

## Localisation Pioneer to address UN Economic Commission for Africa

*Mr Reinhard Schäler of Ireland's Centre for Next Generation Localisation (CNGL) brings social and economic potential of localisation to a global stage*

Dublin, Ireland and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 4 May 2011 - In recognition of his work in spearheading attempts to bridge the global "digital divide", one of Ireland's leading researchers in software localisation has been invited to address the United Nations Economic and Social Council today. Mr Reinhard Schäler of the SFI-funded Centre for Next Generation Localisation (CNGL) at University of Limerick will speak at the Second Meeting of the Committee on Development Information, Science & Technology (CODIST-II) of the UN's Economic Commission for Africa, which takes place from 2-5 May in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At today's plenary session on "Innovation strategies and industrial development plans", Mr Schäler will address senior officials and experts from African member states on the theme "Localisation as an Industrial Strategy".

CODIST-II is bringing together more than 1,000 member state delegates and other experts to explore the extent to which African countries have harnessed innovation to enhance industrial development on the continent. Delegates will review challenges pertaining to the ICT, Science, Innovation, Geo-Information, and Libraries and Information Services sectors, and will advise the UN's Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in these areas.

Explaining how localisation has the potential to contribute to the economic and social progress of developing countries, Mr Schäler says, "*Localisation – the process of adapting digital products, services and content to the needs of global users – can play an important role in helping to bridge the global digital divide. Localisation enables companies to launch their products in markets for which their original product would not be suitable. For this reason, it is a value-adding multiplier of the software industry. However, the true potential of localisation goes beyond opening up business opportunities across the globe. Many communities on the planet find themselves on the wrong side of the so-called "digital divide", with vital hygiene, health, food, educational and other information not available in their local languages. Localisation technologies and processes have the potential to make a considerable contribution to bridging this divide.*"

Mr Schäler's presence at the CODIST-II signifies the formal start of preparations for the Action Week for Global Information Sharing (AGIS'11), which will be hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa in December 2011. In 2009, the first Action Week for Global Information Sharing was hosted at was hosted by the University of Limerick and The Rosetta Foundation, with support from the CNGL. The Rosetta Foundation is a CNGL/University of Limerick spin-off that provides free translation and localisation services for non-profit organisations, supported by innovative technology licensed by CNGL. The Rosetta Foundation and AGIS share the common goal of bringing together and training volunteer translators and localisation specialists with NGOs from all over the world in order to fight the problem of global information poverty. Among the many not-for-profits assisted by The Rosetta Foundation are Special Olympics and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

Speaking from the UN's CODIST-II meeting in Addis Ababa, Mr Schäler expressed his delight at being invited to speak at such a high-profile event: "*Being invited to address the United Nations*

*Economic Commission for Africa at CODIST-II is an honour for me and it highlights the international standing of Centre for Next Generation Localisation and spin-off not-for-profit organisation, The Rosetta Foundation. My presence here reflects both Ireland's leadership position in localisation and the economic and social impact of investment in fourth-level research in Ireland."*

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### **About CODIST**

The Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology (CODIST), formerly The Committee on Development Information (CODI), is one of the seven subsidiary bodies of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) composed of senior officials and experts from the member states who meet on a biennial basis. The role of CODIST is to review challenges and issues pertaining to the ICT, Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), Geo-Information as well as Libraries and Information Services sectors, formulate policies and strategies to address Africa's development challenges; and determine priorities to be reflected in the work programme of the ICT, Science and Technology Division of ECA. <http://repository.uneca.org/codist/>

### **About The Rosetta Foundation**

The Rosetta Foundation is an activity spun out of the Science Foundation Ireland-funded Centre for Next Generation Localisation (CNGL), which aims to relieve poverty, support healthcare, develop education and promote justice through access to information and knowledge across the languages of the world. The Rosetta Foundation supports the not-for-profit activities of the localisation and translation communities. It works, internationally, with those who want to provide equal access to information across languages, independent of economic or market considerations, including localization and translation companies, technology developers, not-for-profit and non-governmental organisations. <http://www.therosettafoundation.org/>

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