

Kenya to host second e-Learning Africa Conference

BY OKUTAH MARK

e-Learning Africa 2007, the second international conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training, will take place from May 28 to 30 in Nairobi.

With a theme of 'Building Infrastructures and Capacities to Reach out to the Whole of Africa' the conference will reflect on the significant efforts of African countries to set up their national and regional ICT infrastructures, to create access to education, training and services for all.

It will also provide the capacities for all stakeholders to efficiently exploit the huge potentials that advanced Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) offer for the benefit of Africa.

According to a note from the minister for Education, Prof George Saitoti, by hosting this large-scale

conference, the country will get a unique opportunity to benefit from the hundreds of experts convening and spending some extra time in the country.

"In keeping with the event theme, we will make it possible for Kenyan teachers, professors, administrators, and students - in fact for the entire educational sector - to benefit in one way or another from the capacity-building activities," says Saitoti.

Major guest lectures in universities, held by visiting conference experts, and break-out workshops in remote regions before and after the conference are just two chosen mechanisms that will ensure a maximum impact on knowledge building within Kenya's education system. The minister further notes that E-Learning Africa is key to Kenya as it comes at a critical time when the country is gearing towards making economic strides to boost its economy.

"Our government has formulated a dedicated national ICT policy. We aim at making ICT an integral part of society for efficient and effective service delivery, access, affordability, and equitable distribution," he says.

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the private sector through the Kenya ICT Trust Fund have developed a National ICT Strategy for Education and Training aimed at making ICT integration possible at all levels of education and training.

A number of initiatives have been implemented in Kenya, including adoption of e-Learning systems in tertiary institutions, the rollout of e-Schools, including the Nepad initiative, and the use of simple text-messaging techniques to share information among teachers and to capture education management data.

ICT integration, capacity building, and localisation of digital content are being considered for implementation towards ensuring access, equity, and quality education.

Against this background, Kenya is ready to host e-Learning Africa. Among the breakthroughs in the use of ICTs within the ministry was put into use late last year, as the candidates who sat for their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education were able to know their results via the mobile phones and also through the exam council's web site.

e-Learning Africa is a new conference organised by ICWE GmbH and Hoffmann & Reif that focuses on ICT for development, education and training in Africa. The organisers note that the event will establish and link a network of decision makers from governments and administrations with universities, schools, governmental and private training providers, industry and important partners in development cooperation. Each year, a different African country will serve as the venue. e-Learning Africa was launched as an annual Pan-African event in May last year in Addis Ababa.

According to the e-Learning 2007 conference organisers, participants will take account of the challenges, achievements, and the strategies forward in discussing inter-African and international cooperation schemes for the continent. An African Technical and Vocational Education and Training Summit will highlight the great relevance of this educational sector for mass education in developing countries.

In addition there will be two break-out workshops addressing the needs in rural areas and regional institutions, one in Mombasa and another in Kisumu.

The overwhelming response to and the very positive assessment of e-Learning Africa 2006 in Addis Ababa has resulted in a strong basis for e-Learning Africa 2007.



EXAM CD

> Prof Saitoti shows off the CD containing KCPE exam results in Nairobi last week <