

It@ab participates in Idlelo 2 - Second Conference on the Digital Commons

23 - 25 February 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya

Kenya, 20 February 2006

The SADC knowledge network it@ab (Information Technology In African Business), with support from InWEnt (Capacity Building International, Germany) of Germany is sending twenty five delegates from six SADC countries to participate in IDLELO2, the second all Africa conference on Free and Open Source software in Nairobi Kenya from the 23 to the 25th of February 2006. The six countries are Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Namibia. Idlelo2 will bring together key decision makers from all African countries and experts from Europe, Asia and America. The objectives of the conference include (a) exposing African Governments, civil society and private sector to leading Open Source technology, (b) stimulating e-government strategies in Africa and (c) stimulating a local Open Source Software Industry in African countries.

Mr Derek Lakudzala, vice chairman of the it@ab network explains: *"it@ab associates itself with Idlelo2 partly to expose the expertise already available in the region and to the regions' user community through the it@ab network and partly to exchange knowledge and information on possible collaboration to use innovations such as FOSS as a tool to fight poverty in Africa. The time to move from mere talk to concrete results, products and services using FOSS is now. Idlelo2 affords stakeholders that rare opportunity to meet some of the regions own experts on the one hand and key decision and policy makers on the other hand. The it@ab network expects that the conference also offers opportunities for business contacts. With the investment already put into development of Africa's own human resource expertise in the area of FOSS, we want to establish new synergies and win-win relationships with other key players in the it-field."*

According to experts, the deployment of Free and Open Software (FOSS) decreases dependence on individual software makers and countries are better able to adapt programmes and platforms to suit local needs. FOSS offers government the opportunity to attain true sustainability in their IT infrastructure for administration and education while also saving money in the long term. The conference will provide different approaches and possibilities for promoting the use of FOSS for development and complimenting poverty reduction strategies. This conference will especially help government representatives and African activists to define, develop and realize their own Free Software policies and to benefit from Free Software in a sustainable way thereby help bridge the digital divide.

Idlelo2 comes two months after [it@ab](#) members participated in the free and open source software developer's conference "Africa Source2" in Uganda and five month after the it@ab network organized a two days international conference on Free and Open Source Software in Lusaka, Zambia on "Smooth integration of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) into existing software environments".

About it@ab – Information Technology in African Business

The Southern African Knowledge Network on “Information Technology in African Business” (it@ab) supports the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), institutions and governmental bodies in the field of e-business development and IT training and promotes local and regional business cooperation. More than 30 institutions in seven SADC member states have been drawn together under the network’s umbrella and serve as multipliers for innovation and technology exchange – in their work, it@ab specialists have acquired considerable expertise in using free and open source software to provide solutions to businesses and the public sector. it@ab mainly consists of IT consulting firms, IT training institutions, business promotion agencies and universities in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. it@ab is supported by InWEnt with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). it@ab participated in the WSIS 2005 Expo in Tunis and hopes to continue expanding its linkages and relationships with more and more countries and regions in Africa and beyond.

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About InWEnt

InWEnt Capacity Building International stands for the development of human resources and organizations through international cooperation. InWEnt’s training and dialogue services cater to managers, skilled and executive personnel and decision makers from business, politics, administration and civil society worldwide. Reaching about 55,000 people per year InWEnt works with partners in developing, transition and industrialized countries. InWEnt’s shareholders are the Federal Republic of Germany represented by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft representing the business world and the German Foundation for International Development representing the German federal states.

it@inwent – Supporting ICT Networks in the South

it@inwent helps multiplying partners in Africa, Asia and the Middle East to provide advanced knowledge in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Through capacity-building and training, we create new business opportunities and assist our partners in generating income and high-quality jobs. Jointly with our partners we support a wide variety of economic and social ICT initiatives and develop ICT products. Our key objective is to strengthen IT sectors in various regions of the world, foster key innovations in ICTs for development and use ICTs as enabling tools for poverty reduction. We focus on providing IT training, fostering e-business opportunities and virtual cooperation and promoting innovative ICT solutions such as open source.

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