from the discussion list.
- Submit quarterly reports to the relevant sub-regional coordinators and Management Group.

needed. In this regard, it was suggested that the letter transmitting the final report should inform heads of national machineries of the importance of ensuring that the e-network team members have regular access to at least one computer with internet connection.

91. **Other national machinery staff** can actively participate in the e-network by using the information portal, signing up for and actively participating in the discussion list and thematic e-discussions, and sending the E-network Team news, events, case studies and resources for the

<p>Box 21: National-level strategies</p> <p>It was recommended that clear strategies and processes should be put in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up the e-network team; ▪ Inform staff about the e-network and its activities ▪ Encourage staff participation ▪ Share knowledge with the e-network ▪ Use, share and store summaries of the e-network activities, such as the e-discussions. ▪ Use the e-network to respond to specific needs of the national machinery ▪ Integrate the e-network into the strategy plan of the national machinery.
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information portal. It was noted that in order for all national machinery staff to participate, they should be made aware of the aims of the e-network, its challenges and benefits and the rules and guidelines for participating in the discussion list and thematic e-discussions. It is also important for participants to share their skills learned at the workshop, for example by giving a hands-on demonstration of the information portal and the discussion list.

92. **Leadership** within national machineries was identified by participants as a crucial success factor for the e-network. In particular, participants noted the need for the Minister or another senior decision-maker to formally establish the E-network Team and ensure that the responsibilities of the E-network Team are included in their job description. (See Annex 5 for

further guidelines for integrating the e-network into the work of national machineries).

Sub-regional level

93. Two **coordinators** from national machineries in each ECA sub-region were nominated to guide the e-network at the sub-regional level. Ten coordinators in total, including French, English and Portuguese speakers, were nominated by participants (See Box 22).

Box 22: The sub-regional coordinators for 2007	
North Africa	Egypt and Mauritania
Central Africa	Republic of Congo and São Tomé and Príncipe
Western Africa	Nigeria and Senegal
Eastern Africa	Burundi and Tanzania
Southern Africa	Botswana and Zimbabwe

94. Participants discussed the roles and responsibilities of the coordinators and decided that they should work on a 1-year rotation basis. The coordinators are responsible for liaising with the E-network Teams in their sub-region and encouraging their participation by sending out regular reminders. The coordinators will also participate in the meetings of the Management Group (see following section) to represent the needs of their sub-region. Criteria for the selection of coordinators include their commitment to and enthusiasm for the e-network; skills in gender equality and ICT, as well as regular access to a computer, email and the internet. It was suggested that coordinators be bilingual, where possible, but participants stressed that this should not be a criterion.

95. Participants noted that time constraints would prove a challenge to the effective role of the sub-regional coordinators and suggested that it was necessary to develop motivation mechanisms, such as providing equipment and internet access and awarding annual awards for excellent contributions. Participants also noted the need for ECA and DAW to provide support to the sub-regional coordinators and to make an official request to the heads of national machineries to put the coordinator position in place and include it in the relevant job description. (See Annex 8 of Annex 4 for more information on the roles and responsibilities of sub-regional coordinators).

96. The gender focal points from the five **ECA sub-regional offices** will also play a key role at the sub-regional level by supporting the sub-regional coordinators and participating in the Management Group.

Regional level

97. The ten sub-regional coordinators from national machineries will form a regional **Management Group**, which will monitor and guide the overall operation of the network. It will comprise the 10 sub-regional coordinators, representatives from ECA and DAW, and gender focal points from the five ECA sub-regional offices.

98. The Management Group will hold quarterly electronic discussions on overall management issues through a discussion list with restricted access. Summaries of the quarterly discussions will be posted on the general discussion list for national machineries so that all staff in national machineries can access this information. Participants noted the need for a clear Terms of Reference for the Management Group, which should include the requirement that the Management Group create and establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the e-network, including the development of indicators. The Management Group should also determine how the meetings can operate in both English and French (See Annex 9 of Annex 4 for more information on the Management Group).

99. **ECA and DAW** will be key contributors to e-network activities by participating in the discussions list and e-discussions and providing information to the portal. They will also play a key role in advocacy and lobbying around the e-network, including raising awareness among other United Nations agencies at headquarters and at country level. In addition, ECA will provide technical support for the information portal and discussion list and DAW will provide substantive support to the e-network, including the preparation of a supporting manual for national machinery staff, in hard-copy and electronic versions, which will include all documents from the workshop and the final report, user-friendly guidelines on the discussion list and e-discussions and other supporting documents on gender and ICT.

Other stakeholders

100. Other stakeholders at the local, regional and international levels can also play an active role in the e-network. They may be users of information that is available on the information portal or they may be participants in the regular thematic e-discussions. The e-network is an excellent forum for national machineries to expand their networks with such stakeholders, including line ministry staff, regional organizations, NGOs, private sector companies, faith-based organizations, donors and academics. Interaction between the e-network and other stakeholders involved in gender equality and ICT, particularly NGOs at the national level, provides an excellent opportunity to make progress in this area and should be encouraged.

7. OVERALL CHALLENGES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE E-NETWORK

101. The effective participation of national machineries will require the political will of Ministers and senior management. A number of actions were suggested to build political will, including a letter from ECA informing ministers of the e-network, identifying their responsibilities and making recommendations, such as including e-network responsibilities in relevant job descriptions, as well as noting the need for the e-network team members to have access to computers and internet. An informal meeting of African ministers during the Commission on the Status of Women was also suggested. The Committee on Women and Development (CWD) could also play a role in securing leadership commitment, either through a letter from the Chair of CWD to fellow ministers or through a face-to-face meeting. Participants also suggested that the Declaration on national machineries, gender equality and ICT, adopted at the September 2005 regional meeting, should be sent as part of the package sent to Ministers with the final report.

102. The issue of limited resources and the need for training were emphasized during the discussions as a major obstacle to effective participation in the e-network. It was suggested that ECA and DAW send national machineries an in-depth survey to determine their level of access to ICT in order to assist them develop customized strategies for resource mobilization. The survey could rank national machineries according to a scale, in which a national machinery at level 1 would mean most staff have computers at their desk with internet of good speed, and a national machinery at level 5 would mean no computers or internet access. A questionnaire was already sent by DAW to national machineries in 2006, with 18 responses. National machineries who have not yet responded could still return the completed questionnaire to DAW.

103. As ECA and DAW were not in a position to provide additional resources, it was suggested that partnerships be developed with other ministries, non-governmental organizations or academic institutions. It was also proposed that there be a fundraising section on the portal to provide national machineries with information on fund raising and writing grant proposals, as well as links to grant-making organizations. It was noted that private sector companies could be an excellent resource, although it is more viable for national machineries to request assistance from the private sector in the form of equipment, internet connection and/or training in ICT skills, at low or no cost, rather than financial support. National machineries are encouraged to submit good practice examples of successful fundraising initiatives or collaborations with the private sector that could be highlighted on the portal.

104. Language barriers present a problem, not only for Francophone and Anglophone speakers, but also for Arabic and Portuguese speakers. The report notes a number of steps that have been taken or are planned to minimize the problem, such as regular summaries of the discussion list, but this is a challenge that requires further serious consideration.

105. Continuity of e-network members is a concern for many participants in the e-network due to high levels of staff turnover. To address this problem leadership commitment is required, as is the need to integrate the e-network into the strategy plan of each national machinery. The structure of the e-network is based on a system of teams, such as the three people in the e-network teams and the two sub-regional coordinators per sub-region, rather than individuals, in an effort to prevent staff turnover from having an effect on the operations and activities of the e-network. There is also a need for management of the e-network to be gradually passed over from ECA/DAW to the national machineries themselves. To succeed, it will be necessary to build the capacity of national

machineries to moderate e-discussions, manage the discussion list and update and host the information portal.

106. The role of national machineries in finding solutions to these challenges was stressed. It was also noted that common obstacles and challenges, as well as successful strategies to overcome them, could be a focal point for discussion during the end-of-year self-evaluation.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

107. The e-network has strong potential to become a valuable resource for national machineries in Africa. In order for it to have the greatest possible impact, it is essential that national machineries take ownership of the e-network and commit to active participation in the information portal, discussion list and thematic e-discussions.

108. **National machineries** should:

- ▶ Appoint the workshop attendee and two other staff members to form a national E-network Team and establish Terms of Reference for the team (see sample in Annex 6 of Annex 4).
- ▶ Organize a briefing session by the workshop attendee to inform all staff members about the e-network and its potential benefits for the national machinery (PowerPoint presentation available on discussion list website).
- ▶ Share training and resources with other staff members – including this workshop report and supporting documents.
- ▶ Develop national level strategies for incorporating the e-network into strategic plans of the national machinery.
- ▶ Send relevant staff names and email addresses to ngmafrica@uneca.org requesting sign-up to the general discussion list.
- ▶ Send resources for the information portal, including resources, news and events, to ngmafrica@uneca.org.
- ▶ Publicize the e-network portal and e-discussions among national and sub-regional stakeholders.
- ▶ Lobby for additional or improved ICT equipment and internet connectivity.

109. **Sub-regional coordinators** should:

- ▶ Make contact with the ECA sub-regional gender focal point in their region (see Annex 7 of Annex 4).
- ▶ Establish a strategy to encourage national level e-network teams to continue their participation in the e-network.
- ▶ Provide quarterly reports to the Management Group on sub-regional activities.
- ▶ Participate in Management Group meetings.

110. The **Management Group** should:

- ▶ Hold three meetings per year to monitor and guide the overall operation of the network.
- ▶ Provide support to national machineries, when possible, such as in the organization of e-discussions.
- ▶ Begin to develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the e-network, including indicators.
- ▶ Arrange for nomination of new sub-regional coordinators at the beginning of 2008.
- ▶ Identify key issues it should focus on, per year.

9. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Aide Mémoire

Annex 2: Programme of work

Annex 3: Participant list

Annex 4: Introduction to the e-network for national machineries in Africa

Annex 5: Integrating the e-network into the work of national machineries

Annex 6: Presentation by Erik Johnson, World Bank Institute.

Annex 1: Aide Mémoire

**Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
and the African Centre for Gender and Social Development, Economic Commission for Africa**

Capacity Building for Promoting Gender Equality in Africa and West Asia Countries

**Regional workshop to establish the African e-network for national machineries and its support
mechanisms**

AIDE-MEMOIRE

Addis Ababa
5-8 December 2006

I. Introduction

The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) is co-organizing with the African Centre for Gender and Social Development (ACGS), of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), a workshop for representatives from African national machineries for the advancement of women. The regional workshop will take place at the ECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 5 to 8 December 2006. One national machinery representative per African country will be invited to participate.

The project builds on a series of sub-regional and regional capacity-building and network-building activities undertaken in 2004 and 2005 on strengthening the capacity of national machineries through the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT). The workshop will introduce participants to the structure and activities of an e-network for national machineries in Africa and its support mechanisms. It will include training for participants on the practical and technical aspects of the e-network.

II. Background

The project has the overall objective to build institutional capacity for promoting gender equality in Africa and West Asia. The current phase of the project focuses on the development of a regional e-network among national machineries in Africa, which aims to enhance the capacity of national machineries of participating countries to take full advantage of ICT to strengthen networking, information sharing and knowledge management.

The Beijing Platform for Action noted that national machineries for the advancement of women have been established in almost every Member State to, *inter alia*, design, promote the implementation of, execute, monitor, evaluate, advocate and mobilize support for policies that promote the advancement of women (para 196). The national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy-coordinating unit inside governments. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas (para 201).

At its forty-seventh session, the Commission adopted agreed conclusions 2003/44 on participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies

and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women. The Commission urged Governments and other stakeholders to, inter alia: “enhance, for the benefit of women and girls, international cooperation in support of national efforts to create an enabling environment to reduce the digital and information divide between developed and developing countries and promote, develop and enhance access to, and transfer of, knowledge and technology...” (para. 4w) and “strengthen the capacity of national machineries for the advancement of women, including through the allocation of adequate and appropriate resources and the provision of technical expertise, to take a lead advocacy role with respect to media and ICT and gender equality, support their involvement in national, regional and international processes related to media and ICT issues and enhance coordination among ministries responsible for ICT, national machineries for the advancement of women, the private sector and non-governmental organizations working in the field of gender advocacy.” (para. 4x)

In the outcome documents of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Governments committed themselves to ensuring that the Information Society enables women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes, and agreed that gender perspectives should be mainstreamed into all sectors of development and ICT used as a tool to that end. The action-oriented Tunis Agenda, adopted at the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (November 2005), committed Member States to building ICT capacity for all and confidence in the use of ICT by all, including women. It was acknowledged that full participation of women is necessary to ensure inclusiveness and respect for human rights within the Information Society. The Tunis Agenda made a commitment to implementing effective training and education, particularly in ICT science and technology, which motivates and promotes participation and active involvement of girls and women in decision-making in the Information Society.

The creation of an e-based network of national machineries in Africa will enhance the effectiveness of national machineries within each country. It will serve as a tool to strengthen the capacity of national machineries to implement their mandates, for example, by supporting their work as advocates and catalysts for gender mainstreaming, as well as support the design and use of an adequate information infrastructure for the achievement of gender equality. The e-network will also link national machineries to the intergovernmental processes, such as the regional Committee on Women and Development (CWD) and the global Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), through facilitating preparations for upcoming sessions. It will also enhance networking and sharing of information and good practice examples regionally and sub-regionally.

III. Regional workshop to establish the African e-network for national machineries and its support mechanisms

A. Objectives of the workshop

The workshop aims to enhance the institutional capacity of national machineries to effectively use ICT to strengthen their networking and capacity-building programmes for the advancement of women in Africa and act as catalysts for systematic gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes, nationally and regionally.

The workshop will:

- Establish the structure and activities of an e-based network of national machineries from participating countries to strengthen cooperation and information-sharing through regular information dissemination on gender equality and women's empowerment, including via electronic media and the internet;
- Provide training to participants in the technical and operational aspects of the e-network;
- Enhance the capacity of national machineries to maximize the use and benefit of information and knowledge management, through more effective use of ICT, to promote gender equality.

B. Expected outputs

The workshop will produce the following outputs:

- A draft regional web portal for the e-network will have been presented to participants and modified to incorporate their comments and suggestions;
- The structure, form and activities of the e-based network of national machineries will have been discussed and finalized;
- The responsibilities and commitments of the national machineries, ECA and DAW in relation to the future functioning of the e-based network will have been discussed and finalized;
- Representatives from the national machineries will have been trained in practical and technical aspects of the e-network, such as using discussion lists, sharing information on the web portal and participating in e-discussions.

It is anticipated that, based on the experience gained during the workshop, participants will use the e-network on a continuous basis, to share experiences and good practices, and exercise leadership for promoting gender equality. The e-network will provide an unparalleled opportunity for networking and collaboration prior to regional and global inter-governmental (CWD and CSW) and treaty body processes (CEDAW). It will also assist national machineries in sharing knowledge on critical areas of concern for gender equality in Africa, as well as identifying and addressing salient emerging issues.

C. Venue and participants

The four-day event will take place at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The number of participants will be approximately seventy. They will include:

- One representative from each national machinery (53);
- Representatives from ECA (African Centre for Gender and Social Development and Development Information Services Division);
- Gender focal points from ECA sub-regional offices;
- Staff members from the Division for the Advancement of Women;
- Facilitators/trainers/resource persons.

D. Organizational and administrative matters

The workshop will be co-organized by DAW and ECA. The meeting of 53 representatives of national machineries will be held for four days. Participants will convene in plenary as well as in working groups. Participants will first review the outcomes of the earlier project on strengthening the

capacity of national machineries through the effective use of ICT, and evaluate progress made in implementing the regional Declaration and Strategic Framework for Action, adopted at the regional meeting in Addis Ababa, in September 2005.

A proposed structure and activities of the e-network will be presented at the workshop and participants will meet in working groups to evaluate this and make recommendations. A draft design for the regional web portal for national machineries will be presented at the workshop and participants will play an active role in adapting the functions, design and content as needed. Participants will also receive training in the practical and technical aspects of participating in the e-network, such as using discussion lists, sharing information on the web portal and participating in e-discussions. On the final day, the results of the discussions in the meeting, the revised regional web portal and the revised structure and activities of the e-network will be presented in plenary.

E. Interpretation

The plenary sessions will be conducted in English with interpretation into French. Working groups will be conducted in English and French.

F. Documentation

The documentation of the workshop will comprise relevant background papers, as well as training materials designed specifically for this workshop. Participants will be provided with handouts to facilitate the training of other staff members in their respective national machineries.

G. Budget

The Division for the Advancement of Women will make available funds required to cover expenses for the organization of the meeting. This will include the costs of travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) for all invited participants, as well as for consultants and resource persons.

H. Passports and Visas

Participants will be expected to make necessary arrangements with regard to passports, visa and health certificates for travel. ECA will send out an information note to participants to assist with travel arrangements.

I. Correspondence

All relevant correspondence should be addressed to:

Sibel Selcuk
Gender Analysis Section
Division for the Advancement of Women
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 963-3154
Fax: (212) 963-3463

Email: selcuk@un.org

Joanna Skinner

Gender Analysis Section
Division for the Advancement of Women
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
Tel (212) 963-4426
Fax. (212) 963 3463
E-mail: skinner@un.org

Omar Ismael Abdourahman

Economic Affairs Officer
African Centre for Gender and Social Development
Economic Commission for Africa
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: 251 1 44 34 29
Fax: 251 1 51 44 16
E-mail: abdourahman@uneca.org

Annex 2: Programme of Work

Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
and the African Centre for Gender and Social Development, Economic Commission for
Africa

Regional workshop to establish the African e-network for national machineries and its support mechanisms

Addis Ababa
5-8 December 2006

PROGRAMME OF WORK

Tuesday 5 December

8.20 *Bus leaves for the Conference Centre*

I. OPENING SESSION

Plenary in Caucus Room 11

8.45 Opening of the meeting
 - *Welcome by Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)*
 - *Introductory Statement by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of
 the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*

 Introduction to the meeting (ECA)
 - *Introduction of the participants/facilitators*
 - *Logistical matters*
 - *Adoption of the Programme of Work*

-

 Project objectives and outcomes (ECA)

10.15 *COFFEE/TEA BREAK*

II. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, NETWORKING AND THE USE OF ICT

Plenary in Caucus Room 11

10.45 Communication strategies, knowledge management and networking
 Value and uses of ICT
 Presenter: Erik Caldwell Johnson, World Bank

- 12.15 The value of electronic networking
Presenter: ECA
- 12.45 *LUNCH*
- 14.00 INSTRAW experience of communication strategies, knowledge management and networking
Presenter: INSTRAW
- 14.30 Status and use of ICT by national machineries (results of questionnaire)
Presenter: DAW
- 15.00 Mainstreaming gender in ICT policies
Presenter: ECA
- 15.30 Experiences on communication strategies, knowledge management and use of ICT.
Panel presentations by national machineries followed by interactive discussion
Moderator: ECA
- 16.30 *COFFEE/TEA BREAK*

Working Groups in Caucus Rooms 7 (French) and 8 (English)

- 17.00 Working groups (#1) to discuss communication strategies, knowledge management, networking and the use of ICT
Facilitators: DAW/INSTRAW
- 18.00 *Bus leaves for Hotel Hilton*

Wednesday 6 December

8.20 *Bus leaves for the Conference Centre*

III. ELECTRONIC NETWORKING AND THE E-NETWORK FOR NATIONAL MACHINERIES IN AFRICA

Plenary in Caucus Room 11

8.45 Report back to plenary and interactive discussion
- *Results of working groups (#1) on communication strategies, knowledge management and the use of ICT*

9.15 Sub-regional and regional electronic networks for women in Africa
- Panel presentations by representatives of networks in Africa
Moderator: ECA

10.15 *COFFEE/TEA BREAK*

Working Groups in Caucus Rooms 7 (French) and 8 (English)

11.15 Working groups (#2) to discuss e-networking
Facilitators: ECA/INSTRAW

12.15 *LUNCH*

Plenary in Caucus Room 11

13.30 Report back to plenary
- *Results of working groups (#2) on e-networking*

14.00 Presentation on the e-network, information portal, discussion lists and e-discussions (ECA)
- *Overview of structure and activities*
- *What is an information portal? Guidelines for its effective use*
- *What are discussion lists? Guidelines for their effective use*
- *What are e-discussions? Guidelines for their effective use*
- *Stakeholders – Who will use the e-network?*

15.30 *COFFEE/TEA BREAK*

Working Groups in Caucus Rooms 7 (French) and 8 (English)

16.00 Working groups (#3) to discuss the e-network
Facilitators: ECA
- *Information portal*
- *Activities of the e-network (discussions lists, themes of e-discussions)*

- *Network name*

17.15 Optional evening tutorials available if needed (sign-up required)
- *Email / - Internet / - Software*

18.00 *Bus leaves for Hotel Hilton*

Thursday 7 December

8.20 *Bus leaves for the Conference Centre*

Plenary in Caucus Room 11

8.45 Report back to plenary and interactive discussion
- *Results of working groups (#3) to discuss the e-network*

10.15 *COFFEE/TEA BREAK*

IV. TRAINING ON E-NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Working Groups in IT rooms

10.45 Hands-on training on:
- *Information portal*
- *Discussion lists and e-discussions, and creation of discussion lists*
Facilitator: ECA

12.45 *LUNCH*

14.00 Working group discussions (#4) on findings from the hands-on training
Facilitators: ECA

Plenary in Caucus Room 11

14.45 Report back to plenary and interactive discussion
- *Results of working groups (#4) on findings from the hands-on training*

15.30 *COFFEE/TEA BREAK*

V. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

16.00 Contributions to and use of e-network by national machineries
Presenter: ECA
- *E-network teams within national machineries*
- *Other staff in the national machinery*

17.00 Management of the e-network

- Presenter: ECA
- *Sub-regional coordinators from national machineries*
 - *ECA sub-regional coordinators*
 - *ECA HQ and DAW*

18.00 *Bus leaves for Hotel Hilton*

Friday 8 December

8.20 *Bus leaves for the Conference Centre*

Working Groups in Caucus Rooms 7 (French) and 8 (English)

- 8.45 Working groups (#5) to discuss roles and responsibilities and management of the e-network
Facilitators: ECA
- 9.45 Management Group Meeting to discuss responsibilities (*if necessary*)
Facilitator: ECA
- 10.30 *COFFEE/TEA BREAK*

VI. FINALIZATION OF THE E-NETWORK STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

Plenary in Caucus Room 11

- 11.00 Report back to plenary
- Results of working groups (#5) on roles and responsibilities of the e-network
- 11.30 Interactive discussion on finalization of the e-network
Facilitator: ECA
- *Information portal*
 - *Network name*
 - *Activities of the e-network (discussions lists, themes of e-discussions)*
 - *Roles and responsibilities*
 - *Management*
 - *Involving other stakeholders*
- 12.30 Presentation of proposal as modified
Facilitator: ECA
- 13.00 Closing of the meeting
- Statement by ECA
 - Statement by DAW
- 13.30 *END OF WORKSHOP*
- Afternoon: Free

Annex 3: List of participants

Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
and the African Centre for Gender and Social Development, Economic Commission for
Africa

Regional workshop to establish the African e-network for national machineries and its support mechanisms

Addis Ababa
5-8 December 2006

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ANGOLA

Mr. Gloria Fernando ROSARIO
Journalist
MINFAMU
Luanda, Angola
Tel.: 244 222 311171
Fax: 244 222 311171
Email: ferrosgloria@yahoo.com.br

BENIN

Mr. Léonard LALEYE
Directeur-Adjoint a la Promotion de la
Femme et du Genre (DPFG)
MFFE, 01 B.P. 2802
Cotonou, Bénin
Tel.: 229 21 300333
Fax: 229 21 316462
Email: laleyel@yahoo.fr

BOTSWANA

Ms. Kgalalelo SENNE
Principal Gender Officer
Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs
Private Bag 00107
Gaborone, Botswana
Tel.: 267 391 2290
Fax: 267-3911944
Email: ksenne@gov.bw
Email: chepete.senne@yahoo.com

BURKINA FASO

Ms. Gisele YONLI
Point Focal Genre & TIC
DELGI
06 B.P. 9904
Ouaga 06, Burkina Faso
Tel: 226 50 375466
Fax: 226 50 318350
Email: gilayon@yahoo.fr

BURUNDI

Ms. Spès-Caritas BARANKARIZA
Conseiller Responsable du Genre au
Cabinet
Ministère de la Solidarité Nationale,
Droits de la Personne Humaine et Genre
Bujumbura, Burundi
Tel. : 257 248719/216303
Fax: 257 21 8202
Email: scharity2000@yahoo.fr

CAPE VERDE

Ms. Milsania Eduioes SOUSA TAVARES
Journaliste
Institut de la Condition de la Femme
Praia, Cape Vert
Tel.: 238-2616271
Fax: 238-2615263
Email: mitchana@gmail.com

Ms. Vera Lúcia MASCARENHAS
GOMES MARTINS
Sociologue
Núcleo Operationel pour la Société de
l'Information, NOSi
Av. Amílcar Cabral, Ed. Ministério das
Finanças, Plateau,
Ilê de Santiago, Praia, Cape Vert
Tel.: 00238-2616031/ 2607564
Fax: 00238-2615510
Email: veral@nosi.cv

CHAD

Mr. Théodore MBAINAISSEM
Conseiller en Environnement et
Développement Communautaire
Ministère de l'Action Sociale et de la
Famille
B.P. 80
N'Djamena, Tchad
Tel.: 235 522952
Fax: 235 524888
Email: apedac2001@yahoo.fr

DJIBOUTI

Madame Djibah Choukri HOUSSEIN
Chef de Service des Affaires Economiques
Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme
Djibouti
Tel.: 253-822501/353409
Fax: 253-350439/354421
Email: djibahchoukri@yahoo.fr

Ms. Mariam Hamadou ALI
Sous-Directrice de la Planification
Point Focal Genre
Ministère des Finances
B.P. 10014
Djibouti
Tel.: 253-356786/352801
Fax: 253-355085
Email: mariamhamadou@yahoo.fr

EGYPT

Dr. Zeinab SAFAR
Technical Advisor
National Council for Women
1113 Corniche El-Nile
Cairo, Egypt
Tel.: 202 7355482 / 5748494 ext. 218 or
109
Fax: 202 7374193 / 5745596
Email: zsafar@ncwegypt.com
Email: zeinabsafar@yahoo.com

ETHIOPIA

Ms. Assefu GEBRE-AMLAK
Team Leader/Capacity Building
Ministry of Women
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel.: 251-11-4166356/4166382
Fax: 251-11-4663995
Email: assefug2005@yahoo.com

GAMBIA

Mr. Lamin M. CEESAY
Deputy Executive Director
National Women's Bureau
14/15 Marina Parade
Banjul, The Gambia
Tel.: 220 422 8733/30
Fax: 220 422 9846
Email: lceesay2@yahoo.com

GHANA

Ms. Francesca POBEE-HAYFORD
Acting Director
Ministry of Women & Children Affairs
P.O. Box CT 1402
Cantonments, Accra, Ghana
Tel.: 233-021-228064
Fax: 233-021-688182
Email: fp_hayford@hotmail.com

KENYA

Ms. Mary Mumbi KIMATHI
Senior Programme Officer Gender/Senior
Social Development Officer
Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture &
Social Services
P.O. Box 16936-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: 254-20-2727980/1/2/3 Ext. 2713
Fax: 254-20-2734417
Email: marykimathi@yahoo.com

LESOTHO

Ms. Mahali SEKANTSI
Senior Gender Officer
Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sport and
Recreation
P.O. Box 729
Maseru 100, Lesotho
Tel.: 266-22-314763
Fax: 266-22-310506
Email: halisntlo@yahoo.com

LIBERIA

Ms. Quitina COOPER
Communication Officer
Ministry of Gender & Development
UN Drive and Gurley Street
Monrovia, Liberia
Tel.: 631-06-831000
Email: shawein224@yahoo.com

MADAGASCAR

Ms. Siti Mariesa LODA
Assistante technique Projet Genre
Ministère de la Population, de la
Protection Sociale et des Loisirs
Antananarivo, Madagascar
Tel.: 261-20 22 03204/70189
Fax: 261-20 22 64823
Email: lmariesa@yahoo.fr

MALAWI

Ms. Lexa Gladys AMOSI
Ministry of Women and Child
Development
P/Bag 330
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Tel.: 265 1774708
Fax: 265 8318363
Email: lexa_amosi@yahoo.co.uk

MALI

Mr. Amadou DEMBELE
Charge Gestion Site Web
Centre National de Documentation et
d'Information sur la Femme et l'Enfant
(CNDIFE)
Ministere de la Promotion de la Femme,
de l'Enfant et de la Famille (MPFEF)
B.P. 2688
Bamako, Mali
Tel.: 223 223 6017
Fax: 223 222 7524
Email : adoufa20002000@yahoo.fr

MAURITANIA

Mr. Brahim Vall Ould Mohamed
LEMINE
Charge de Mission, Président Groupe
Multisectoriel Genre
Secrétariat d'Etat a la Condition Féminine
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Tel.: 222-525-8018
Fax: 225-525-7156
Email: bvallml@yahoo.fr

MOROCCO

Mr. Rachid EL AOUEJ
Ingénieur d'Etat
Secrétariat d'Etat, Charge de la Famille,
de l'Enfance et des Personnes
Handicapées
Rabat, Maroc
Tel.: 212-37-773231
Fax: 212-37-772197/681225
Email: rachidaj@gmail.com

MOZAMBIQUE

Ms. Agueda NHANTUMBO
Executive Secretary for National Council
for the Advancement of Women
Ministry of Women and Social Action
Rua Da Tchamba, 86
Maputo, Mozambique
Tel.: 258-21 497901
Fax: 258-21 491729
Email: lececiane@yahoo.com.br

NAMIBIA

Ms. Melitha Antonia DUMBU
Development Planner: Research
Ministry of Gender Equality and Child
Welfare
Juvenis Building
Independence Avenue
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel.: 264 61 2833115
Fax: 264 61 226842
Email: adumbu@mgecw.gov.na
Email: maldumbu@yahoo.com.au

NIGERIA

Ms. Olayinka OLATUNJI
Deputy Director, Women Affairs
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
P.M.B. 229 Garki
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel.: 234-9-5238341
Fax: 234-9-5237112
Email: favouredyinka@yahoo.co.uk

REP. DU CONGO

Ms. Cornélie ADOU-NGAPI
Directrice générale de l'Intégration de la
Femme au Développement
Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et
de l'Intégration de la Femme au
Développement (MPFIFD)
Brazzaville, Republic of Congo
Tel.: 242 556 0586
Email: cornelie_adoungapi@yahoo.fr

SAO TOME & PRINCIPE

Ms. Neusa Carvacho RAPOSO
Directrice du Division de Promotion de la
Femme et de la Famille
Ministère de Travail, Solidarité, Femme et
Famille
Avenue Amilcar Cabral
Sao Tome, Sao Tome et Principe
Tel.: 239 39 90 92 30/22 47 97
Email: gabpromufa@costome.net

SENEGAL

Ms. Aminata Diouf NDIAYE
Conseillère Technique chargée des
questions de Genre
Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille et du
Développement Social
Building Administratif, 6ème Étage
Dakar, Senegal
Tel.: 221 849 7062
Fax: 221 822 9490
Email: aminatadioufndiaye@yahoo.fr

SEYCHELLES

Ms. Marie-Antoinette ALEXIS
Principal Secretary
Ministry of Employment and Social
Affairs
Social Affairs Department, PO Box 190
Mahé, Seychelles
Tel.: 248-281500/324943
Fax: 248-321880
Email: pssa@seychelles.net

SIERRA LEONE

Mr. Charles Bockarie VANDI
Programme Officer-Gender & Children's
Affairs
Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender &
Children's Affairs
Youyi Building
Freetown, Sierra Leone
Tel.: 232-22-240028
Fax: 232-22-242301
Email: charlesvandi04@yahoo.com

SUDAN

Ms. Limya Abd ELHAMEED
Official (Computer)
Ministry of Social Welfare, Women &
Child Affairs
Khartoum, Sudan
Tel.: 249 83 770329
Fax: 249 83 777633
Email: limya2@hotmail.com
Email: laam_fa@yahoo.com

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Mr. Timothy-Gabriel MGONJA
Community Development Officer
Ministry of Community Development,
Gender & Children
P.O. Box 3448
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
Tel.: 255-22-2132526
Fax: 255-22-2124852
Email: timothymgonja@hotmail.com

TOGO

Mme. AKAKPO Akuai Léontine née
ESSEH-YOVO
Directrice générale de la Promotion
Féminine
Ministère des Affaires Sociales et la
Promotion de la Femme
B.P. 369
Lomé, Togo
Tel.: 228 221-6166
Fax: 228 222-2575 / 221-6166
Email: akakpoyovo@yahoo.fr

TUNISIA

Mr. Driss MNAJJA
Responsable TIC
Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille, de
l'Enfance et des Personnes Agées de Tunis
02 Rue d'Alger 1002
Tunis, Tunisia
Tel.: 216-71252 514
Fax: 216-71344 643
Email: driss.mnajja@email.ati.tn

UGANDA

Ms. Magdalene Mabweijano
KYOMUKAMA
Assistant Commissioner Gender &
Community Development
Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social
Development
Kampala, Uganda
Tel.: 256-41 347854/5
Fax: 256-41 256374
Email: mmkyomukama@yahoo.com
Email: mmk@mglsd.go.ug

ZAMBIA

Mr. Norbert BUKOKA
Documentalist
Gender in Development Division
Cabinet Office
P.O. Box 30208
Lusaka, Zambia
Tel.: 26 01 230024
Fax: 26 01 253493
Email: mweeneb@yahoo.com

ZIMBABWE

Ms. Caroline MATIZHA
Director for Gender
Ministry of Women Affairs
Gender and Community Development
P. Bag 7762 Causeway
Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel.: 263 4 253064
Fax: 263 4 708065
Email: matizhac@africaonline.co.zw

NETWORK REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. Dorothy OKELLO
Coordinator
Women of Uganda Network
(WOUGNET)
P.O. Box 4411
Kampala, Uganda
Tel.: 256-41 4532035
Fax: 255-41 4530474
Email: dokello@wougnnet.org

Chimene BINDJEME
Protégé QV
P.O. BOX 4888
Yaounde
Cameroon
Tel.: 237-2318546
Fax: 237-2318546
Email: chimene_b2000@yahoo.fr

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Ms. Thokozile RUZVIDZO
Officer in Charge
African Centre for Gender and Social
Development (ACGSD)
3rd Floor, UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 443448
Fax 251-11-5 512785
Email: truzvidzo@uneca.org

Ms. Wambui KARANJA
Senior Social Affairs Officer
ACGSD
3rd Floor, UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 443429
Fax 251-11-5 512785
Email: wkaranja@uneca.org

Ms. Houda MEJRI
Information Officer
ACGSD
3rd Floor, UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 443337

Fax 251-11-5 512785
Email: hmejri@uneca.org

Ms. Tacko NDIAYE
Economic Affairs Officer
ACGSD
3rd Floor, UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 445205
Fax 251-11-5 512785
Email: tndiaye@uneca.org

Ms. Selamawit ABEBE
Project Management Officer
ACGSD
3rd Floor, UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 443429
Fax 251-11-5 512785
Email: sabebe@uneca.org

Ms. Carole Andree Ngouleu NGANSOBI
ACGSD
3rd Floor, UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: cngouleu@yahoo.fr

Mr. Omar Ismael ABDOURAHMAN
Economic Affairs Officer
ACGSD
3rd Floor, UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 443429
Fax 251-11-5 512785
Email: oabdourahman@uneca.org

Mr. Souleyman ABDALLAH
Associate Economic Affairs Officer
ACGSD
3rd Floor, UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 443784
Fax 251-11-5 512785
Email: sabdallah@uneca.org

Mr. Kibruyisfa ACHAMYELEH
Information Officer
Information and Communication Services
UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 445304
Email: kachamyeleh@uneca.org

Ms. Eskedar NEGA
Officer in Charge
ICT Policy and Development Section
ICT and Science and Technology Division
(ISTD)
UNECA
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. 251-11-5 445315
Email: enega@uneca.org

ECA SUB-REGIONAL OFFICES

Ms. Hadija GAVA
Economic Affairs Officer
ECA Office in East Africa (ECA-EA)
Kigali, Rwanda
Email: hgava@uneca.org

Ms. Irene LOMAYANI
Social Affairs Officer
ECA Office in Southern Africa (ECA-SA)
P.O. Box 30647
Lusaka, Zambia
Tel.: 260-1-228502
Email: irenelomayani@yahoo.com

Ms. Anne-Marie BAKYONO
Statistician
ECA Office in Central Africa (ECA-CA)
P.O. Box 14935
Yaounde, Cameroon
Tel.: 237 772 6099
Fax: 237 223 3185
Email: abakyono@uneca.org

Ms. Fatouma SISSOKO
Economics Affairs Officer, Gender Focal
Point
ECA Office in West Africa (ECA-WA)
B.P. 744
Niamey, Niger
Tel.: 227 96560058
Email: fsissoko@uneca.org

UNITED NATIONS DIVISION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Ms. Sibel SELCUK
Associate Economic Affairs Officer
Division for the Advancement of Women
2 UN Plaza, DC2-1266
New York, New York
USA
Tel: 212-963-3154
Fax: 212-963-3463
Email: selcuk@un.org

Ms. Joanna SKINNER
Associate Social Affairs Officer
Division for the Advancement of Women
2 UN Plaza, DC2-1264
New York, New York
USA
Tel: 212-963-4426
Fax: 212-963-3463
Email: skinner@un.org

INSTRAW

Mr. Laurent DUVILLIER
Media & Communications Specialist
United Nations International Research and
Training Institute for the Advancement of
Women (UN-INSTRAW)
#102-A Calle Nicolas Penson
Sainto Domingo
République Dominicaine
Tel.: 1 809 685.21.11 ext. 227
Fax: 1 809 685.21.17
Email: lduvillier@un-instraw.org

CONSULTANTS

Mr. Erik Caldwell JOHNSON
Knowledge for Development (K4D)
Program
World Bank Institute
1818 H Street, NW, MSN J 3-302
Washington, DC 20433
Tel: 202-458-9891
Fax: 202-522-0638
Email: ejohnson1@worldbank.org
Web: www.worldbank.org/ks

Mr. Solomon TESFAYE
eSystems Africa
P.O. Box 60149
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Cell phone 251-91 1 202727
Email: stesfaye@esystemsafrika.com

Annex 4: Introduction to the e-network for national machineries in Africa



United Nations Nations Unies

**Division for the Advancement of Women,
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

In collaboration with

**African Centre for Gender and Social Development,
Economic Commission for Africa**

**AN INTRODUCTION TO NGMNET-AFRICA:
AN E-NETWORK OF NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERIES IN AFRICA**

JANUARY 2007

1. BACKGROUND

The Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) collaborated with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on a project to build the capacity of national machineries in Africa to effectively use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to enhance achievement of the goals of gender equality and empowerment of women throughout the region. In 2004 and 2005, four sub-regional workshops were organized to strengthen skills on information and knowledge management and the use of ICT. A regional meeting was held in Addis Ababa in September 2005 to highlight the lessons learned from the sub-regional workshops and begin development of an e-network (electronic network) for national machineries in Africa.

The e-network serves as an important tool to enhance knowledge management and communication strategies, as well as strengthen networking between national machineries at the sub-regional and regional level. It enhances the capacity of national machineries to utilize ICT to enhance their roles as advocates and catalysts for the achievement of gender equality. In particular, it provides potential for increasing the sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practice examples between national machineries. It also directly links national machineries to information on and processes connected to important intergovernmental bodies in the United Nations, such as the regional Committee on Women and Development and the global Commission on the Status of Women, as well as to the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

2. STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE E-NETWORK

The e-network for national machineries consists of a web-based information portal; general electronic discussion lists and regular thematic e-discussions. (See Annex 1 for timeline of activities in 2007 and Annex 2 for a glossary of terms).

A. Information portal

An information portal looks like a regular website, with a number of different pages that make up the portal. It is internet-based and can be accessed through an internet URL (website address). An information portal has the specific function of being a “gateway” to key information and resources on a particular topic.

The information portal will be the central hub of the e-network for national machineries. National machineries will use the portal to share and access relevant information and resources, including information on national machineries in Africa, as well as on information of relevance to national machineries. National machineries are the primary contributors to the portal and should submit resources, case studies, news and events to nmwafrica@uneca.org (See Annex 3 for more details on the information portal).

The portal includes:

(a) Access to information

Information on national machineries:

- Contact details of national machineries in Africa;

- A resource center of information provided by national machineries, such as reports from recent research or projects;
- Highlights of news from national machineries, updated monthly.

Information of relevance to national machineries:

- Regional and global inter-governmental processes, such as the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW);
- Information on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the African Protocol on the Rights of Women;
- Information on relevant regional organizations, such as the African Union, the African Development Bank, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
- Information on innovations and good practices from national machineries in other regions.

Information on the portal should be general information on gender equality issues that national machineries wish to share among themselves and with other stakeholders.

(b) Possibilities for interactive activities

Discussion lists for national machineries

A discussion list is a convenient electronic method to share information and discuss issues, such as challenges and good practices in particular areas. It is an electronic mailing list that offers the opportunity for members to post information, make suggestions or pose questions to a large number of people at the same time through the use of a group email address. Anyone with an email account can join a discussion list. A member writes an email message to the group, sends it to the discussion list address, and the submission is distributed to all of the other members of the discussion list. Messages are downloaded as an email rather than viewed over a connection to the internet, thereby facilitating participation by those without regular internet connection.

One general discussion list for national machineries has been established, with contributions in French and English, for continuous exchange of information between national machineries. National machineries can use the discussion lists to share information, raise queries with other national machineries and exchange ideas on relevant topics. It can also be used as a tool to mobilize African national machineries around a particular event or theme, such as in preparations for upcoming inter-governmental processes, including the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). (See Annex 4 for more information on using the discussion lists).

Access to the discussion list is email-based and participants can send and receive messages directly from their existing email accounts. It is also possible to access a web-based version of the discussion list via a link on the information portal. The web-based interface for the discussion list is in English and French. From here, members can view message archives as well as a list of members belonging to the discussion list. They can also edit their own profile and change their password.

These discussion lists will be open only to staff members of the national machineries and relevant staff members of ECA and DAW. Summaries of the main highlights of the discussion lists will be provided by ECA on a regular basis, in English and French, as relevant.

The content of the discussion list should be specific to national machineries and should be on issues of common interest. Suggested topics include sharing project information, sharing successful advocacy tools and strategies, requesting examples of good practices, seeking feedback on draft project proposals and looking for partnerships or experts.

There are established rules and etiquette for participating in discussion lists that should be followed (See Annex 4 for more details).

Thematic e-discussions for wider participation of stakeholders

An e-discussion is an electronic discussion to promote and stimulate debate on a particular topic. It is a tool for a group of people, in any geographic location, to exchange ideas and resources and is particularly useful for advancing understanding of key issues, methodologies and good practices, and identifying common obstacles and challenges. It can bring together a larger and more diverse group of people than most other learning events, and its extended duration permits a level of sustained interaction and reflection on the chosen subject that is often not possible with face-to-face meetings.

E-discussions are guided by a moderator, who provides a week-by-week outline with specific sub-topics and questions for discussion. Each week, participants in the e-discussion receive the questions for that week and can respond with their ideas and thoughts. At the end of an e-discussion a summary is produced that highlights some of the major findings and conclusions of the discussion. An e-discussion operates in the same way as a general discussion list, with messages being sent and received as an email, rather than viewing them over the internet. They can sometimes also be accessed through a web-based discussion forum.

E-discussions for the e-network of national machineries will be held every 4 months (3 per year), for a duration of 6 weeks, on relevant topics identified by national machineries. They will be open to all stakeholders, including national machineries, line ministries, NGOs, donors, academia etc., in order to promote collaboration and cooperation and encourage a vibrant and informed debate. National machineries are responsible for actively publicizing upcoming e-discussions and encouraging relevant stakeholders to take part.

The thematic e-discussions will operate in the same way as the general discussion list and can be accessed through both an existing email account and also through a web-based version via a link on the information portal. There are established rules and etiquette for participating in e-discussions that should be followed (See Annex 5 for more information on participating in e-discussions).

3. PARTICIPANTS IN THE E-NETWORK OF NATIONAL MACHINERIES

All staff of the national machineries should be encouraged to participate in the e-network, by using the information provided on the portal and sharing information on their work. They can also participate in the general discussion lists for national machineries, as well as in the e-discussions and other interactive activities, for example activities around regional inter-governmental processes.

Other stakeholders, such as line ministries and other national bodies, regional organizations, NGOs, academics and donors, should be informed of and encouraged to use the information portal. They can also be invited to participate in e-discussions and other activities. (They will not be able to participate in the general discussion lists for national machineries.)

4. MANAGEMENT OF THE E-NETWORK OF NATIONAL MACHINERIES

Within national machineries

An E-network Team should be established in each national machinery to ensure that the e-network is well known and integrated into the work of the national machinery. This team should be comprised of two gender specialists and the ICT specialist working with the national machinery (whether employed directly by the national machinery or loaned from another Ministry). In countries where focal points have also been established in the context of the African Information Initiative, these focal points could also be encouraged to participate in the team.

Members of the E-network Team are expected to encourage broad participation in the e-network by national machinery staff. This could include ensuring that as many staff as possible have access to email and have the capacity to participate in discussion lists and e-discussions. E-network teams are required to submit quarterly reports to their sub-regional coordinators and the Management Group (See Annex 6 for more information on the roles and responsibilities of the E-network Team).

Sub-regional

Two coordinators from national machineries in each ECA sub-region are nominated by e-network members on a 1-year rotational basis to guide the e-network at the sub-regional level. There are 10 coordinators in total, including French, English and Portuguese speakers. The gender focal points from the ECA sub-regional offices play a key role in supporting the sub-regional coordinators and monitoring the operation of the network. Sub-regional coordinators are required to submit quarterly reports to the Management Group (See Annex 7 for list of countries by ECA sub-region, and Annex 8 for roles and responsibilities of sub-regional coordinators).

Regional

The ten sub-regional coordinators from national machineries will form a regional Management Group, which will monitor and guide the overall operation of the network. It will comprise the 10 sub-regional coordinators, representatives from ECA and DAW, and the 5 gender focal points from the ECA sub-regional offices.

The Management Group will hold quarterly electronic discussions on overall management issues through a discussion list with restricted access. Summaries of the quarterly discussions will be posted on the general discussion lists for national machineries so that all staff in national machineries can access this information. (See Annex 9 for more information on the Management Group).

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL FUNCTIONING OF THE E-NETWORK

In the initial phase – the first one to two years following the regional workshop - activities are led by ECA headquarters, in collaboration with sub-regional coordinators, the ECA sub-regional gender focal points and DAW.

E-network Teams in the national machineries play a vital role in providing information to the information portal and participating in the e-network interactive activities.

The Management Group will provide overall guidance. It will also create and establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the e-network, including the development of indicators.

The first phase of the e-network activities are designed to build capacity of national machineries, especially the E-network Teams and 10 sub-regional coordinators, to manage future e-network activities.

6. WORKING LANGUAGES

The e-network will operate mainly in English and French. Core information on the information portal will be in English and French. However, resources available in other languages, such as Portuguese and Arabic, will be posted in the original language.

The general discussion list for national machineries operates in English and French. Translated summaries of the main highlights of the discussion lists are provided by ECA on a regular basis.

E-discussions are held in English and French. Summaries of the e-discussions will be distributed in English and French.

The Management Group will operate in English and French. Where possible members of the Management Group should be bilingual.

ANNEXES TO INTRODUCTION TO THE E-NETWORK

1. Timeline of e-network activities in 2007
2. Glossary
3. The information portal
4. Using the general discussion lists for national machineries
5. Participating in e-discussions
6. E-network Team in national machineries: roles and responsibilities
7. List of countries by sub-region
8. Sub-regional coordinators roles and responsibilities
9. Management Group

ANNEX 1. TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES IN 2007

	Dec 2006	Jan 2007	Feb 07	Mar 07	Apr 07	May 07	Jun 07	Jul 07	Aug 07	Sep 07	Oct 07	Nov 07	Dec 07
Portal	Prototype design completed	Portal launched	Monthly updates submitted to ECA webmaster by national machineries, ACGD and DAW										
Discussion Lists	Lists launched at workshop	DAW sends information on CSW							ECA sends information on CWD				
		Ongoing discussions, sharing of information											
E-discussions	Themes for 2007 agreed				E-discussion #1 (ECA)				E-discussion #2 (DAW)			E-discussion #3 (other)	
Management Group	Coordinators nominated at workshop					E-meeting				E-meeting			E-meeting

General

Term	Definition
Discussion list	An electronic mailing list that offers the opportunity for members to post suggestions or questions to a large number of people at the same time through the use of a group email address. Also commonly called a "listserv".
E-discussion	A discussion on a particular thematic issue, conducted electronically via email. E-discussions are often guided by a moderator and a week-by-week outline with specific questions is provided.
ICT	Information and communication technologies. Includes both traditional (print, TV, radio etc.) and new technologies (computers, internet etc.)
Information portal	An information portal has the specific function of being a "gateway" to key information and resources on a particular topic of interest. It is internet-based and can be accessed through an internet URL. It is the central hub of the e-network.
Knowledge management	Knowledge management refers to a range of practices used by organizations to identify, create, represent, and distribute knowledge for reuse, awareness and learning across the organization.
Knowledge management strategy	Outlines how an organization communicates knowledge within and outside an organization and how it captures and organizes critical knowledge of staff.
Knowledge networks	A knowledge network is broadly defined as a group of people sharing ideas and information around a specific topic. There are different types of networks in most organizations, ranging from personal networks to formal strategic knowledge networks.
Network	A group of people who exchange information, contacts, and experience for professional or social purposes.
Networking	An exchange of information, contacts or experience, which helps to make connections and build relationships of support. Networking can operate through both formal and informal channels. (NB: In computing, networking is the practice of linking 2 or more computing devices together to share data, often called a Local Area Network (LAN).)
Webmaster	Person responsible for the creation or maintenance of a website.

E-network for national machineries in Africa

Discussion list for national machineries	Electronic mailing list open only to staff of national machineries in Africa. It is primarily e-mail-based, with members sending and receiving messages via a group email address (ngmafrica@dgroups.org). A web-based version can also be accessed via the information portal.
E-network	An electronic-based network of national machineries for the advancement of women in Africa. It will operate through a web-based information portal and will facilitate the sharing of information and good practice examples, through the use of discussion lists and regular thematic e-discussions.

E-network Team	A team of 2 gender specialists and 1 ICT expert in each national machinery, responsible for integrating the e-network into the work of the national machinery and facilitating and encouraging participation in the e-network by all staff members.
Management Group	Responsible for overseeing the operation of the e-network. It will consist of 10 sub-regional coordinators from national machineries, as well as representatives from DAW and ECA, including ECA sub-regional gender focal points.
Sub-regional coordinators	Two national machinery representatives from each ECA sub-region nominated to participate in the Management Group. They are responsible for encouraging national E-network Teams to participate in the e-network and submit regular updates and resources to the information portal.
Thematic e-discussions	A discussion on a particular gender equality issue chosen by members of the e-network, conducted electronically via email. E-discussions last for 6 weeks and are held 3 times per year. They are open to all staff of national machineries as well as other stakeholders, including line ministry staff, NGOs, donors and academia. Thematic e-discussions are guided by a moderator, who provides a week-by-week outline with specific questions for participants to discuss.

ANNEX 3. THE INFORMATION PORTAL

The information portal is hosted and managed by ECA.

It is publicly available on the internet and all stakeholders can access information on the national machineries through the portal. The general discussion list for national machineries has restricted access.

The ECA web manager updates and adds content to the portal based on contributions from national machineries, sub-regional coordinators, ECA and DAW. Regular contributions and updates from national machineries are essential to maintain relevance and operation of the portal. The 10 sub-regional coordinators and 5 ECA sub-regional gender focal points are expected to regularly encourage E-network Teams to submit updates and resources.

All pages of the portal are printer-friendly to enable repackaging and distribution of the information by national machineries to their constituencies.

Contents of the portal:

<u>Information on national machineries</u>	
National machineries in Africa	Up-to-date contact list, including links to websites, where available.
Resource page on the work of national machineries	Documents/links provided by national machineries, organized under sub-headings of the Beijing Platform for Action’s 12 Critical Areas of Concern and other issues.
Events	Upcoming and past events including (a) events organized by national machineries; (b) events of interest to national machineries.
News	“What’s new” section on relevant news from national machineries in Africa
<u>Information on key bodies and networks</u>	
UN entities	Links to ECA; DAW; United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW); Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE); and WomenWatch (a United Nations information portal on gender equality).
Regional organizations	Links to Gender Directorate of the African Union; New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD); and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) etc.
Gender networks	Links to regional and sub-regional gender networks (e.g. APC Africa Women, Women’sNet, Gender and Media Southern Africa)
<u>Intergovernmental processes and treaty bodies</u>	
ECA & regional inter-governmental processes	Committee on Women and Development (CWD)

DAW & global inter-governmental processes	Information on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), incl. links to CSW webpage and links to DAW's e-discussions.
Treaty bodies	Information on CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, incl. links to texts in English, French & Arabic; dates of upcoming sessions; links to African States parties' reports & concluding comments. Information on African Protocol on the Rights of Women.
<u>Activities of the e-network for national machineries</u>	
General discussion list (restricted)	Link to general discussion list (restricted to national machineries only)
E-discussions	Links to each thematic e-discussions, with sign-up option; summaries of past e-discussions <i>NB: When new e-discussions start, a special link will be highlighted on the homepage.</i>
Other information	
Contacts	Email addresses to submit resources, comments and technical feedback
ICT explained	Brief notes and guidelines on ICT tools used in the e-network
Funding, resources and training opportunities	A selection of documents on fundraising, resources and training, including good practice examples and links to relevant opportunities

Additional sections may be added to the portal in the future. For example:

- A section on national machineries from other regions can provide information on innovative activities in other regions.
- Monthly rotating "Spotlight" section on the work of national machineries in different countries.

All staff of national machineries can and should participate in the discussion lists.

Subscribing to the discussion list

1. **Sign up.** The E-network team should send the name and email address of staff members who wish to join the list to nmwafrica@uneca.org.
2. **Set your e-mail preferences.**
 - a. **Regular e-mail:** When you subscribe to the discussion list, by default you will receive an e-mail each time someone posts to the list. If you wish to reset this setting after changing it, send an email to lyris@dgroups.org with the following in the body of the message: “set [nmwafrica](#) mail”
 - b. **E-mail digest:** This option allows you to receive only one e-mail each day with all of that day's messages included in it. To receive a daily digest send an email to lyris@dgroups.org with the following in the body of the message: “set [nmwafrica](#) digest”
3. **Read and post messages:** You will receive emails in your inbox, and can read and respond as desired. New messages should be sent to nmwafrica@dgroups.org. This will distribute your message to every active member of the discussion list.
4. **Reading archived messages:** To access old messages from the discussion list, visit the information portal and click on the discussion list link. After logging in to the discussion list, click on “Discussion” in the left navigation bar.
5. **Unsubscribing:** To unsubscribe from the list send a blank email to leave-nmwafrica@dgroups.org.

An FAQ on Dgroups is available at http://wiki.dgroups.org/index.php/General_and_Usage_FAQ

Accessing the discussion list

Access to the discussion list is email based and participants can send and receive messages directly from their existing email accounts. It is also possible to access a web-based version of the discussion list via a link on the information portal. The web-based interface for the discussion list is in English and French. From here, members can view message archives as well as a list of members belonging to the discussion list. They can also edit their own profile and change their password.

(a) Through the internet

- Go to the web portal
- Select the link to the discussion list
- Put your e-mail address and password to login
- Then you will get a page containing links to: discussions, participants, etc
- Choose “discussions”
- Choose “new messages” to send a new one
- Or click on the list of discussions already there to reply

(b) Using your e-mail account

- Open your e-mail account
- Send message to: nmwafrica@dgroups.org
- Or, click on “reply” to a message sent by another member of the list

If you are not receiving any discussion list emails, please check your spam or junk mail folder. If messages are being sent there, please add nmwafrica@dgroups.org to your address book.

Etiquette for posting messages

There are some general rules of etiquette for participating in discussion lists that should be observed, these include:

- Use the discussion list only for professional correspondence, not for emails of a personal nature.
- Note that when you are replying to a post, hitting the reply button will send your reply to everyone. If you would like to reply only to the author of the message, remember to start a new email with the author's email in the “To:” field.
- Keep paragraphs and messages short and to the point, but make sure it has substantive content. Focus on one subject per message.
- Always include a relevant title for the message in the “subject” field.
- Identify yourself at the bottom of the email message, including your name, position, national machinery name and country: For example:

Message here

Joanna Skinner

Associate Social Affairs Officer

Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations

- Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading. Capitalizing whole words that are not titles is generally termed as SHOUTING!
- When forwarding other emails – please send only the relevant text and delete anything else. It is also useful to add an introductory sentence to explain why you are forwarding it. Also remember to amend the subject field.
- Be professional and careful what you say about others. Email is easily forwarded.
- Cite all quotes, references and sources and respect copyright and license agreements.
- Acronyms can be used to abbreviate when possible, however messages that are filled with acronyms can be confusing to readers.

Suggested content for discussion lists

The discussion lists should be used to share pertinent information with other national machineries in Africa that is directly relevant to their work. Although the discussion lists facilitate interaction and networking among its members, it should not be used for personal messages. If you wish to send a personal message to another discussion list member, send a separate email to that person’s personal email address and not to the discussion list address (see etiquette guidelines above).

Participants in the general discussion list are encouraged to use the discussion lists to:

- 4) **Share information.** Send updates and information on the activities of your organization, for example, good practices in programming; outcomes of recent research; new developments etc. Other information that can be shared includes upcoming events that may be of interest to other members
- 5) **Ask questions.** Send a query to the discussion list if, for example, you are looking for examples of good practices on particular programming activities; you are seeking experts in a particular field; or you are looking for information on a particular subject, including available resources as well as opinions of other members. See below for tips on sending a query and an example.
- 6) **Respond to questions.** Assist other members of the discussion lists by answering their questions if you are able to provide relevant information.

The discussion lists can also be used for facilitated discussions by ECA on upcoming meetings and events, for example, preparations for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

Sending a query

Tips on sending a query

When sending a query, be sure to include the following:

Brief background information
Description of the project
Details on exactly what kind of information is being requested
Contact details

Sample query

The following query was originally posted on a UNDP discussion list

UN-ESCWA and UNDP/SURF in Beirut (Sub-Regional Resource Facility) have designed a pipeline project to prepare a Report on 'More Gender Responsive Monitoring and Reporting in the Arab Region'. The project aims to improve countries' capacities to engender MDG monitoring and reporting, particularly in the preparation and use of gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data. The project was conceived as a preliminary step to address data availability and quality issues in the region, especially that of gender-sensitive indicators.

To support a stakeholder-driven process, the project is centered on a Roundtable meeting/discussion among users and producers of statistics from selected central statistical offices, government departments and UN specialized agencies. The roundtable will be a 1-day meeting to share experiences and lessons in engendering MDG monitoring and reporting, particularly from a data compilation and analysis perspective, and discuss options and recommendations for preparing and using gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data, taking into consideration challenges in this regard.

The main outcomes of the Roundtable are to be - a) a list of goal-specific gender issues; b) core set/minimum standard of gender-sensitive indicators; and c) recommendations for overcoming data

shortages. The outcomes will serve as the basis for the Report on engendering MDG Monitoring and Reporting in the Arab region.

We would be in particular interested in:

- a) To share country/regional experience i.e. examples of advocacy initiatives, capacity building initiatives undertaken by your respective organizations in the area of engendering MDG data collection and analysis;
- b) To provide suggestions on the proposed Project Concept Note (attached). We would, in particular, be interested to learn about experience and tips on organizing similar Roundtable discussions and making them effective.

Regards,

NAME
ORGANIZATION
COUNTRY
CONTACT DETAILS

E-discussions are held to promote and stimulate debate on a chosen topic, such as a particular challenge for national machineries or an upcoming theme of an inter-governmental process. Their extended duration permits a level of sustained interaction and reflection and they can therefore be useful for national machineries to advance their understanding of key issues, methodologies and good practices, and identify common obstacles and challenges. They also bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including national machineries, line ministries, NGOs and academia etc., in order to promote collaboration and cooperation. National machineries are responsible for actively publicizing upcoming e-discussions and encouraging relevant stakeholders to take part.

E-discussions for the e-network will be held every 4 months (3 per year), for a duration of 6 weeks, on relevant topics identified by national machineries. They will operate via email. In the initial phase (1-2 years) one e-discussion will be led by ECA; one by DAW; and one by national machinery or an invited NGO/academic institution.

The thematic e-discussions will operate in the same way as the general discussion list and can be accessed through both an existing email accounts and also through a web-based version via a link on the information portal.

Participation guidelines

When the e-discussion is announced in advance, detailed instructions on how to sign up will be provided.

Accessing the e-discussions

Access to the thematic e-discussions is email based and participants can send and receive messages directly from their existing email accounts. It is also possible to access a web-based version of the discussion list via a link on the information portal. The web-based interface for the discussion list is in English and French. From here, members can view message archives as well as a list of members belonging to the e-discussion. They can also edit their own profile and change their password.

If you are not receiving any e-discussion emails, please check your spam or junk mail folder. If messages are being sent there, please add the e-discussion email address to your address book.

Etiquette for posting messages

See the information on the general discussion lists for etiquette in posting messages. These guidelines should also be followed for e-discussions.

In particular, note that whereas the general discussion list is restricted only to staff of national machineries in Africa, the e-discussions will be open to all stakeholders, including national machineries, line ministries, NGOs, academia etc.

Suggested content for e-discussion postings

Only information directly related to the e-discussion topic should be sent to the list. Any other information that you wish to share should be sent to the general discussion list for national

machineries. If you wish to send a personal message to another e-discussion member, send a separate email to that person's personal email address and not to the e-discussion address.

At the beginning of the e-discussion, a moderator will send a 6-week outline of the e-discussion to the list. The moderator will also send a set of specific sub-topics and questions at the beginning of each week. You can participate in the e-discussion by:

- Responding to the moderator's weekly questions or to questions from other participants. You can share your opinion or experience and/or share related resources that may be of interest to other participants.
- Raising new questions or comments, related to the e-discussion topic.

ANNEX 6. E-NETWORK TEAM IN NATIONAL MACHINERIES: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The effectiveness of the proposed e-network for national machineries in Africa is dependent on the active participation by national machineries themselves. It is therefore suggested that each national machinery nominate an E-network Team, consisting of two gender experts and one ICT expert, who will act as focal points and take lead responsibility for the participation of the national machinery in ongoing e-network activities.

One member of the E-network Team should be the person who attended the regional workshop to establish the e-network, to be held in Addis Ababa, 5-8 December 2006. This person would be expected to share skills and information learned during the workshop with other staff members within the national machinery – especially on using discussion lists and participating in e-discussions.

Responsibilities of the E-network Team include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Collect information and news
- Prepare material for dissemination on the information portal and discussion list
- Encourage other staff to join the discussion list
- Publicize the information portal
- Communicate upcoming and past activities of the e-network to other staff and stakeholders
- Disseminate e-discussion summaries and other information to staff and other stakeholders
- Take charge of planning and budgeting for the e-network at the national level
- Train replacements for the team as necessary
- Build list of expertise of national machinery staff, as well as other experts in the country, and share this as needed with the e-network
- When staff leave the national machinery notify ECA to remove them from the discussion list.
- Submitting quarterly reports to the relevant sub-regional coordinators and the Management Group.

Gender sensitivity and a basic knowledge of computers are essential for members of the E-network Team. The E-network Team needs to have easy access to a computer with email and internet connection.

ANNEX 7. LIST OF COUNTRIES BY ECA SUB-REGION

North Africa

Member countries (7): Algeria, Egypt, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.

ECA sub-regional office: Rabat, Morocco
Gender focal point: Ms Semia Guermas De Tapia
Tel.: +(212) 3767 5012
Fax: +(212) 3767 5282
Email: sguermas@uneca.org

Central Africa

Member countries (7): Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe and Chad.

ECA sub-regional office: Yaoundé, Cameroon.
Gender Focal Point: Ms Anne Marie Bakyono
Tel.: +(237) 223 1461
Fax: +(237) 223 3185
Email: abakyono@uneca.org

Western Africa

Member countries (15): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

ECA sub-regional office: Niamey, Niger.
Gender Focal Point: Ms Fatoumata Sissoko
Tel: +(227) 722 961
Fax: +(227) 722 894
Email: fsissoko@uneca.org

Eastern Africa

Member countries (13): Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda.

ECA sub-regional office: Kigali, Rwanda.
Gender Focal Point: Ms Hadidja Gava
Tel.: +(250) 50 151
Fax: +(250) 86 546
Email: hgava@uneca.org

Southern Africa

Member countries (11): Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

ECA sub-regional office: Lusaka, Zambia.
Gender Focal Point: Ms Irene Lomoyani
+(260) 1-228 505
Fax: +(260) 1-236 949 / 234 757
Email: ilomoyani@uneca.org

ANNEX 8. SUB-REGIONAL COORDINATORS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and responsibilities:

Two sub-regional coordinators from each ECA sub-region are nominated on a 1-year rotational basis. They take primary responsibility for:

- Regularly encouraging national E-network Teams in national machineries within their sub-region to submit updates and resources for the information portal.
- Liaising with national E-network Teams on their experiences and use of the e-network.
- Submitting quarterly reports to the Management Group

Coordinators will also be members of the e-network Management Group and are expected to participate in quarterly Management Group meetings. (See Annex 9 for more information on the Management Group).

Coordinators will be supported by the gender focal point in the relevant ECA sub-regional office as well as other members of the Management Group (See Annex 7 for ECA sub-regional gender focal points).

Requirements:

The sub-regional coordinators will play a vital role in ensuring the success of the e-network, both during the initial phase and in subsequent years. Therefore, they should:

- Be committed and enthusiastic about the e-network and its activities;
- Be willing to spend time every month to conduct their responsibilities;
- Have regular access to a computer and email;
- Have knowledge of gender equality issues and be skilled in ICT.

Sub-regional coordinators for 2007

North Africa	Egypt and Mauritania
Central Africa	Republic of Congo and São Tomé and Príncipe
Western Africa	Nigeria and Senegal
Eastern Africa	Burundi and Tanzania
Southern Africa	Botswana and Zimbabwe

ANNEX 9. MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Management Group will meet quarterly (3rd week of March, June, September and December 2007) to monitor the e-network and ensure its continued relevance for national machineries. Meetings will be organized by ECA, in collaboration with the Management Group, and will operate via a discussion list with restricted access over a period of 10 working days (to allow for intermittent access and connectivity). The meetings of the Management Group will be conducted in English and French. Summaries of meetings are distributed via the general discussion list.

Roles and responsibilities of the Management Group:

The Management Group is primarily responsible for monitoring the e-network and its activities to ensure its continued relevance for national machineries in Africa. All members of the Management Group should actively participate in quarterly meetings. Specific roles and responsibilities include:

- a) ECA should:
 - Take lead responsibility for the Management Group.
 - Facilitate the electronic meetings, as described in the meeting guidelines below.
- b) ECA sub-regional gender focal points should:
 - Provide support to the sub-regional coordinators from national machineries, including in collecting updates and resources for the information portal from national E-network Teams.
- c) Sub-regional coordinators should:
 - Act as representatives of the national machineries from their sub-region and provide relevant feedback to the Management Group.
 - Submit quarterly reports to the Management Group.
- d) DAW should:
 - Provide support to the Management Group, as needed.

The Management Group should also create and establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the e-network, including the development of indicators.

Meeting content:

The content of the Management Group meetings may include:

- 1) Monitoring and evaluating the e-network:
 - Is the information portal being updated and used? By whom?
 - Are the general discussion lists being used? By whom?
 - Who is participating in the e-discussions? Outcomes?
 - Suggestions for improvements and new activities for the e-network.
 - Identification of technical problems.
 - Identification of topics for upcoming e-discussions.
- 2) Identifying emerging issues for national machineries:
 - What are key institutional challenges facing national machineries?
 - What are thematic issues facing national machineries?

Annex 5: Integrating the e-network into the work of national machineries

Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
and the African Centre for Gender and Social Development, Economic Commission for
Africa

Regional workshop to establish the African e-network for national machineries and its support mechanisms

Addis Ababa
5-8 December 2006

INTEGRATING THE E-NETWORK INTO THE WORK OF NATIONAL MACHINERIES

The e-network can be integrated into the work of national machineries and contribute to its knowledge management and communication strategies in a variety of ways. To ensure the most effective use of the e-network, it is recommended that specific strategies and processes are implemented, in particular:

- 1) Set up the e-network team to take lead responsibility for the participation of the national machinery in ongoing e-network activities.
 - The team should comprise of two gender experts and one ICT expert.
 - Inform all staff about the e-network and explain how they can participate.
- 2) Develop processes for the E-network Team to encourage participation of all staff in the e-network.
 - Share training experiences and lessons learned from the workshop with all staff, in particular on using the information portal, discussion lists and e-discussions. When new staff join the national machinery, ensure that they also receive training on participating in the e-network
 - Encourage all staff to share knowledge and resources with the E-Network Team on a regular basis, for example, issuing a weekly reminder via email or a public notice board.
 - Inform all staff when a new e-discussion is coming up and encourage them to register.
- 3) Develop specific processes for the E-network Team to share this knowledge via the e-network, for example:
 - Schedule a specific time on a weekly basis for the E-Network Team to send resources to sub-regional coordinators for posting on the information portal.
 - Schedule a specific time on a weekly basis for the E-Network Team to share information via the discussion list. Include contact details for more information in all postings.
- 4) Develop strategies to use, share and store summaries of the discussion lists and e-discussions, for example:
 - Set a method for the E-Network Team to share summaries, especially with staff without email access.
 - Have a systemized method for storing summaries, e.g. filed chronologically or by topic, which is readily accessible

- 5) Develop strategies to use the e-network to respond to specific knowledge needs of the national machinery, for example:
- Before starting a project, submit a query to the discussion list to collect knowledge, including information on good practices, common challenges and possible ways to overcome them and use this knowledge to inform project development.
 - When writing a publication or research paper, search the information portal for useful resources and use the discussion lists to seek collaboration or to ask other members to share relevant experiences, resources and recommendations for experts.
 - When responding to a request from a line ministry for information on a specific topic, use the discussion list to seek information from other members with sectoral expertise.


Finally, remember to share with other e-network members any particularly successful strategies and processes that you use to integrate the e-network into the work of your organization!

Annex 6: Presentation by Erik Johnson, World Bank Institute

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Building a Network: Managing Expectations and Planning for Success

Erik Johnson
World Bank Institute
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
December 5, 2006




IBM Workshop, Addis Ababa, December 5-6, 2006

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What I will talk about:

1. Why participate in a network?
2. What do networks look like?
3. Some regional, global and national examples
4. Approaches to assessing results
5. Major challenges
6. Success factors
7. Discussion questions




IBM Workshop, Addis Ababa, December 5-6, 2006

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The Value of Networks

Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking with other institutions Increased retention of talent Catalyst for partnerships
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forum for expanding skills and expertise Network for keeping up-to-date on fields Enhanced professional reputation
Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve individual performance Direct access to expertise Confidence building Sense of belonging



IBM Workshop, Addis Ababa, December 5-6, 2006

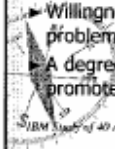
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Benefits of Social Networks

Four features of effective relationships:

- ▶ Knowing what the other person knows and when to turn to them
- ▶ Being able to gain timely access to them
- ▶ Willingness of the person sought out to engage in problem solving rather than dump information
- ▶ A degree of safety in the relationship that promoted learning and creativity

IBM Study of 49 managers in a consortium of fortune 500 companies.



IBM Workshop, Addis Ababa, December 5-6, 2006

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You Learn More by Teaching Others

When do adults learn the most?

Source: National Training Laboratories, Inc.

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Sharing Your Learning

Source: Kolb's Learning Cycle

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Different Types of Groups and Networks

	Mission	Members	Driving Force	Duration
Formal Work Group	Deliver a product or service	All who report to managers	Job requirements and common goals	Until reorganization
Project Team	Accomplish specified task	Employees assigned by management	Project milestones and goals	Until project completion
Informal Network	Collect and pass on information	Friends and business acquaintances	Mutual needs (economic, social)	As long as members wish
Formal Network (or Professional Association)	Develop members' capabilities, build and exchange knowledge	Self-selected volunteers that qualify pay dues	Identification with subject expertise	Until it is no longer financially sustainable
Community of Practice	Develop members' capabilities, build and exchange knowledge	Self-selected volunteers	Identification with subject expertise or issue	As long as members remain active

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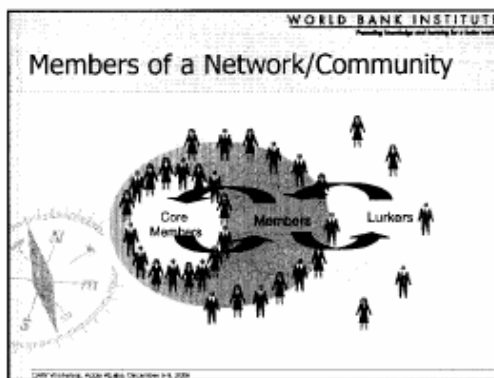
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What is a "Community of Practice"?

A community that learns: More than a "community of learners," a community of practice is also a "community that learns." Not merely peers exchanging ideas around the water cooler, sharing and benefiting from each other's expertise, but colleagues committed to jointly develop better practices.

George Pör, Community Intelligence Labs

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- ### Types of Government Networks
1. **Enforcement Networks**
 2. **Harmonization Networks**
 3. **Information Networks**
-
- Source: Ann-Rene Skaghter, A New World Order
- ©2005 Washington, DC: World Bank, December 3, 2005

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Information Networks

Created and sustained by the valuable exchange of ideas, techniques, experiences and problems.

- ▶ Collect and distill info of members into best practice
- ▶ Exchange information about each other – concerning competence, quality, integrity and professionalism

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- ### Network Structures
- ▶ Know what you want and design for it
 - Governance arrangements
 - Empowering champions
 - Incentives for participation
 - ▶ But...
 - You may end up with a structure you didn't plan for
 - ▶ So, be flexible and adapt
- ©2005 Washington, DC: World Bank, December 3, 2005

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Network model: A

Information dissemination service reaching the eight organizations or individuals, but no reciprocal information exchange (not a network).

Source: Paul Starkey

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Network model: B

The organizations or individuals cooperating in a highly centralized network or institutional outreach programme. All have reciprocal relationships with the secretariat, but they do not network with the others.

Source: Paul Starkey

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Network model - C

All the organizations or individuals linked with each other, without any central facilitation (theoretically a perfect network, but probably unrealistic).

Source: Paul Starkey

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Network model: D

Network model with secretariat. The network members interact with each other (not all possible lines shown) and with a central secretariat that facilitates linkages between members.

Source: Paul Starkey

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Network model: E

Decentralised network model. Active local, national or thematic networks interact with each other and with resource organizations (not all possible lines shown). Secretariat responsibilities delegated.

Source: Paul Starkey

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A Few Case Studies

1. Aid Workers Network (global)
2. ECA-Net – Social Funds in Europe and Central Asia (regional)
3. South Africa Cities Network (national)

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Aid Workers Network

<http://www.aidworkers.net/>

A learning community of development and relief practitioners for mutual support and to share practical advice based on experience

- A "One Stop Shop" for people who can implement development best practices
- Engaging field workers before, during and after projects
- All topics, all continents, all levels of experience and all types of organisation
- Peer based, Demand driven



How many times have you reinvented the wheel?

2005 Working, AWW Africa, December 1-3, 2005

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AidWorkers Network Services

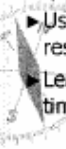
- ▶ Discussion forum
 - Searchable community built resource containing thousands of questions, answers, announcements, discussions and news items.
- ▶ The exchange
 - Email newsletter with short practical articles, comments and summaries interesting discussions
- ▶ Advice pages (an expanding resource)
 - Written by members initially from "grey literature" and forum discussions
- ▶ Blog Community
 - Recent addition with sampling recent blogs

2005 Working, AWW Africa, December 1-3, 2005

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AWN Facilitation

- ▶ Email alerts and bulletins (gets into in-boxes)
- ▶ Facilitators "rope in" people to answer questions
- ▶ Users encouraged to contribute and respond
- ▶ Learned that facilitation is expensive in time and resources



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ECANet: A Regional Network of Social Funds

Structure and Purpose:	Activities:
▶ Organized in 1998 at the first regional conference in Armenia	▶ Regional conferences
▶ Rotating, self-financing, voluntary Secretariat	▶ Regional training seminars and workshops
▶ Started with 7 member countries, and expanded to 14	▶ Internship program to exchange specialists working in different Funds
▶ Goal: regional cooperation, learning and exchange of information between participating funds	▶ Study tours
	▶ E-bulletin and publication of papers


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South Africa Cities Network

- ▶ Update leaders on current and emerging changes and trends in urban policy across the world and in South Africa.
- ▶ Promote innovation and strategic thinking between cities and other spheres of government.
- ▶ Foster cooperation and exchange of best practice.
- ▶ Generate options and make recommendations to Network members.

- Links to the Cities Alliance (a global program)



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SA Cities Network Instruments

- ▶ Peer review
- ▶ Joint research
- ▶ Newsletter
- ▶ Quick briefs and special reports
- ▶ Seminars, workshops and training
- ▶ Study tours, placements and exchanges
- ▶ Documentation of best practices and innovations
- ▶ Calendar of activities and events
- ▶ Electronic data base
- ▶ Thematic working groups

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Summary of What Networks Do: Food-for-Thought

- ▶ Websites with regular updates
- ▶ Members/expert list and information
- ▶ Info exchanges via e-mail discussion forum
- ▶ Electronic newsletters
- ▶ Query and answer services (i.e. Help Desk)
- ▶ Electronic conferences
- ▶ Annual workshops and conferences
- ▶ Study Tours
- ▶ Toolkits
- ▶ Manuals
- ▶ "How-to guides"
- ▶ Lessons learned notes
- ▶ Video conference "peer assist"
- ▶ Recognize good performance (i.e. via awards)
- ▶ Peer reviews

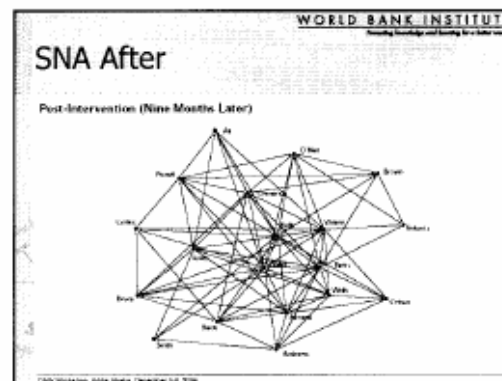
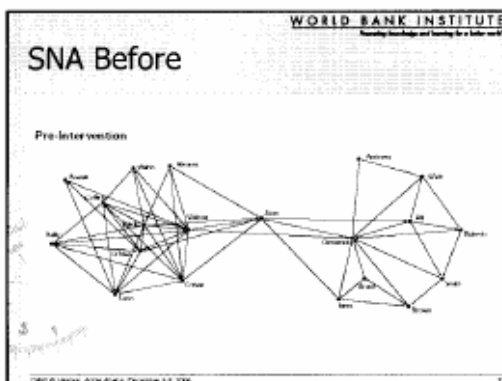
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Measuring Network Results

- ▶ Electronic interaction statistics:
 - Number and diversity of participants
 - Frequency of contributions/interactions
 - Quality and relevance of contributions
- ▶ Social Network Analysis (SNA)
 - Are people connecting?
 - In what ways?

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Major Challenges

- ▶ Members become passive recipients, and the secretariat has to do everything
- ▶ Exclusion/lack of participation due to:
 - General Inhibition/reluctance
 - Domination by sponsors or very active members
 - Seniority differences
 - Language
 - Lack of time
- ▶ Expanding the network and handling job turn-over (new members)
- ▶ Lack of fast, easy, cheap (or even any) online access for some

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What Do You Need to Do? 10 Lessons from Successful Networks

1. Focus on topics important to the business of network members
2. Develop an active and passionate core group (champions)
3. Get key thought leaders involved
4. Build personal relationships among members
5. Make it easy to contribute and access the network's knowledge and practice (technical)
6. Ensure participatory decision making, transparency and representation (ownership!!!)
7. Delegate responsibilities away from the secretariat
8. Maintain a steady flow of activity so that members do not lose interest
9. Work with complementary networks to leverage resources
10. Regularly monitor and evaluate - and evolve

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