



Economic Commission for Africa

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NEPAD TODAY

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Funds for NEPAD ICT projects running out in Africa

Unless member countries of the African Union agree on alternative sources of funding, regional ICT projects under NEPAD are threatened with derailment or even closure due to lack of funds.

Over the past few years, member countries of the AU have failed to agree on funding for the organization, with proposals for alternative funding being revised multiple times.

The AU has an annual budget of \$150 million, which go to various projects and organizations including the e-African Commission, responsible for the development of ICT programs. In addition to developing regional ICT infrastructure, the e-Africa

Commission, based in Johannesburg, runs a number of ICT projects including e-learning and e-school programs.

However, the AU claims it has run out funds, and is currently exploring innovative means of raising finances for its projects and activities. The business plan to roll out ICT projects in the region was approved in 2008 by African ministers in charge of ICT. NEPAD wants schools in Africa equipped with computers and connected to the Internet in order to access educational material that would be delivered to schools on a continuous basis.

NEPAD was also formulating common technology standards for schools and buying solar panels and generators for schools not connected to the national grid.

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African first ladies discuss ways to fight HIV/AIDS and improve women's lives

On 31st January 2011 in Addis Ababa, the 16th Ordinary Session of the African First ladies was held at the AU headquarters with the theme of "Towards Greater Unity and Integration through Shared values" emphasizing on HIV/AIDS. 13 first ladies attended.

First ladies and representatives of first ladies of countries presented and showed briefly

what they have been doing and plan on doing in the future in their countries, to minimize the number of women infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The first ladies and representatives of first ladies raised issues like creation of credit funds, education, avoiding harmful cultural practices, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission, using health care providers, and use of radio, TV, billboards and HIV counseling and testing centers. They also

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Funds for NEPAD ICT projects running out in Africa

The AU's Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) discussed NEPAD's funding situation at a recent meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The AU relies more on mainly internal funding. Outside donors have been reluctant to offer funding recently, citing a lack of a proper accounting system.

"While particular attention must be given on following up funds provided by partners, AU must improve its capacity to manage finances put at its disposal," said the AU Chairman Jean Ping at the opening of the PRC.

In order to avoid the closure of many ICT projects being carried out by NEPAD, the AU is now proposing that member states raise money from increased taxation of sectors including insurance, tourism and air travel.

Source: <http://news.idg.nolcw/art.cfm?id=09938197-1A64-67EA-E4EBB2C090724B59>

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African first ladies...

discussed universal access to treatment using traditional leaders, and free anti natal and post natal checkups.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of NEPAD said African Heads of State and Government adopted the program of NEPAD 10 years ago since it focuses on saving life and empowering women at the continental level to eradicate poverty for sustainable socio-economic growth and development. 75% of the African population lives in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture. He said these people face economic prob-

lems so focus on the rural areas is paramount. He added that Africa has 60-80% agricultural laborers who are women and they work for longer hours.

Women, he said, are affected by lack of access to markets, climate change and raw material shortage. But, he added that women can contribute to the development of Africa since they are the backbone of the household. Dr Mayaki proposed to work with the first ladies individually.

Mrs. Ban Ki Moon, on behalf of the UN Secretary General stressed on the need for strong commitment by the AU in the fight against HIV. HIV predominantly exists in the Sub-Saharan Africa and the region needs medicine, she said.

She said that "we have to work to protect mothers and babies to reach the Millennium Development Goals". She showed the importance of women's empowerment and equality for the betterment of the society.

Dr. Sheila Sisulu Deputy Executive Director of WFP started by recalling that agriculture is the backbone of Africa's economy and that 80% of agricultural produce comes from women but these women have less than 5% access to credit, and less than 5% access to extension services. So whatever they produce they consume right away. She said the problem is that the women farmers are not organized within farmers associations. She also underlined the importance of education which will one way or another have an impact on the prevalence of HIV.

The Chairperson of OAFLA, Ethiopian First Lady Mrs Azeb Mesfin raised points like regional presence and membership fees. She stressed on the role played by the UNAIDS and other donor organizations.

Source: African Press Organization, Feb. 03, 2011

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