

Workshop adopts EAC Corporate ICT Policy for the Community

EAC Headquarters, Arusha, Tanzania, Thursday 29 May 2009: A three-day stakeholder's workshop to review the draft EAC corporate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Website/Portal Policy closed on Thursday 27 May 2009 in Moshi, Tanzania. The workshop, which was chaired by Mr. Emmanuel Dusenge from the Ministry In-charge of Science and Technology, Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda, was attended by ICT Experts from the Partner States' Ministries of EAC Affairs and officials from the EAC Secretariat.

While welcoming delegates to the workshop, the EAC Principal Administrative Officer, Mr. Abdul Katabaro (on behalf of the Director of Human Resource and Administration), said EAC had reached a crucial stage of finalizing the ICT and Website/Portal Policy and therefore the workshop outputs would enable the Secretariat to put in place a modern ICT infrastructure both for its own internal operations and for linking with the Partner States.

Mr. Katabaro said EAC was committed to ensure that information and communication technology was developed to the highest possible levels and applied effectively in order to enhance performance and speed up decision making process within the Community.

Mr. Katabaro emphasized the need for EAC to have an ICT Policy that would give guidance on effective management, use and control of services, adding that "the ICT policy and procedures would act as a reference guide on proper use and maintenance of ICT systems at the Headquarters". He said the policy should as well guide electronic information exchange between the EAC organs, institutions and Partner States and the rest of the world, and to contain disaster recovery plans to ensure continuous availability of ICT services at the EAC.

The Chairperson, Mr. Emmanuel Dusenge informed the workshop that Rwanda had eagerly embraced ICT and was striving to become the regional ICT hub. He called upon the delegates to emulate Rwanda's experience to develop ICT in their respective countries.

The workshop considered the draft ICT Policy and Procedures document as presented by the Secretariat and noted some gaps in the document, especially on the need to separate Policy and Operational Procedures, as well as the need to reorganize and enrich the contents. In this context, the workshop reworked and adopted the final draft policy document, which will now be presented to the EAC higher authorities for further guidance.

According to the Chief Convener and coordinator of the workshop, the EAC Principal Information Technology Officer, Mr. Aggrey Nkondola, "the final draft ICT Policy document is now more robust and provides benchmarks for EAC to develop and manage a modern ICT infrastructure for internal operations and linkages with Partner States". He said the draft policy provides guiding principles for optimal use, maintenance, secure and ethical use of all EAC corporate ICT facilities and services.

Mr. Aggrey Nkondola affirmed that the East African Community Secretariat (EAC) had become increasingly dependent on use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to carry out its mandate as spelt out under Article 71 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African

Community. In this context, the PITO disclosed that for the EAC to achieve its lofty goals as stipulated in both the Treaty and the Development Strategy (2006-2010), “a well-designed and managed ICT resources must be put in place and adequate funds allocated to support the implementation of the proposed ICT policy”.

The EAC Principal Information Technology Officer disclosed that the final draft policy document covers all aspects of ICT related issues at the EAC, including the management, roles and responsibilities, infrastructure, environment, website and web portal, security, human resource development, health and safety. He said the EAC Secretariat will develop the necessary ICT operational procedure guidelines for the users.

The workshop also considered the draft EAC Website and web Portal policy document and recommended that the draft document be reviewed taking into consideration the overall EAC Information, Education and Communication Policy, and regional and international best practises.

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