

**Bonn/Dakar, 17.03.2008**

## **Multi-year training on Open Source Software in Africa**

### **InWEnt launches ICT programme at Pan-African Idlelo 3 Conference in Dakar**

InWEnt - Capacity Building International, Germany is launching a new programme called "ict@innovation" in Africa. The training and networking initiative is aimed at building capacities in innovative Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) through Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in Southern and East Africa.

This is done in partnership with The Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA). FOSSFA is the main organizer of the third African Conference on FOSS and the Digital Commons – Idlelo 3. The conference is taking place in Dakar, Senegal, from 16–20 March 2008. Like ict@innovation, this year's Idlelo conference focuses on the theme of "Making the Knowledge Economy Work for Africa".

At Idlelo, InWEnt and FOSSFA jointly organize two conference tracks on "Human capacities, capabilities and competencies" and "Business models and community development".

About 400 representatives will take part in Idlelo 3 coming from African IT associations, IT Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME), IT training institutions, as well as from government, public sector and civil society from various African countries. The Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar (UCAD) and the Campus Numérique de l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) are hosting Idlelo for the first time in West Africa after Idlelo conferences in South Africa and Kenya.

Major directives for ict@innovation are expected to be discussed with key partners from the continent at the first planning workshop for ict@innovation at Idlelo 3. The gathering will particularly examine strategic issues with FOSS entrepreneurs, trainers and other actors dealing with FOSS-based services for the development of African knowledge economies.

Major topics will be the options for African business models based on FOSS and the development of related training programmes. The events at Idlelo 3 are the first steps towards achieving the objective of ict@innovation, which is to foster African ICT-SME sectors through FOSS-related capacity building and networking.

ict@innovation is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

#### **About ict@innovation**

ICT represent key elements for economic and social development in Sub-Sahara Africa in sectors such as education, administration and business development. However, the region lacks sustainable local ICT service providers, ICT-driven businesses, IT-experts, and innovation managers, particularly in the promising field of Free and Open Source Software.

Therefore, InWEnt's new programme ict@innovation focuses on fostering SME in the field of ICT in Southern and East Africa capable of providing adapted applications and services to the public and private sector. The focus is on FOSS as a key technology to drive innovation, add local value and foster development-oriented and affordable ICT applications. The improvement of regional networking and strengthening of consulting capacities of ICT associations and training institutions as well as of other relevant change agents is a key vehicle of the programme.

#### **About InWEnt**

InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany, is a non-profit organisation with worldwide operations dedicated to human resource development, advanced training, and dialogue. Our capacity building programmes are directed at experts and executives from politics, administration, the business community, and civil society. We are commissioned by the German federal government to assist with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. In addition, we provide the German business sector with support for public private partnership projects. Through exchange programmes, InWEnt also offers young people from Germany the opportunity to gain professional experience abroad.

#### **it@inwent - Supporting ICT Networks in the South**

InWEnt supports its partners in Africa and Asia to provide advanced knowledge in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The key objectives of our it@inwent programmes are to strengthen IT sectors, foster vital innovations in ICT for sustainable human development, and use ICT as enabling tools for poverty reduction. it@inwent focuses on providing IT training and blended learning, fostering business opportunities and virtual networking, and promoting innovative ICT solutions such as free and open source software. ict@innovation is part of it@inwent.

#### **About FOSSFA**

The vision of FOSSFA is to promote the use of FOSS and the FOSS model in African development. FOSSFA supports the integration of FOSS in national policies, coordinates, promotes and adds value to African FOSS initiatives, creativity, industry, expertise, efforts and activities at all levels. FOSSFA partners with development organizations who share these goals towards a participatory and gender-mainstreamed sustainable development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. FOSSFA is governed by a Council elected during Idlelo, from which the executive is chosen.

FOSSFA members may be individuals, organisations, development agencies or governmental FOSS bureaus. The South African Minister of Public Service and Administration, Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, is FOSSFA's present Patron.

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