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**REPORT OF THE FIRST NEPAD  
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY  
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA:  
3-7 NOVEMBER 2003**

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**A. INTRODUCTION**

1. In November 2003, the NEPAD Secretariat and the Department of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa organised, in Johannesburg, the First NEPAD Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology. The Commission of the African Union has been invited to attend the meeting.

2. The meeting was held in two segments:

- From 3-5 November 2003 was the Experts and Senior Officials segment, followed by;
- From 6-7 November, the Ministerial segment.

3. Thirty-three (33) Member States were represented at the meeting and seventeen (17) of these delegations were led by Ministers or Deputy-Ministers.

**B. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

4. The purpose of the meeting was, building on the regional Forum organized by the NEPAD Secretariat, in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa, from 17-19 February 2003 on the theme: *“Developing a shared Platform for Science and Technology in Africa”*, and implementing the recommendations of this Forum, to set priorities and develop strategies in the area of Science and Technology for Development in Africa within the NEPAD framework. One of the main recommendations of the Forum was the establishment of a high-level Forum or Commission of African Ministers and Presidential Advisors responsible for Science and Technology matters. *“The Ministerial Forum/Commission will be the main regional platform on which critical policy and political issues pertaining to the development and application of Science and Technology will be discussed and addressed. It will specifically provide high-level political leadership to the process of developing and adopting NEPAD Science and Technology framework action plans and specific initiatives”*.

**C. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING**

5. The objective of the Conference could be summarized as follows:
- To establish a NEPAD Pan-African Ministerial Forum/Commission on Science and Technology;
  - To take appropriate decisions on key issues and areas that should constitute an African/NEPAD Science and Technology Strategic Framework and Action Plan;
  - To adopt the NEPAD Action Plan on Science and Technology.

**D. THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE**

6. To achieve those objectives, it was proposed that the following will constitute the themes around which the structure is built and which will guide the deliberations:

- Knowledge of Africa's science and technology landscape;
- Appropriate political space for nurturing the building-up and effective application of Africa's scientific and technological capabilities;
- Science, technology and innovations for creating wealth from Africa's abundant natural resources and reducing poverty;
- Investment in science and technology and funding of Research and Development;
- Role of Centres of Excellence in building-up and utilizing Africa's science and technology capabilities;
- Effective mobilization and utilization of Africa's vast wealth of scientists, engineers and technicians in the region and the Diaspora;
- Science and technology as mainstreamed components of NEPAD's priority programmes;
- Regional and international cooperation.

**E. SALIENT POINTS OF THE DELIBERATIONS**

7. Whether it was during the Experts/Senior Officials segment or the Ministerial segment of the Conference, all participants were of the view that:

- Science and Technology are key for economic and social development of a given country, a group of countries or a region and the whole African Continent and that Science and Technology will play an important role in promoting Africa's economic transformation and sustainable development;
- To that effect, there is need to put in place harmonized policies and strategies that can bring together Member States to cooperate and collaborate in the area of Science and Technology; it was acknowledged that, as they stand now, no African country can develop in isolation;
- In promoting Science and Technology in Africa, special attention need to be given to the following:
  - o To accord highest level consideration to Science and Technology and its application at policy and decision-making of Heads of State and Government;
  - o To link Science and Technology policies with industrial, infrastructure, energy, health, education, trade, food, water and environment policies, just to mention a few;
  - o Thus to consider Science and Technology and Research and Development (R&D) as a multisectoral and cross-cutting sector which supports the development and activities of other sectors;
  - o To adopt a holistic view to strengthen the collaboration between public and private sectors; the development of Science & Technology in Africa should be demand-driven and will have to address the basic needs of the population;
  - o To look into new and innovative ways by which the Government and all concerned actors in the field of Science & Technology should find long-lasting solutions to African peoples' concerns;

- To promote innovations as primary end of research and development efforts.

## F. OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE

8. At the end of its deliberations, the Conference adopted two main documents, namely a “*DECLARATION OF THE FIRST NEPAD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY*” and a “*PLAN OF ACTION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY*” (final version will be forwarded by NEPAD Secretariat).

- a) In **the Declaration**, Ministers commit or re-commit themselves to a number of principles and action to be undertaken at National, Regional and Continental levels including, the need to consider Science & Technology as priority instruments of economic and social development at the highest level of their governments; the establishment of appropriate enabling conditions for scientific and technological advancement of their countries and the Continent; the improvement of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the development and application of Science & Technology; the establishment of networks of Centres of Excellence in Science and Technology; the increase of public expenditure on Research and Development to at least 1% of GDP per annum.
- b) **The Plan of Action** is articulated around three main areas which are, the Flagship Programme; the Governance Structure and the Funding Mechanisms. The Plan of Action identified some twelve (12) priority areas of Flagship programmes in which more detailed programmes (Business/Work Programmes) will be developed within a period of one year.
- c) The Conference also adopted **a Governance Structure** for NEPAD activities in Science and Technology which comprises; a Ministerial Council for Science and Technology and a Steering Committee for Science and Technology to oversee the work of the NEPAD Secretariat in the area of Science and Technology.

9. The DECLARATION of the First NEPAD Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology is hereby submitted to Council for endorsement.

**Declaration of the First NEPAD Ministerial Conference on  
Science and Technology**

**Adopted 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003  
Johannesburg, South Africa**

**WE**, the Ministers responsible for science and technology in African countries, meeting at our inaugural conference on the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) from 6-7 November 2003 in Johannesburg, South Africa;

**Motivated** by the solemn pledge by our Heads of State and Government in adopting NEPAD as the socio-economic framework for regional integration, eradication of poverty and sustainable development;

**Recalling** Article 3 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU), which promotes research in all fields, particularly in science and technology to advance the development of the Continent;

**Taking into account** that the realization of the NEPAD goals as well as those of supportive initiatives, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development is receiving considerable attention of African leaders and Africa's development partners;

**Convinced** that scientific advances and technological innovations are driving forces for economic growth and sustainable development;

**Emphasizing** the importance of adopting multidisciplinary approaches, including social sciences or humanities, in research and development;

**Acknowledging** that the ability of our countries to create, diffuse and utilize scientific and technical knowledge is a major determinant of our capacity to take advantage of international trade and effectively compete in the global economy as well as improve the quality of life of our people;

**Realizing** that the gap between poor and rich countries in terms of real income is largely accounted for by differences in the acquisition, accumulation and utilization of science and technology;

**Determined further** to effectively and successfully address the challenges of food security, environmental degradation, diseases, poor communication, poverty eradication and Africa's marginalisation in the global economy;

**Guided** by the deliberations and outcome of the Regional Workshop on "Developing a shared Platform for Science and Technology" held from 17-19 February 2003 in Johannesburg, South Africa as well as the preparatory meeting of this conference held from 13-15 October 2003 in Nairobi, Kenya;

**WE HEREBY COMMIT TO:**

1. **Acknowledge** the need for science and technology to be championed as priority instruments of economic and social development at the highest level of our governments;
2. **Emphasize** the need for science and technology policies and strategies that lead to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty;
3. **Resolve and commit** to find ways and means of strengthening, individually and collectively, science, technology and innovation systems of our countries to attain sustainable development and integration into the global economy;
4. **Reaffirm** our commitment to promote within our countries scientific research and technological innovations and their applications, particularly in the eradication of poverty; seeking solutions to food insecurity, malnutrition, homelessness, unemployment, lack of affordable energy and the fight against disease, especially HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria;
5. **Establish** appropriate enabling conditions for scientific and technological advancement of our countries and the Continent;
6. **Establish** a Council of Ministers of Science and Technology as the policy-making and overall governance body for science and technology in the framework of NEPAD;

7. **Proudly acknowledge** the abundance of indigenous knowledge and technologies accumulated over millennia in our Continent, and commit to promote, protect and develop them as crucial components of science, technology and innovation systems;
8. **Reaffirm** our commitment to pursue all measures possible to increase public expenditure on research and development to at least 1 per cent of GDP per annum;
9. **Resolve** to develop the appropriate policy and regulatory environment, including protection of intellectual property, to encourage private sector investment in research and development;
10. **Establish** networks of centres of excellence in science and technology within the framework of NEPAD;
11. **Undertake** to improve on bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the development and application of science and technology;
12. **Develop** and adopt common sets of indicators to benchmark our national and regional systems of innovation;
13. **Resolve** to build regional consensus and strategies to address concerns emerging with advances in new technologies, including biotechnology, nanotechnology, and information and communications technologies;
14. **Establish** national and regional programmes to promote public understanding of science and technology and their role in development;
15. **Undertake** to improve the quality of and enrolment in science, technology, mathematics and engineering education;
16. **Ensure** coordination of science and technology matters between the different sectors of government, and promote dialogue between stakeholders in the science and technology community; and



17. **Promote** networking of departments of science and technology, and ensure that expertise and experiences in various national institutions is shared across the Continent;

**THEREFORE ADOPT** the Outline of Plan of Action as the basis for the formulation of NEPAD's Business Plan on Science and Technology to be finalized within twelve months after this Conference.

**RECOMMEND** that the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) consider and submit this Declaration to the Summit of the African Union.

**EXPRESS** our profound gratitude to Dr. Ben Ngubane, Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa for chairing and providing leadership to the conference and kindly request him to convey to H.E. President Mbeki, the Government and People of South Africa our sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality and excellent material and logistical support we received at the conference.

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