

SCAN – ICT Workshop 23.1.06

Director of Statistics welcome address

**Honourable Minister of Information Technology & Telecommunications,
Representatives of ECA, Mr Faye and Mr Temtime,
Fellow colleagues,
Ladies & Gentlemen,**

I would like to welcome you all to this workshop on SCAN-ICT, which we are privileged to host, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and, with strong support from the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications.

2. Ladies & Gentlemen, ICT concerns all of us:

- (i) Government is very much aware of the importance of mainstreaming ICTs in development strategies, to improve the well-being of the nation, and the performance of the economy.
- (ii) The business community, in particular SMEs, are keen to increase their productivity and competitiveness through the use of ICTs; and
- (iii) The population at large wants access to skills and capacity-building in ICT competencies, not only to make the most of available ICT tools, but also to adapt to the changes in work practices which ICT is bringing about.

3. Initiatives have already been taken by Government and others, to develop the ICT sector, and also to harness ICT to transform the economy and society. Ladies and Gentlemen, we don't want these initiatives, and the policy and decision-making process, to be hampered by scarcity of data. We want to put comparable statistics at the disposal of those who are called upon to measure the information economy and society, analyse trends and monitor impact of ICT.

4. The Central Statistics Office is acutely conscious of ICT-generated data needs. We have already started collecting some information from both households and establishments since 2002. However, the gap between the statistics that are available, and those that are needed, particularly with reference to Value Added and Investment, is quite big. We need to bridge that gap. And we cannot do it alone. We need the cooperation of one and all.

5. We need to convince households and businesses to supply the data needed to produce the statistics required by users. We need to consult with other data producers to harmonize concepts, definitions and methods. We need to coordinate our activities with others to reduce the burden to be placed on data suppliers. And last, but not least, we

need to learn from the international community, represented here by the ECA delegates: we need to be guided through the measurement challenges posed by the information age.

6. Ladies and Gentlemen, this workshop is the beginning of a long-term cooperative effort between all of us engaged in the measurement of ICTs for relevant evidence-based policies and decisions.

Thank you all for your attention.