

**Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to join my voice to the commissioner and thank you for coming to this event of the African ICT week.

I shall thank you also for this opportunity to discuss with you.

It is indeed a discussion- and since we will be talking about ICT- this is not a one way communication - a simplex communication-

it's at least a duplex- a two way communications not to say a Multiplex communication.

The subject of our discussion is aligned –like every year - with the coming theme of the January 2013 AU Summit.

The thematic of this year ICT week it is about Africa's e-identity and the Presence of Africa in Internet Governance as contribution of to the Africa renaissance and Integration

While the subject on African's renaissance and integration could be debated jointly or separately with a lot of passion and intelligence, the focus of my presentation is more on the Africa's e-Identity or Africa's digital identity through the African Union initiative- Dot Africa.

The aim is to stress once again on the vital role of ICTs in the integration of Africa.

I used stress again- simply because ICTs- by essence and existence - are agents of integration. And among all networks, ICT networks are the only ones that do not accept discontinuity - regionally, continentally and globally

Before doing so I found that it is of order to go over certain basic concepts conducting to the integration of our beloved continent. Hence, my presentation will be articulated as follows:

1. Overview of African Renaissance and Pan Africanism
2. The CIT landscape in Africa
3. The Africa digital identity –Dot Africa
4. Conclusion

## **The Pan-Africanism**

Pan-Africanism is an ideology and movement that encourages the solidarity of Africans worldwide.

It is based on the belief that unity is vital to economic, social and political progress and so, it aims to “unify and uplift” people of African descent.

Pan-Africanism is a system of equitably sharing food, clothing, homes, education, healthcare, wealth, land, work, security of life and happiness.

Pan-Africanism is the privilege of the African people to love themselves and to give themselves and their way of life - **RESPECT AND PREFERENCE.**

The ideology asserts that the fate of all African peoples and countries are intertwined.

At its core, Pan-Africanism is “***a belief that African peoples, both on the continent and in the Diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny***”

The patriarchs of pan-Africanism may be gone but the fire they ignited is still burning.

## **African Renaissance**

From Italian of origin, Renaissance, means “to be reborn”

The African Renaissance is the concept that African people and nations overcome the current challenges confronting the continent and achieve cultural, scientific, economic, etc. renewal

Among other things the African Renaissance is a philosophical and political movement to end the violence, elitism, corruption and poverty that seem to plague the African continent, and replace them with a more just and equitable order

Some leaders propose doing this by, among other things, encouraging education and the reversal of the "brain drain" of African intellectuals.

They also urge Africans (led by African intellectuals) to take pride in their heritage, and to take charge of their lives.

For some others, no African Renaissance can happen without African Unity.

When Africans overcome their differences to unite, they can then talk about African Renaissance.

How this will be achieved? through

***Federalism?***

***Functionalism or neo functionalism ?***

***Transactionalism, Constructivism ?***

The debate is there- not here today

But whatever model or philosophy is selected, **Both Renaissance and Pan Africanism converge to one place- The INTEGRATION of the continent**

## **African Integration**

Integration is the mean to accomplishing- Pan Africanism and African renaissance.

African integration is the process of industrial, political, legal, economic (and in some cases social and cultural) integration of states wholly or partially in Africa.

AI deals with the cooperation and harmonization of national and international development strategies that has to do with political, economic, social issues focusing on development and the creation of a common market and preferential trade attainments within a region.

That why the major AUC activities – specifically in the field of ICT are

- 1) Harmonization of policy and regulations
- 2) Elaboration AND implementation of Development Master plan
- 3) Advocacy for Africa and Resources mobilization
- 4) Implementation of concrete projects

ICT is vital to regional integration. ICTs- by essence and existence - are agents of integration

## **Africa's ICT landscape**

ICTs have empowered the lives of Africans and are driving entrepreneurship, innovation and income growth

ICTs has been more economically dynamic and enabled wider social change than any other economic sector

The voice market / Telecommunications have been liberalized in almost all countries and have been technologically transformed.

Mobile has displaced fixed telephony as the principal means of interpersonal communications, offering relatively cheap access in almost all locations.

There are now more mobile phone subscriptions than people on the planet.

The Internet has emerged, becoming first the principal source of information access and exchange worldwide and, more recently, a dynamic new means of social networking.

Even traditional ICTs, like broadcast radio and television, have become much more diverse in technology and content, reaching deeper into societies around the world.

The Information Society is variously seen as a phenomenon, a transformation of society that should—develop further into what might be described as a Knowledge Society or Network Society.

By contrast, internet access in many parts of Africa lags behind the rest of the world.

There is general misunderstanding and mistake in thinking of as only voice or mobile phone. ICT is more than that.

Because of this situation the policy makers left the sector leaving it to the private sector who's interest is mainly voice and sometimes internet.

ICT is more than that. It is a tool for transforming society. It is an enabler for health, education, trade, electronic, agriculture, financial transactions. There is no sector where ICT can't play a key role. ICT support transport, Energy.

ICT is in each and every network and its effect on the African economy is impressive.

The way ICTs is changing the everyday lives of Africans that is genuinely transformational.

To illustrate that – let me just mention on example- The pan African e- Network for Telemedicine and Tele-education: This is a satellite and fiber with the hub in Dakar and connected to universities and hospitals in India and in Africa

- 10,000 Students
- 3000 Tele-consultations

Example of Integration- sharing of competencies

### Some AUC Target and Achievements

- Connecting all capital cities by broadband terrestrial infrastructure
- Reference framework
- PIDA /PAP
- PAeN
- AXIS
- Cyber Convention
- And Dot Africa- for content and identity

### e-Africa – Identity - Dot Africa

#### The Domain Names

When you use the Web or send an e-mail message, you use a **domain name** to do it. For example, the URL "http://www.african-union.org" contains the domain name **african-union.org**. So does the e-mail address "embassy@africa-union.org"

Human-readable names like "**African-union.org**" are easy for people to remember, but they don't do machines any good. All of the machines use names called **IP addresses** to refer to one another. For example, the machine that humans refer to as "**www.african-unions.org**" has the IP address **70.42.251.42**.

An often-used analogy to explain the Domain Name System (DNS) is that it serves as the *phone book* for the Internet by translating human-friendly computer hostnames into IP addresses. For example, the domain name [www.embassy.com](http://www.embassy.com) translates to the addresses **192.0.32.10**

In general, the Domain Name System also stores other types of information, such as the list of mail servers that accept email for a given Internet domain.

It also reflect an identity and belonging to a geographic area and / or community

#### Generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs)

The first-level set of domain names are called top-level domains (TLDs) and the first of these are referred to as generic top-level domains (gTLDs). These include domains such as the well-known **.com** (dot com), **.net** (dot net) and **.org** (dot org).

The second type is the country code top-level domains (ccTLDs)

A geographic TLD (or *GeoTLD*) is a generic top-level domain using the name of/ or invoking an association with a **geographical, geopolitical, ethnic, linguistic or cultural** community.

As of 2009, only two GeoTLDs were registered the sponsored domains Dotcat, for the Catalan language and culture, and DotAsia, although many others have been proposed.

## **The Business Side of the DNS**

When an institution or company decides they want a presence on the Internet, they first pick a domain (DNS) name, usually something like **company-name.com**.

The company then chooses a registry service with which to register that domain name for which the registry charges a nominal fee.

The registry is accredited by ICANN to provide this service and has to pay annual fees to ICANN to maintain accreditation.

## **The DotAfrica top level domain (.Africa)**

The DotAfrica TLD is proposed as a new gTLD for the promotion of Africa business, peoples and culture in the Internet.

The origins of DotAfrica date back to 2000 when the namespace was claimed by non-African companies during ICANN's<sup>1</sup> first gTLD open application round.

In response, a few African professionals strongly opposed that DotAfrica bid as it was not seen to be in the interest of benefitting the continent.

In 2002, the same group of professionals drafted, a concept paper proposing a possible operational model of DotAfrica by Africans for Africa.

DotAfrica will provide registrants with accrued possibilities for establishing their Internet presence.

It is expected that African institutions, small and medium size enterprises will greatly benefit from DotAfrica, as they thrive beyond their local markets to invade the regional and continental marketplace.

As individuals, businesses, organizations as well as community groups use the DotAfrica name they would be promoting a diverse and dynamic community within the DotAfrica namespace and realising the potential of the Internet as a platform for the economic growth of Africa.

## **Preserving DotAfrica for Africa**

DotAfrica is supposed to be the name space serving the aspirations of Africa's one billion people and 53 countries.

This unique name space will be run in parallel to the current ccTLDs and as such it is imperative that the sponsoring organizations and registrants understand its distinctive value as well as the need for DotAfrica to co-exist with African ccTLDs without negatively impacting on the ccTLDs. .

## **The African Union and DotAfrica**

The African Union Commission strongly believes that the introduction of the DotAfrica will create an attractive regional home for the Pan-African Internet community.

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<sup>1</sup> ICANN: the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ([www.icann.org](http://www.icann.org))

As the first sponsored registry to be operating from Africa and, therefore, serving the specific needs of its communities, DotAfrica will echo ongoing operation and the successes of other sister community TLDs such as DotEu (DotEuropa) and DotAsia that have created a new Internet identity for their users and businesses which seek more regional presence without being confined within the limits of one country.

DotAfrica will be adding value to the namespace as a recognizable phrase which focuses on the African identity.

It will capture the essence of the community served;

The Internet will therefore become a platform for growth of the Africa business.

This matches well and is consistent with the multicultural and vibrant community in Africa.

While current gTLDs tend to focus on a vertical group (e.g. commercial entities, network providers, organizations, museums, cooperatives, etc.) within the global Internet, .Africa will embrace a horizontal perspective with a clear brand to reach and enrich the broad global community.

Unlike ccTLDs, which provides for a local audience, .Africa will allow the user to express a CONTINENTAL relevance.

The introduction of the .Africa will creates an attractive regional home for the Pan-African Internet community;

this will be the first sponsored registry to be operating from Africa and therefore serving the specific needs of its communities.

With regard to the social, cultural, and economic aspects of establishing an .Africa domain, .Africa would be an important symbol of the **UNITY OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT**.

It would also help the African continent to retrieve its identity within the emerging knowledge society era.

From an economic point of view, experts are convinced that .Africa will enhance African youth creativity leading to socio-economic development;

it would bring new business horizons to the African market at large; and it would be an advantage for diverse African organisations by allowing them to avoid other generic TLDs, thus increasing online business and financial incomes into Africa.

Dot Africa it is a very powerful concept that goes beyond the actual geographic limits of the African continent.

Large Diaspora communities from Latin America and North America, for instance, consider themselves African, so they would also be involved in the .Africa implementation.

It is an opportunity to forge an identity that will elevate and enhance an African digital presence.

The dotAfrica TLD will bring the continent together as an internet community under one umbrella allowing e-commerce, technology and infrastructure to flourish.

This is a truly African initiative created for Africa, by Africans. In other words, it will promote innovation in Africa.

The DotAfrica TLD will be for the promotion of Africa business, peoples and culture in the Internet in order to boost local economies.

dotAfrica TLD will be used to extend Africa commercial influence and will be critical in the building of an inclusive Information Society and knowledge economy.

dotAfrica will allow Africans, private sector, groups, governments, NGOs operating in Africa and tourist attractions to register website names and have email addresses ending in .africa, which will directly identify them with Africa.

With the dotAfrica TLD, clients will easily locate companies.

Through dotAfrica, individuals, organizations and others will have a chance to own a virtual piece of Africa.

The dotAfrica will strengthen the image of Africa and give added value to the African private sector.

dotAfrica will provide greater visibility and improve recognition for Africa on the Internet worldwide like dotAsia for the Asian community and dotEu for the European community.

*.DotAfrica* is an important channel for increasing online visibility of some rich but yet unused potentials of the African culture, such as the promotion of storytelling and oral culture found throughout Africa.

**We will then define ourselves rather than being defined by others**

## **In conclusion**

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen

Being African is now more and more powerful. The world is in need of Africa.

The future of ICT is not about the phone or the computer anymore; it's about the applications and the information they deliver.

ICTs now offer major opportunities to advance human development – from providing basic access to education or health information to making cash payments and stimulating citizen involvement in the democratic process.

It is now accepted among Political leaders, African scholars and analysts that Africa has missed the opportunity of the industrialisation and the proper decolonisation.

Africa should not then miss the turn of Information and communication technologies.

ICT represents a unique chance and opportunity for Africa to enter the new age and the developed world

Through Dot Africa, Africa will be able to promote itself- not by others and as Patrice Lumumba said:

***Africa will write its own history, and it will be, to the north and to the south of the Sahara, a history of glory and dignity.***

In implementing dot Africa the Africa digital identity,  
In building the information society for our future generation,

In building our integration and accelerating our renaissance, we faced , still face and will continue to face a lot of challenges,

But Thomas Sankara said once:

***“If we maintain a certain amount of caution and organization we deserve victory....We cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of readiness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn our back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future.”***

The Renaissance and the integration of Africa –is most of all a state in mind.  
It is a love to Africa and Africans regardless of their tribe or their ethnic, their religion or believes.

It is a believing, as Kwame **Nkrumah**, said, that

**Africa is one continent, one people, and one nation**

**Thank you for your kind attention**