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Environmental eLearning for Africa

Representatives of environmental authorities in 14 African countries met in Dakar, Senegal at a UNEP seminar during the 4th eLearning Africa conference and agreed roles and responsibilities in establishing an African Environmental eLearning Network to share expertise, best practices and eLearning content. The network will be comprised of a number of sub-regional hubs and national eLearning centres. One of the first tasks will be to develop strategies and action plans to mainstream technology supported learning to support their work in the areas of training, education and awareness raising.

The seminar was convened in response to a decision endorsed by the 12th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in Johannesburg last year in which the environment ministers called for a wide range of actions to strengthen environmental education programmes and apply technology supported learning.

A survey conducted by UNEP earlier this year revealed that over 70% of African institutions dealing with environmental matters do not have any strategy in place to utilise modern information and communication technologies to support their education, training and outreach activities. Furthermore, in the area of environmental education the survey pointed to the need for more networking amongst institutions to address priority environmental issues.

The UNEP-convened seminar endorsed a set of key actions in the areas of environmental education, technology supported and partnerships to develop the first phase of the pan-Africa network over the next year and report on progress made to the 13th session of AMCEN in Bamako, Mali in 2010.

Welcoming the outcome of the Dakar seminar, UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, said that "the African Environmental eLearning Network provides an ideal framework to foster both North-South and South-South collaboration in the use of ICT to support education, training and outreach on priority environmental issues across Africa". "UNEP must act as a catalyst in providing technology support to our partners in Africa and foster cooperation between the education and environment sectors".

The fourth eLearning Africa conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training came to a successful end on Friday, May 29th, 2009. Under the patronage of the Republic of Senegal and attended by its President Abdoulaye Wade and Prime Minister Souleymane Ndéné Ndiaye, eLearning Africa attracted 1315 eLearning users, newcomers, providers and experts from 85 countries, who gathered over the three conference days at Le Méridien President in Dakar, Senegal.

eLearning Africa is the most comprehensive conference on ICT for development, education and training on the Continent. Its mission is to bring people together who are actively engaged in education and in the implementation of learning technologies in schools, universities, corporate training as well as in education in the public sector. Participants are high-level decision-makers such as Ministers of Education, representatives from government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), development agencies and international organisations, senior executives from businesses, as well as practitioners from all fields of education.

For more information, please visit: www.unep.org/mentor/regions/africa