

AFRICAN UNION

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ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION
Twelfth Ordinary Session
1 – 3 February 2009
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Assembly/AU/8 (XII) Add.5

**ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN OBSERVATORY
OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
(AOSTI) IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

*(Item proposed by The Government of the
Republic of Equatorial Guinea)*

I. BACKGROUND

In 1991 the African Heads of State and Government of the AU adopted the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and in 1992/3, in the framework of the Treaty, a draft Protocol on Science and Technology was formulated with the following aims, among others, to

- (a) strengthen scientific and technological capabilities of Member States through science and technology programmes for development in the different sectors of the economy;
- (b) strengthen national, regional and continental institutions and centres responsible for science and technology development with a view to enhancing their capability for research on science and technology, and the application of research results to solving Africa's economic and social problems;
- (c) set up national policies for the development and application of science and technology with a view to facilitating their integration into national economic and social development plans;
- (d) prepare and implement national strategies for scientific research and technological development programmes to fulfill the needs of the continent.

The Ministers responsible for science and technology in African countries, meeting in the framework of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), Johannesburg, South Africa, 6-7 November 2003, reaffirmed the 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;

In 2005, Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) was developed and it was subsequently endorsed through the Executive Council decision EX.CL/Dec.254 (VIII) at the Khartoum Summit of January 2006.

The CPA contributes towards achieving the vision of the AU of integration, development and assertion of Africa's position in the global knowledge society, through the development and application of science and technology in eradication of poverty, fighting diseases, stemming environmental degradation and improving the global economic competitiveness of the continent.

The Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting at the 8th Ordinary Session of its Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 29-30 January 2007, adopted a declaration on science and technology and scientific research for development recognizing the need to build and strengthen Africa's institutions to enable them to conduct more scientific research so that the outputs of research may be utilized to solve the Continent's social environmental problems and contribute to

socio-economic development. They also approved the decision *Assembly/AU/Dec.161 (VIII)* on science and technology.

This decision:

- *Welcomes and supports* the Declaration of 2007 as the launching year of building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation in Africa;
- *Strongly urges* Member States to promote Africa's Research and Development (R&D) and develop innovation strategies for wealth creation and economic development by allocating at least 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of national economies by 2010 as agreed by Khartoum Decision, EX.CL/Dec.254 (VIII);
- *Also supports* the establishment of a Pan-African Intellectual Property Organization (PAIPO);
- *Endorses* the need for South-South and North-South cooperation in science, technology and innovation and to enhance its role in international partnerships.

II. PROPOSAL

The Heads of Government of the African Union and the European Union Member States signed the African-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement and its related Action Plan in Lisbon, December 2007. The 8th Priority Action asked for a specific identification of proper initiatives to be ruled under the Agreement. One of the nineteen (19) "light house projects" that were identified within this context is the "*African Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI)*".

In Abuja, December 2008, the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology (AMCOST III) commended the African Union lighthouse projects initiatives and appreciated this as a positive step forward for the implementation of Africa's science and technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA). The members expressed the willingness to partner in the mobilization of their competencies towards the implementation of specific projects.

Considering the above background, the declarations of the African Heads of State and Government calling for the implementation of the Consolidated Plan of Action and the need for African countries to take concrete steps in this direction while building Africa's capacity through the use of Science, Technology and Innovation for the sustainable development of the Continent,

The Government of Equatorial Guinea:

- a) Proposes to host the African Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI).
- b) offers, as contribution in kind, an adequate office space for the Observatory;

- c) commits itself to encourage local civil society and private sector in the country to support this initiative;
- d) Commit to finance the estimated budget of US\$3,600,000 to permit the establishment and running of the Observatory for the year 2009.

The AU Member States to contribute with at least one staff working full time as focal point in each respective country starting in 2009 and to commit to share the running cost of the Observatory starting with the second fiscal year (2010);

The AU to assist with technical expertise and financial assistance to finance the estimated running cost budget. The AU will also help the Observatory to generate financial assistance from other international organizations as needed.

III. AFRICAN OBSERVATORY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (AOSTI)

A. Scientific Objective

As per the African Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Consolidated Plan of Action, the Observatory would play the main **role** of coordination, data collection, training and information dissemination on the STI landscape of the African Continent.

- a) **coordination**: managing the collection of statistics on science, technology and innovation from African countries,
- b) **data collection**: assuring uniformity in the methodologies and definitions utilized for the collection of data in the participating countries, the development of relevant indicators and the timely collection of data;
- c) **training**: building capacity through the provision of training, sample survey instrument, and case study templates, as well as practical advice on the development of country profiles, indicator reports, and the use of indicators in evidence based policy,
- d) **information dissemination**: producing and disseminating the “African Innovation Outlook”

B. Reporting

It is proposed that the Director of the Observatory reports to AMCOST.

C. The way forward

1. To assist the Government of Equatorial Guinea with the establishment of the observatory, the assistance and collaboration of the AU and UNESCO are requested.
2. Development and Adoption of African Common Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators:

As stated by the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology, a set of indicators can be developed to describe the science, technology and innovation system of a country, and to support the policy processes and public debate. However, those indicators become even more valuable if they support comparisons with other countries in Africa. For this to happen, there has to be agreement among African countries on definitions, on statistics, indicators, and methods of collection and of interpretation of data in the African Continent.

NEPAD has established an experts' working group that is preparing the necessary document with proposed indicators and guidelines for conducting surveys. This should form the basis for initiating an intergovernmental process to enable African countries to agree upon definitions and methods, and where none exist, to develop definitions and methods appropriate to the relevant government authorities,

It is thus proposed that NEPAD plays a lead role, in coordination with the AU and other relevant institutions in the development and adoption of African common STI indicators.

3. Training is a very important objective for the smooth functioning of the Observatory and the collection of quality and compatible data. It is recommended that UNESCO plays a lead role in assisting the Observatory, in close consultation and coordination with the AU, NEPAD, RECs and other relevant bodies, with the preparation of training materials.

The preparation and dissemination of the outlook should benefit the continent for the formulation of evident based policies.

The need for an active role by the African Union and Member States for the success of this initiative, in the context of the implementation of the African Consolidated Plan of Action, cannot be emphasized enough.

YEARLY BUDGET (IN US DOLLARS)

Title	US\$
A. Staff Costs	1,300,000
• Director	
• Specialists (in statistics, IT, economics,...)	
B. Running Costs	1,200,000
• Publications	
• Consultants	
• Travel – staff	
• Travel – participants to meetings	
• Equipment and maintenance	
• Communication (telephone, fax...)	
• Office supplies	
• Computers	
• Training	
• Meetings	
C. Miscellaneous	100,000
Total Yearly Budget	2,600,000
Installation costs	1,000,000
• Office equipment	
• Books/library	
• Miscellaneous	
TOTAL BUDGET INCLUDING INSTALLATION COSTS	3,600,000

2009-02-03

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