"The International Heliophysical Year Space Science Workshop Recommendation on Cyber-infrastructure"

Preamble

The International Heliophysical Year Space Science Workshop, held in Addis Ababa, 12-16th November 2007, brought into sharp focus the outstanding scientific and technical abilities of African scientists as resourceful researchers, strongly committed to education and training. African scientists offer a huge reservoir of talent and enthusiasm.

Modern information & communications technologies offer a low-cost way for all communities, regardless of wealth and level of industrialisation, to share on equal terms the benefits of the information revolution. Internet infrastructure has profound effects on educational and research outcomes, and fuels economic success. Affordable access to the Internet is clearly essential for sustaining viable University and high school sectors.

The workshop highlighted the single largest barrier that prevents African countries from benefiting from their indigenous scientific talent and resources – poor access to the Internet. Overcoming this barrier will also ensure continued regeneration and expansion of talent in a manner that is achievable in no other way.

Resolution

We, the 63 African scientists, representing 19 African countries, participating in the International Heliophysical Year Workshop in Addis Ababa, 12-16 November 2007,

RECOGNISE that modern information and communications technologies have revolutionised the conduct of research, education, and training in science and technology, as well as elsewhere, by providing rapid and effective means to

- communicate among people,

- participate in international, regional, and national scientific and educational efforts,

- discover, access, and share data and information,

- utilize available computational services, including data processing, visualization, and analysis,

- benefit from the vast world-wide research and teaching resources and publications that exist, and

- transmit observational data from remote stations,

NOTE that the capabilities listed above deliver economic and social benefits to communities that have an efficient cyber-infrastructure and good Internet connectivity,

REGRET that the digital divide is growing and denying most African communities those very benefits, and that the situation is particularly acute in research, education, and training institutions, where Internet services are often poor, or even non-existent,

RECOMMEND that high priority be given to improving the cyber-infrastructure for universities, colleges, and other national science and technology institutions in Africa as a cost–effective and essential means of achieving national Millennium Development Goals.

Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa,
16 November 2007