



Vol 2: Issue 4: August 2009

## NUANCE:

Newsletter of UbuntuNet Alliance: Networks, Collaboration, Education

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### Upcoming Events

[Open Access 2009: 7th International Conference on Open Access, Accra, Ghana](#)

[UbuntuNet-Connect 2009, Kampala, Uganda, 12 – 13 November 2009](#)

[5th BELIEF Symposium and CHPC National Meeting 2009, Johannesburg, South Africa, 7-9th December 2009](#)

## Senegalese NREN to be formed

*By Dr Boubakar Barry*



On 20-21 July 2009, a national policy dialogue meeting was held in Dakar, Senegal to discuss ways and means of establishing an NREN. About 50 participants from all 5 public universities, private universities, research institutes, the ministries in charge of education, scientific research and ICT, the Government ICT Agency, the Telecommunication Regulatory Agency and developing partners attended the meeting, which was opened by the Minister of Scientific Research and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Higher education. Vice-Chancellors too attended the opening and closing ceremony.

The participants decided to work together towards the establishment of a Senegalese Research and Education Network by April 2010. A Steering Committee has been established as well as 3 working groups on governance, technical issues and content.

The Government ICT Agency offered to provide connectivity between the participating institutions from its national fibre backbone with bandwidth in the gbps range; a dedicated fibre pair may be allocated at a later stage. Video Conference equipment will be made available to them too.

A declaration was produced, with an appeal to policy and decision makers, namely the President, the Ministers in charge of higher education, research and ICT and to Vice-Chancellors.

## E-Readiness Survey of East African Universities



Congratulations, Professors Meoli Kashorda and Timothy Waema of KENET and their team for compiling the 2008 E-Readiness Survey of East African Universities (with financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation). The purpose of the e-readiness survey was to assess the preparedness of about 50 universities in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for teaching, learning, research and management.

To assess the e-readiness, the survey used 17 indicators grouped into the following 5 categories: network access, networked campus, networked learning, networked society, and institutional ICT strategy. The assessment framework was derived from an e-readiness assessment tool originally developed by the Center for International Development (DID) at Harvard University.

The Universities in the survey are part of their NRENs and NREN members played a significant role in data collection. They all fall within the framework of the interconnection plans of UbuntuNet Alliance

For further details visit [www.eready.kenet.or.ke](http://www.eready.kenet.or.ke)

## Secretariat Developments - Beatrice full time at the Secretariat



Many NUANCE readers will know Beatrice Ng'ambi who has been the quiet efficiency behind many of the UbuntuNet Alliance events and also manager of the finances since the establishment of the Secretariat in early 2006.. Beatrice was working at Alliance on a part time basis while holding an administrative position in the University of Malawi, Kamuzu College of Nursing.

On 1 August this year, she took the bold step of resigning from the security of the University and signing a three year contract with UbuntuNet Alliance. She is located at the Secretariat in Lilongwe. Beatrice is in a capacity-building position, and currently holds the position of Accountant Trainee. Join us in welcoming her in her full- time capacity.

## MAREN fills executive posts



The MAREN Task Force converged in the north of Malawi at Mzuzu University on 17th August 2009 to examine some critical issues. One outcome of this meeting was the appointment of Solomin DIndi, a Computer Science lecturer at Chancellor College specializing in Networks, as CEO and Daurice Nyirongo, Systems Administrator at Mzuzu University as CTO.

The photo shows the Chair of the MAREN Task Force, Professor Leonard Kamwanja, Pro VC of University of Malawi with Daurice, Solomon and the outgoing Ag CEO, Dr Harry Gombachika. All members of the Task Force will continue assisting the new incumbents in the strenuous task of getting MAREN operational. The next step is a two day meeting to be held in Lilongwe in late September to develop the MAREN business plan.

## Recreating African Universities for relevance: UbuntuNet presents again to RUFORUM



The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a consortium of 25 universities, with a geographic footprint very similar to that of the Alliance, is a recent recipient of a Bill and Melinda Gates foundation grant and is expanding its activities. The Forum held several high profile events at Serena Beach Hotel, Mombasa, from 26 August till 4 September 2009: the AGM, an African Agricultural Policy Caucus and the Deans and Pro Vice Chancellors meeting under the theme “Recreating African universities for relevance”

A highlight of the event was the inspiring Key Note by Nobel Prize winner Professor Wangari Maathai who is captured in the photo. Mrs Margaret Ngwira, a Board member of the Alliance who is based at the Lilongwe Secretariat, made two well received presentations under the theme “Harnessing ICT for Effectiveness in Universities” explaining global Education and Research Networking, the upcoming EU Africa-Connect and the role of UbuntuNet as regional REN. Also present were several representatives of other networks such as the African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE) and the CG centers. CTA which has had a vital role in giving access to agricultural knowledge also played major role.

UbuntuNet Alliance is grateful to RUFORUM for this opportunity to network with networks and raise awareness at a critical time as the SEACOM fibre is being connected in the region.

## Call for Articles

NUANCE is a monthly e-newsletter published by UbuntuNet Alliance. Key content is news from, about, or of interest to National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) in Africa. We request and invite you to submit an item before the 20th of each month capturing:

News and developments from your NREN and news items of interest to NRENs

Content networks: how researchers and academics are using the REN infrastructure to enhance effectiveness and efficiency their work and to promote national and international collaboration

Hot tips about something you have done successfully (organisational or technical)

A photo that tells a story

Looking into the future, especially with regards to fibre infrastructure

Submissions should be sent to [info@ubuntunet.net](mailto:info@ubuntunet.net).

## NUANCE

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