

ACP head urges more investment, recognition for ICT sector

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Tallinn, Estonia, 31 May 2017/ ACP: The Secretary General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States Dr. Patrick I. Gomes is pushing for more backing from both ACP governments and private sector in promoting Information Communications and Technologies (ICT).

While opening the 2017 Tallinn e-Governance Conference on Tuesday, the Secretary General underscored the role of ICT as a driver of progress and growth for national economies, as well as a booster for the Sustainable Development Goals, by helping to link, monitor and evaluate the SDGs.

“As developing countries strive to embrace e-governance in their respective development agendas, there is need to invest in innovation processes which will adapt new technologies and practices for the benefit of their populations,” he told an audience of nearly 400 ICT policy-makers and practitioners on Tuesday.

“The ICT sector needs to be openly and repeatedly recognised as a key economic enabler at the highest levels of governments.”

Over the past few years, the mobile communications market as exploded in Africa, and internet usage has seen a similar trend, particularly in developing countries. But although digital technologies are being adopted in ACP countries at an



unprecedented rate, it is still unaffordable for the majority of the population.

Dr. Gomes said that recognition of the ICT sector should be “tangible” and “translated into specific value” – be it monetary, in the form of funding, fiscal incentives or tax relief, or non-monetary, such as policies that encourage investments, liberalisation, and greater productivity. Investments aimed at strengthening the ICT human capital also need to be encouraged, as well as incentives to increase ICT adoption by small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

He also pointed to ACP-EU development programmes that seek to tackle the issue, such as the ACP Connect Programme, which builds regional communication networks and internet connectivity. Since 2000, the Intra-ACP strategy of the European Development Fund has dedicated some €90 million to ICT development and bridging the digital divide, through various programmes such as ACP Science & Technology, ACP Connect and ACP Research for Sustainable Development.

E-governance solutions

Access to knowledge technology and innovation remains mostly limited for many ACP states, especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The Tallin E-Governance Conference enabled ACP senior officials, including several Ministers of Information and Communication, to tap into global expertise and draw from discussions on successful models, challenges, and opportunities for cooperation.

Co-organised by the E-Governance Academy of Estonia, the Estonian Government and the ACP Secretariat, the conference will focus on the transfer of knowledge to developing countries.

An MoU was signed on the final day of the conference between the Estonian Government – one of the world’s leading e-societies in the world – and the ACP Group of States, to support future collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and joint initiatives

in the field of e-governance.

(Photos from top: ACP Secretary General presents a gift to the President of Estonia H.E. Ms. Kersti Kaljulaid at the Tallinn E-Governance Conference; Group Photo including from left European Commission DEVCO Director General Mr. Stefano Manservigi, H.E Dr Amani Abou-Zeid is the Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism at the African Union Commission (AUC); the President of Estonia H.E. Ms. Kersti Kaljulaid, ACP Secretary General H.E. Dr. Patrick Gomes and Director for Development and Strategy at the e-Government Academy Mr. Hannes Astok.)

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