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## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### **Africa's first African Leadership in ICT graduates gather in Addis for the African Union award ceremony**



**Wednesday, 29th August 2012** - Over 80 public sector senior level managers and policy makers from across East and Southern Africa on 29 August 2012, gathered at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa where they received awards as Africa's future Knowledge Society leaders. These laureates represented the first graduates of the **African Leadership in ICT**

**(ALICT)**-course that builds the leadership capacities of future African Leaders to enable them become change makers and to participate in the kind of social and economic planning that underpins Knowledge Society development.



The graduates, from Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia completed a 3-day workshop - a final requirement for the course - working with Knowledge Society and Futures Thinking experts to create Knowledge Society policy coherence road maps to the knowledgebased social and economic futures for their respective countries.

The African Leadership in ICT (ALICT) course is an African Union initiative, supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland and implemented by the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI), an international organisation headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.



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Her Excellency, Dr. Elham M.A. Ibrahim, Commissioner, Infrastructures and Energy, African Union Commission said; As the African Union continues to integrate into the global economy which is an increasingly information and knowledge based economy, the African Leadership in ICT Course will facilitate middle level policy makers to strengthen their visioning and planning on ICTs' role in the development of inclusive and sustainable Knowledge Societies in Africa.



The seven month course is delivered as a blended learning approach which means that participants complete most of the course online with some face to face workshop sessions over a period of seven months. The blended learning nature of the course is designed so as to provide full-time working professionals with the opportunity to

take the course and apply the learning in their workplace without having to travel outside their respective countries or even offices and homes.

The course combines theory with *applied learning*, and challenges participants to discover new leadership qualities within themselves and to become transformational leaders. Targeting middle and senior managers working in ministries and their associated agencies and those on a trajectory to key decision-making positions, this course equips participants to act as gatekeepers to policy, plans and strategies that will significantly influence the social and economic futures of their countries.

Dr. Jyrki Pulkkinen, Senior Adviser of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, said; The contents of ALICT modules are very relevant and practical. Every government in the world is struggling with the same problem: how to define coherent policies for the country in order to secure sustainable development of the society as well as the competitiveness of the economy in the globalized world. As the global economy is moving towards a knowledge economy, the policies of education, science and technology, ICT and innovation must all be streamlined to hit this challenge. ALICT course is one of the first, if not the only blended learning courses in Africa aiming to build visionary leaders on Knowledge Society in Africa. It is an important milestone not only in the development of African Knowledge Society, but also in development of appropriate capacity building model that suits well to policy makers and experts in Africa.



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As part of the course, participants explore a range of Knowledge Society themes, including education in the knowledge age, new strategies for science, technology and innovation, and telecommunications and broadband internet infrastructure. They will gain mastery of futures thinking tools and a Leadership Toolkit for Knowledge Society development.

Jerome Morrissey, CEO of GESCI, said: *“course graduates have much to look forward to on successful completion of this innovative course, including automatic membership to a continent-wide alumni network and the professional skills for innovative policy-making and implementation for knowledge society development in their respective countries. The course is very much career-enhancing”*

The participants are being awarded with a joint AUC/GESCI *Professional Certificate in leadership in ICT*. Successful participants will also be eligible for the award of *Graduate Diploma in Leadership in ICT and the Knowledge Society* from Dublin City University (Ireland), a leading European university.

Ricaud Auckbur, Director E-Education and TVET, Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Mauritius remarked: *“This class was not what I had initially anticipated. It was so much more in terms of e-content and connecting with other ICT leaders in Africa! The level of critical thinking and networking through technology was great”*.

*“The ALICT course has been innovative, informative and receptive to my challenging schedule and I am confident of scanning the future and preparing my organization for it. The tutors and staff of GESCI have been friendly and professional”*said Dr. D.C. Mwinzi, MBS, Director Youth Training, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Kenya

*“The course was an eye opener and it could not have come at a better time. It has revolutionised my thinking as a leader and I will start looking at things in a futuristic way. It had many relevant examples and scenarios which are applicable in our institutions. The personal development plan will be my guiding compass in the execution of my leadership responsibilities”*said Paul Waibochi, Head of Department, CEMASTEVA, Kenya

*“GESCI team, I would like to thank you for extending me the opportunity to participate in this Leadership in ICT course. It was a fantastic, life altering experience, and I feel very sad that it is near to finish. At first it was difficult to get online for the learning and*



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*interacting, but once the course started, it turned out to be a motivating experience which I am keen to renew without any hesitation. The depth of information provided and the focus on practicalities has inspired me to take on new challenges and to open many doors and windows in the work environment. I now realise how lucky I was to be among the selected few who followed the ALICT course” said Narainsamy Pavaday, University of Mauritius*

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