Communicating the African Union Commission

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• Vision of the AU
• Composition of DCI
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• DCI vision
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Introduction

- Communication strategy has been drafted.
- Discussed with UN, RECS, and partners
- Next step - consideration by AU structures
- Strategy is accompanied by a four year work plan, which includes a comprehensive mix of media, publications, audio visual services and development, website, relationship with partners and promotional activities
VISION OF THE AFRICAN UNION

“A united and integrated Africa, prosperous and peaceful, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”

The vision is anchored on 4 key pillars

- Peace and security
- Development and integration
- Shared values/ best practices
- Institution and capacity building
COMPOSITION OF DCI

The DCI is located in the office of the Chairperson and reports directly to him. It comprises:

- 1 Head of Division
- 4 communication officers
- 2 website administrators
- 3 audio visual technicians
- 1 secretary
- 1 administrative assistant.

Total = 12
The mandate of the DCI is derived from

- AU Vision and Mission i.e. “assuming a dynamic information and advocacy role for Africa vis-à-vis the World”
- Strategic Plan 2004-2007
- 2009-2012 strategy nearing completion. It recognizes communication more
- AU Communication Strategy

DCI serves both the Commission and the African Union
DCI OBJECTIVE

- To develop, plan and conduct activities designed to provide information about the AU, and to promote increased awareness about its aims and activities through various information tools and mechanisms (AU Executive Council)
DCI Vision statement

- To contribute in a strategic manner, to the attainment of the vision of the AU, through dissemination of information emanating from and about the AU, the Commission and all the organs and institutions; engaging stakeholders on integration and development, raising awareness of the AU symbols and, where appropriate, acting as the link between the Commission and its stakeholders

DCI also guided by the recommendations of the Communication strategy workshop held last year
DCI missions

- To be the focal point for disseminating information about the AU
- To create awareness about the AU’s role in continental and national development processes
- To formulate and to manage policies and programmes for information and outreach
- To establish and maintain lines of communication with stakeholders both internal and external.
- To explore more innovative approaches, formats and platforms in order to achieve greater speed, immediacy and relevance of communication in order to engage the interest, time and commitment of the media
- To be the spokesperson
DCI missions cont…

- To advise leadership on communication
- To maintain, upgrade and update the website
- To develop automated databases to enable efficient dissemination of information
- To implement the decisions of Ministers responsible for information
- To explore the possibility of establishing the Pan African TV and Radio Channels
- To facilitate more media freedom through the creation of a media observatory
- To build and maintain partnerships with key stakeholders
- To popularise the symbols of the AU

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DCI Key Performance Areas

- Dissemination, accessibility and transparency
- Consultation, exchange, outreach
- Partnership and alliance building
- Elevating, streamlining, mainstreaming and liberalising communication
- Corporate identity
MAJOR OUTPUTS of DCI

- Media liaison - press center, journalists’ database, luncheons, arranging interviews, field trips
- Press releases, media advisories,
- Press conferences and media briefings
- Publications e.g. AUC NEWS, AU ECHO, Annual report, Information brochures and packages, other AU publications
- Press kits
- Media buying
Major outputs of DCI (cont)

- Audio visual e.g. documentary and film production, Audio recordings and photography
- TV and radio programmes
- Daily press review
- Promotional materials
- Advice on communication matters
- Public relations/branding
- Website
- Liaison with partners
Lessons learnt in media relations

- DCI job two fold; 1 provide info; 2 facilitate work of media
- Coming up is advocacy for media liberalisation under the media observatory - with EU
- Media are a partner in development
- One learns lessons every time: we are ready to learn
- “Low hanging fruits” can be very effective
- Follow up to any invitations is necessary
- Need to know the total media landscape in Africa
- Need to engage media early in the process
- This is our continent. Up to us to look for the African angle - +ve or –ve. We are the dynamic citizens referred to in the AU vision, to drive the continent to peace and prosperity

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EXPECTATIONS, CHALLENGES

- Ways to facilitate media work, increase coverage
- Where are the improvements needed
- Crisis management - assistance required
- Some leaders are not very media friendly
- Persistent negative images of Africa in world media, esp. on wars etc., social development less covered
- Internal issues e.g. more tools and skills; Human resources spread very thinly; training for officers; upgrading of website; digitalisation of photo and film footage; increase access to management information; inadequate equipment/office space

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African Union Commission
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I thank you
media liaison

- Interviews for Commission leadership and key actors
- Invitations to media to cover Commission events
- Arrangement of and moderation at press conferences
- Responding to media enquiries
- Maintaining and updating media database
- Facilitating the work of the media e.g. media center
- Accreditation of media to the AU and to all major events
- Media buying
- Sending all relevant information e.g. Summit outcomes
...press releases and media advisories

- Press releases sent out before, during and after event through the data base of regional and international media
- Media advisories sent out to advise media of upcoming events
- Some press releases sent out jointly with or on behalf of partners
- Sent in English, Arabic and French
press conferences and briefings

- Standard measure at all major AU events
- Briefings of media on all subjects discussed in plenary
- Heads of State or Ministers may host press conferences during AU events
- Facilitating access to media by key partners during AU Summits
PUBLICATIONS

- AUC NEWS - the newsletter of the AU Commission. A monthly publication in print and online
- AU ECHO - a special daily newsletter for the Summits - in print and online
- Annual report - in production since 2006

www.africa-union.org  African Union Commission
Newsletter of the AU Commission
Published every month
Targets all AU stakeholders
Published in hard and soft copy
Soft copy on website, email
Hard copies to Commission staff, regional bureaus, development partners, embassies
Summit decisions and declarations are sent as attachments to that month’s newsletter
Published in English, French and Arabic

AUC NEWS
www.africa-union.org  African Union Commission
First ever annual report published in 2006
2007 report already
Report gives stakeholders an insight into activities of the AU over the year
.... information brochures

- E.g. Founding fathers of the OAU; AU Vision and Mission; Leadership of the Commission- (bio data of Commission leadership); Nobel laureates from Africa and the Diaspora;
- DCI assists departments with designing and publishing their publications
... press kits

- Produced for most major conferences and summits
- Standard press kit folders used
DCI takes photographs of all possible AUC events.
Photos used in publications, in documentaries and as reference.
DCI also supplies major partners on request.
Photo library dates back to formation of OAU in 1963.
Photos used for exhibitions.
• Recordings of all possible AU events
• Used for making of documentaries, for reference, distribution to interested Member States, and as archives for future use
• DCI makes short video documentaries of AU Summits and major conferences
• Materials in stock date back to the 1960’s
Documentaries made so far

- Founding fathers of the OAU
- AU corporate video
…. audio recordings and productions

- Audio of conferences, summits, and special events is recorded
- Used for broadcast, as reference, archives
- Materials in audio library date back to 1960s
A recent initiative

“Inside Africa” on ETV is the first one

First TV broadcast on ETV on 9 September 2008 on African Union Day

Aim is to popularise the AU, explain its vision and mission, engage the public and raise awareness of the Union and its role in African development

Ethiopia broadcasts a first step to further engagements

More possibilities being explored in other Member States
Other electronic products

- PowerPoint
- CD presentations of AU documents and newsletters
- VCD presentations of photographs
Daily press review

- Daily press review started in April 2008
- From 16 February, it is being sent out to all AUC staff in French and English
DCI advises Commission leaders on communication, publicity and PR issues

DCI co-opted as technical experts in planning meetings
public relations

- Currently consists of guided tours around the Commission
... branding

- Ensuring all stakeholders are familiar with AU symbols e.g. the flag, the logo and anthem
promotional items

- Corporate and departmental merchandise
- Functions include specifying the goods to be purchased, sourcing of quotations, attending tender board meetings, ensuring timely delivery of materials, distribution
First point of contact with AU
Carries documents, pictures, and audio
In process of moving to dynamic website
Special pages done of major conferences and Summits
COLLABORATING WITH KEY PARTNERS

E.g.

• AU - EU through the Joint Strategy
• AU - UN through Ten year Capacity Building programme;
• AU - African Diaspora to be signed in SA in October
• Bilateral collaboration with individual Member States accredited to the AU e.g.
• Africa - India through the Plan of Action
• Africa - Turkey through the plan of Action
• US government etc
I thank you