The 2009 Infopoverty World Conference

**Plenary Session: Global scenarios: Past and present challenges of ICT 4D
projects the EU contribution**

11:30: Market and Research towards demand-driven ICTs in developing countries:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to present in details the EC
cooperation projects and partnerships in the ICTs' domain.

As the Commissioner mentioned, the EC is particularly involved in a cooperation
process with Africa.

Then EC set up two complementary Africa-EU partnerships: the partnership on
infrastructures for supporting the rolling out of physical backbones and Partnership
on Sciences, Information Society and Space for supporting complementary S&T and
ICT capacities.

These partnerships not only involve the EC but also the Member States which are
working closely to the Commission as well as the African union Commission.

I. Africa-EU partnerships, towards an inclusive information society

1.1 EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructures

It was adopted in 2005 (launched in October 2006), as a joint EU effort to respond to
the AU/NEPAD Infrastructure Plan, aiming at substantially increase EU investments
in African Infrastructure, targeting regional interconnectivity in 4 domains: water,
energy, transport and ICT.

The approach is **highly innovative in terms of governance and funding
mechanism with the creation of the EU Infrastructure Trust Fund** (jointly created
with the EIB) : total of 5,6B€ expected funding (2008-2013) from the EDF and the

Trust Fund.

Regarding the ICT component of the Partnership, the EASSy (East African Submarine Cable System) has been identified as a flagship project of the Partnership and already received a 14,5M€ loan and 3,8 M€ grant from the Trust Fund.

1.2 The Africa-EU Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space

DG INFSO actively contributed to set-up, is one of the 8 Partnerships adopted in Lisbon last December during the EU-Africa Summit.

This new Partnership offers an **opportunity to tackle the digital divide in Africa, complementing investments on the deployment of physical infrastructures** (as planned in the already adopted EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructures) through support to key capacities.

The capacity-building activities foreseen at continental or sub-regional level are in support of **ARAPKE** (the African Regional Action Plan for the Knowledge Economy) adopted by the African Union in the context of the WSIS, and would concentrate on **4 main topics**: support to regulation and e-policies, human resources development, content and e-services creation, research and education networks deployment and their interconnection with GEANT.

II. A critical challenge: the European cooperation towards developing countries

How is it possible for developing countries to participate in cooperation projects developed by the European Commission?

1.1 Identifying concrete project from short term implementation

- **AfricaConnect (12M€),** extension of GEANT to sub-Saharan Africa, for which a physical interconnection was already achieved between the GEANT router in London and the Ubuntunet network (an alliance of national research and education networks in sub-Saharan Africa).

- AXIS (2,5 M€) : led by AfrISPA (African Association of Internet Service Providers) aiming to establish Internet Exchange Points in 44 African countries as well as 5 regional internet hubs (1 per sub-region).

Let me mention that at the same time the HIsspa Project EC_ITU for better regulation has been launched.

1.2 Cooperation projects in the framework of FP7

Let me indicate that the participation of African partners increased in a significative way: from the FP6 with only 8 IST participants in total to the 2 first year of the FP7 where we have already registered 29 ICT participants in retained proposals.

The FP7 is open to a large scale of applicants with sponsorships.

- IST conferences Africa

The goals of the IST-Africa Conference Series are Community Building to facilitate EU-African research cooperation and successful exploitation of research results, to stimulate take-up of RTD results by industry, Small and Medium Sized Businesses and the public sector, to promote knowledge sharing between commercial organizations, government agencies and the research community, to exchange experiences about the current state of eAdoption at a sectoral, national or regional level, support International Cooperation and open up the European Research Area (ERA) to Africa.

Since 2006 an appointment between European research and African research has been organized each year (IST project Africa), Pretoria (2006), Maputo (Mozambique 2007), Windhoek (Namibia 2008), and Uganda (2009).

- **Digital world** (technological roadmap), a project on low-cost technologies: web mobile, low cost lap top, last mile. The DigitalWorld Forum gathers the foremost experts in the field of inclusive and accessible ICT and Developing countries in a context of Sustainable Development to **create a forum where initiatives and actors are able to network and to exchange best practices and success stories in order to deliver development-related ICT research exploitation and cooperation roadmaps.**

Conclusion

There is now no doubt that in Africa, ICTs reached an important level of development, as illustrated by the recent mobile boom, with a mobile market growing twice as fast as the global average, and a leap from 16 million subscribers in 2000 to around 300 million today.

Main challenges for the future are to invest more in R&D projects and to emphasize the implementation process. We now have to build on these concrete achievements, and exploit existing dynamics through setting-up the most efficient partnerships between public, private and academic stakeholders.

Thank you very much.