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# Working Together to Enable Innovation, Jobs & Opportunity

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization's (UNIDO) mission is to improve the living conditions of people and promote global prosperity by offering tailor-made solutions for the sustainable industrial development of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. UNIDO has a special place in the United Nations system as it is the only organization specifically targeting the creation of wealth through manufacturing industries, focusing on the small and medium enterprise sector, the key generator of employment in most developing countries.

Contributing to partnerships for development is a core part of corporate citizenship and an integral part of conducting responsible business. Microsoft's approach is competence-based and rooted in the idea that by bringing the core resources, solutions, know-how and time of the company and its employees to the table, it can support its partners serving local needs and addressing global development challenges.

In July 2006, UNIDO and Microsoft established a partnership pooling expertise to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and foster greater innovation and competitiveness. The partnership recognises the importance of harnessing the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for promoting sustainable industrialization throughout the developing world as a means of improving livelihoods in developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.





“Information and Communication Technology is a key development tool – it contributes to increased productivity and helps stimulating a competitive knowledge-based economy. More public-private partnerships are needed - such as the one we have established with Microsoft – to bring Africa closer to achieving the Millennium Development Goals”.

Director-General of UNIDO, Dr Kandeh K.Yumkella, commenting on the UNIDO partnership with Microsoft

Areas of focus for the partnership are concentrating on promoting the development and growth of SMEs through the use of ICT, fostering the development of a local software economy and promoting e-business initiatives. The partnership also seeks to facilitate SME's access to quality hardware and software solutions in Africa, particularly in rural areas.

#### **Making Computers Available to Entrepreneurs in Less Developed Countries**

One of the key difficulties for SMEs in less developed countries is securing access to hardware and software to leverage the benefits of ICT. In order to address this need, and to extend the useful life of PCs, UNIDO and Microsoft announced a Refurbished Computer Initiative for SMEs in Africa in June 2007 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

The partners agreed to establish a local refurbishment centre of excellence based on a sustainable business framework, providing affordable quality hardware, relevant software as well as ICT training for SMEs. Microsoft and UNIDO are also exploring opportunities of establishing dismantling facilities and complimentary regional e-waste recycling services that can provide zero landfill recycling of e-waste, as well as knowledge transfer and new business opportunities, thus securing that the entire life-cycle of PCs is optimally addressed.

Microsoft will provide access to its Gold Partner Refurbishment Programme which is currently under development, to include software tools to help refurbishers, special pricing on software for refurbished PCs, criteria on quality of partners including mandating of warranties for PCs, after sale support, qualified staff and end-of-life return, linkages to potential suppliers of secondary PCs and marketing support.

The model will be piloted in Uganda before expanding it across the region. The ultimate goal is to provide SMEs with access to affordable, quality PCs in Africa, thereby increasing their productivity and competitiveness and contributing to skills transfer and ICT training.



### Supporting Micro, Small and Medium Business

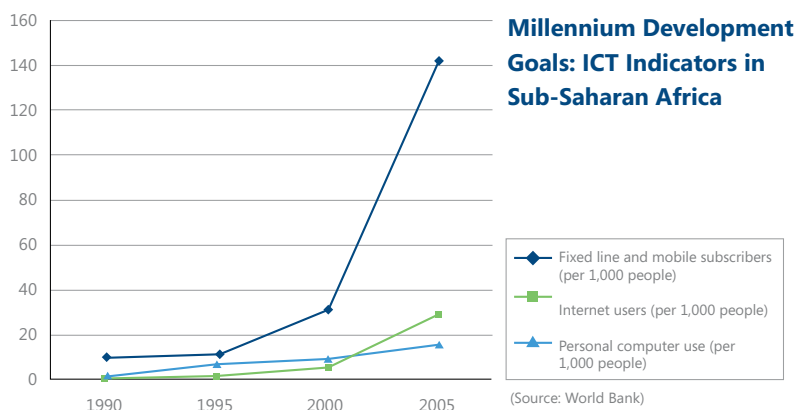
UNIDO establishes Business Information Centres (BICs) in developing countries to assist SMEs to access relevant market information over the Internet. Despite a driving business spirit, the growth and competitiveness of these enterprises is often hampered by a lack of technical training, business advisory services and access to relevant hardware and software. In this context, UNIDO is currently implementing a BIC programme in Uganda. The Centres are aimed at providing integrated business information solutions to SMEs on a demand-driven basis to help their development. Eight Centres have been established in various districts throughout rural Uganda.

An important focus of the BICs is on income-generation by the SME business community through the provision of sustainable services such as ICT training and entrepreneurship development. In addition, the BICs offer entrepreneurs fast and reliable access to the Internet to get the information they need to improve their production and day-to-day business activities. Microsoft's support is centred on developing relevant ICT-related services and training for the rural business community and awareness building on the benefits of ICT tools via its Digital Literacy programme and SME relevant training curriculum.

### Promoting Local Software Economy

In September 2007, UNIDO, the Government of Uganda and Microsoft signed an agreement to cooperate on the development of a sustainable local software economy in Uganda over the next 12 months. Local software developers will be encouraged to develop "localized software solutions." By fostering information and communication technology innovations and solutions, the partners intend to enhance the role that Ugandan software developers and ICT graduates can play in the country's economy.

A local Software Development Centre will be set up in which software solutions are offered, demonstrated and developed. The Centre will act as an incubator for innovations and solutions in IT by offering technology training (developer workshops, support centre, proof of concept lab) and industry skills transfers (best practices seminars conducted by local and international industry players).





### Driving Investment in Africa

UNIDO actively supports the improvement of the investment climate in Africa through its Africa Investment Promotion Agency Network (AfrIPANet) initiative. AfrIPANet assists policy-makers tailor their strategies to attract FDI and private decision-makers to make sound investment choices. Through gathering data on the behaviour and expectations of investors, sectoral growth, and the impact of different types of investment on each country, AfrIPANet bridges the existing investment knowledge gap in Africa and provides a tool for evidence based policy advocacy.

In the framework of an Expert Group Meeting in March 2007, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, UNIDO and Microsoft officially launched a prototype of the Investment Monitoring Platform. This innovative technology solution supports AfrIPANet, by facilitating more informed investment decision-making and closer partnership between governments and businesses.

Microsoft supports this initiative with its technology to enhance the analysis and tracking functionality of the network's information platform. The new technology solution serves to increase transparency, information sharing and the articulation of strategies and to create synergies through the active involvement of all end users – companies, government agencies, development partners and civil society.

Fifteen countries are currently part of the network: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, and Tanzania.

“Give people the right tools, empower them with the right knowledge and provide them with the right opportunity and you'll see them build their own futures. Our partnership with UNIDO is firmly rooted in this approach.”

Dr. Cheick Modibo Diarra, Microsoft Chairman for Africa



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