

## **it@ab and InWent contributed to Idlelo2 - Second Conference on the Digital Commons 23 - 25 February 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya**

Kenya, 25th of February 2006 - More than 200 IT-Experts, governmental representatives and entrepreneurs gathered in Kenya's capital Nairobi from 23-25 February 2006 for the international conference "Idlelo 2 - Second Conference on the Digital Commons", the second pan-African conference on Free and Open Source software.

The SADC knowledge network it@ab (Information Technology In African Business), with support from InWent (Capacity Building International) of Germany was involved in Idlelo2 and sent twenty five delegates from six SADC countries (from Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Namibia), Europe and Asia at IDLELO2 as speakers and participants.

Idlelo2 brought together key decision makers from all African countries and experts from Europe, Asia and America. The conference proved to be instrumental in

- (a) exposing African Governments, civil society and private sector to leading Open Source Technology
- (b) stimulating e-government strategies in Africa
- (c) stimulating a local Open Source Software Industry in African countries
- (d) bringing together Practitioners, Decision Makers and FOSS Software Developers to learn how FOSS works
- (f) developing an African FOSS Action Plan from 2006 to 2008
- (g) giving a strong impetus to the gender component of the FOSS activities in Africa and
- (h) charting a way forward towards the use of FOSS in African development.

The conference was opened by Mr. Amoussougbo, Regional Advisor on ICT initiatives, Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Sir Daniel, President and CEO, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Mr. Shuttleworth, Canonical/Ubuntu, Mr Balthas Seibold – InWent gGmbH Germany, Ms Borhat, Manager, Open Source Programs, Google and Mr Thatcher, Region Technology Officer, Microsoft EMEA.



During the three days of exchange and discussions on free and open-source software (FOSS), more than 30 international and national experts and policy makers presented and discussed global and local FOSS-solutions, FOSS-based business models and market opportunities – divided in the following sub-themes: Foss and Health, Foss and Education,

Foss and Governance, the role of FOSS in the eradication of extreme poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability, the role of FOSS applications in HIV/AIDS, FOSS and Gender and FOSS and local entrepreneurship. For all themes, Idlelo2 produced concrete reports highlighting achievements, challenges and possible projects. The records of the conference are online at [www.fossfa.net](http://www.fossfa.net)



Mr Derek Lakudzala, vice chairman of the it@ab network explains the rationale behind it@ab's participation at Idlelo2: *"it@ab associated 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 afforded 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. With the investment already put into development of Africa's own human resource expertise in the area of FOSS, we had the opportunity at Idlelo2 to establish new synergies and win-win relationships with other key players in the it-field."*

At Idlelo2, [it@ab](http://it@ab), InWEnt and guests of the network showcased its expertise in ICT for development at the Idlelo2 Exhibition and were active as speakers in different sessions, which attracted large audiences:

Session 2 - Official Opening	Keynote speech, Seibold Balthas (InWEnt)-Capacity Building International
Session 3, Break out session FOSS & E-Government	Presentation by Joseph Machange, it@ab-guest from Tanzanian Government
Session 3, Break out session FOSS & Health	Moderator and report: Edephonc Nfuka, University of Dar es Salaam, it@ab member
Session 3, Break out session FOSS & Local Entrepreneurship	Moderator and report: Derek Lakudzala, vice chairman it@ab Presentation by Markus Beckedahl- New Thinking Germany, it@ab guest from Germany, FOSS-expert
Session 5: FOSS Localization	Presentation by Sola Javier: Power of Localization, it@ab guest from Cambodia, FOSS-expert
Session 6: Africa Government's best practices on FOSS	Presentation by Maganlal, Kauxique, Ministry of Education and Culture, Mozambique, it@ab guest from Mozambique government
Session 7: FOSS & MDGs	Co-chair of session: Derek Lakudzala, vice chairman it@ab

The Second African Conference on the Digital Commons – IDLELO 2 benefited from an enlarged partnership base from the first edition. In addition to InWEnt, Capacity Building International, FOSSFA partnered with the Republic of Kenya, the Kenya Directorate of E-Governance, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa - UNECA, the Commonwealth of Learning, HIVOS, Google, Open Society Initiative of West Africa - OSIWA, Ubuntu and Circuits and Packets.

### **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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