



Opening and Welcome Addresses

Session chair

Karine Valin, Sigma-Orionis, EuroAfrica-ICT project coordinator

Session rapporteur

Peter McGrath, TWAS, EuroAfrica-ICT project partner

*Cape Town, South Africa - www.euroafrica-ict.org
4th Euro-Africa Cooperation Forum on ICT Research*





Panellist list

- **Isaac Maredi, Acting chief director, Sector Innovation and Global Change and Director, ICT, Department of Science and Technology, Government of South Africa**
- **Laurens Cloete, Executive Director, CSIR, Meraka Institute, South Africa**
- **Harry de Backer, Minister Counselor, EU delegation to AU, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**
- **Moctar Yedaly, Head of Information Science Division, AUC**
- **Joseph Nezaam, Director, Dept of Economic Development and Tourism, Provincial Government Department of Western Cape, South Africa**



A large, stylized world map in shades of orange and brown, positioned at the top of the slide. The map is centered and shows the continents. Below the map is a horizontal line with a gradient from dark orange to light orange.


Report - Slide #1

The importance of ICT infrastructure and research to economic development was highlighted by all speakers.

Isaac Maredi, for example, noted that South Africa – through Meraka/CSIR – was currently working on a long-term road map for development that will review existing capabilities, and identify gaps, opportunities and economic drivers.

Providing more background on the economic activities of South Africa, Laurens Cloete confirmed that its economy was largely driven by traditional primary industries such as mining and agriculture, but that there was government commitment to developing a knowledge economy, for example through a new 10 year innovation plan, in which the production and dissemination of knowledge would drive development and at the heart of which would be a focus on ICTs such as wider access to broadband internet and digital inclusion strategies. He also noted South Africa's commitment to research, including the global research community, through the development of such infrastructural facilities as CHPC for high-power computing, a super-computing facility.





Report - Slide #2

Harry de Backer noted that urban areas in Africa now had 90% coverage by mobile networks and that there were already a number of initiatives – the most well known of which is the Kenyan m-Pesa e-banking system – that are showing the innovation that exists within Africa for Africa. He is convinced that the ubiquity of mobile phones in Africa is helping to launch applications adapted for Africa and that can also be used elsewhere such as in Europe. However, there is still a need for local adaptation to make many other applications relevant, such as those coming out of the European LivingLabs initiative.

Joseph Nezaam highlighted the role of Cape Town in innovation, perhaps aided by the diversity of the cultures it represents, and noted the need to take risks to answer long-standing questions, such as a successful local programme to train unemployed people with cognitive skills for the financial sector. He also confirmed his support for open access and open source initiatives that reply on collaboration and can move ideas and research to practical actions for poverty alleviation much more quickly, he believed, than development driven through patenting and the protection of intellectual property.

Finally, Moctar Yedaly congratulated the organizers of the meeting for putting together a rich and exhaustive agenda, and encouraged participants to take advantage of the opportunities presented to further their ICT research and infrastructure development goals.





Report - Summary

The speakers confirmed the importance of ICT for economic development and highlighted a number of African and European activities that are driving the greater integration of ICTs into such activities.

In particular, these include the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, and especially Partnership 8 on Science, Information Society and Space and such Flagship Projects as Flagship projects, e.g. HIPSSA (Harmonisation of ICT Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa), and AfricaConnect for educational networks (with European GEANT).

