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**First Ministerial Conference on Information and
Communication Technologies (ICT) of the African
Union**

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Cairo – EGYPT**

**African ICT Week
(AICTW)
Concept Paper**

African ICT Week (AICTW)

1. Introduction:

Very few aspects of our lives are unaffected by sciences, information and communication technologies ICTs. Currently, a large number of the workers in developed countries are employed by industries that are either producers or intensive users of ICTs products and services. However, the same is not the case with developing countries, although telecommunications in Africa received a boost in the past few years especially with the launch of a new African-owned undersea fibre-optic cable and the thriving of cell phone market. ICTs are making it possible for a vastly larger population than at any time in the past to join in sharing and expanding the base of human knowledge, and contributing to its further growth in all spheres of human endeavour as well as its application to education, health and science. ICTs have enormous potential to expand access to quality education, to boost literacy and to facilitate the learning process itself. Thus, organizing one week annually to promote the benefits and advantages of using the technologies in all life aspects and activities would encourage the people in the continent to utilize the modern ICTs tools for the development of the continent.

AU remains firmly committed to its goal of bridging the digital divide -- to ensure that Africa, its citizens, and its businesses derive the maximum benefit from information and communication technologies. This commitment to fostering a transition to an Information Society is made not as an end in itself but rather as a means to the more fundamental goals of the Continent: improved public services, a stronger economy, increased productivity and greater opportunities for all.

The African ICT Week AICTW (14-20 November) was launched for the first time during the course work of the Second Phase of the World Summit of Information society in Tunis, November 2005 and it can have a tremendous positive impact as an instrument to promote sustainable development and enabling environment.

2. Why AICTW?

As stated above, the role of ICTs in economic development is vast and it permeates all sectors. Investment in information technologies and telecommunications not only creates an enabling environment for citizens to access and participate in the economy but it also paves the way towards achieving Africa's economic integration. With e-commerce, we can reduce costs, reach a larger market and eliminate the use of middlemen and intermediaries. With e-government, we improve productivity, quality of government to citizen services, reuse of resources and moreover, increase the transparency and satisfaction between government and citizens.

Inline with the fact that Africa still lags behind in the transition to e-community, there is evident demand for Africa to integrate into the digital community or risk being further marginalized. Thus the AU launched this week annually, as African ICT week, to focus the continent on the value of the Technology and specifically to promote the use of ICT's, Internet and to outline the vision of the Africa in building the information

society. The Week is also aims at demonstrating the values and advantages of communicating digitally and in general how ICTs could improve our quality of life.

3. Objectives of the AICTW:

Guided by the desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society and inline with the outcome of WSIS process, and other relevant major ICTs conferences and summits. The ICT week aims to achieve the following objectives:

- a. Bridging the digital divide;
- b. To promote the right of all to have equal access to ICT value added services and to experience the advantages of using technological services.
- c. To develop, maintain and stimulate people's curiosity, interest and enjoyment in technologies
- d. To promote the acquisition of appropriate technological skills, concepts, principles, methods and vocabulary.
- e. Boosting security and trust in the sectors rely on the using of information networks;
- f. To encourage people to develop informed opinions about their technological services and to be able to support them by reasonable arguments.
- g. Leveraging ICTs as a tool for creating an informed-Africa society
- h. Promoting greater ICTs awareness among African governments, community and stakeholders.
- i. To use technologies in a variety of subject areas and contexts.
- j. To attract more and new investments to the African technological market, especially the ICTs market.

4. Implementation of ICT Week

- a. **Theme of the AICTW:** Selecting a proper theme to the week which is inline with the most active events in the continent's ICTs sector
- b. **Creating AICTW Website:** As promoters of ICT's, it is important for us to use them as means to communicate and implement the week project. This will demonstrate our objectives right at the beginning. The AU has a special Website advertising AICTW objectives "www.aictw.com", theme and activities in a fast and easy manner. The Website will also be used to organize online activities, contests and in announcing any new relevant events or news.
- c. **Management of the Week:** Forming a Task Force consisting of representatives of AU, ECA, ADB, RECs, other sub-regional/regional partners, media and other international partners.
- d. **AICTW Seminars and Workshops:** AU and its partners will organize seminars and workshops to examine the theme of the Week and so as to come up with recommendations for how utilize the week in the maximum extent.

Proposed Activities:

	Activities	Pattern	Organizers	Targeted Groups
1	Low Charge Week	ICTs service providers to offer discounted services for the Week or for a few hours a day during the ICT week e.g. provide free Internet access and offer free hosting services for the schools and universities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Private Sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Universities • Institutions • General Public
2	Promote Digitally Literate Africa	Service provided could be encouraged to invest in people by improve their digital skills through cheap/free short-term ICT courses, workshops and discussion sessions. They could also demonstrate distance education by making it available for the Week to local schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Private Sectors • Schools • Universities • Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Public
3	Media blitz	Partnership with the Media to promote ICT's by means of bulletins, newspaper articles etc to familiarize people with the advantages of technology and its applications (e.g. E-Learning, E-Commerce, E-Health, E-Government).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Private Sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Universities • Institutions • General Public
4	ICTs Contests	Organize ICTs contests (e.g. web design, innovative application) in relation with the AICTW theme. Small and medium enterprises as well as the ICT training centers may participate but they can also contribute by providing tools, equipments and consultation to the contestants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Private Sectors • Schools • Universities • Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Universities • Institutions • General Public
5	ICT Tours	Governments and service providers can Open Days for sightseeing tours to ICTs and science and technology centers and operators to stimulate the curiosity of the new generations for the technologies in early age stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Private Sectors • Schools • Universities • Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • General Public

	Activities	Pattern	Organizers	Targeted Groups
6	ICT Week Billboard	Prepare and publish special leaflets, sites, magazines and press releases on the occasion of the AICTW. Thus, it will assist in project promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Private Sectors • Schools • Universities • Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Public
7	ICT Fairs	Organizing ICTs and science and technology exhibition and fairs. Which will work as an opportunity to explore new ICT horizons and as an occasion to attract more investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Private Sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Private Sectors • Universities • Schools • Institutions • General Public