



**RESOLUTIONS OF THE
SIXTH MEETING OF THE STEERING
COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN
MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(AMCOST)**



**20-21 March 2006
Pretoria, South Africa**

Introduction

The sixth meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST) was held in Pretoria, South Africa on 20 and 21 March 2006 and attended by representatives of Algeria, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, the African Union (AU) Commission and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Office of Science and Technology.

The meeting considered and/or addressed the following issues: (a) ways and means to ensure that there is a quorum for SC meetings, (b) report on implementation of decisions of SC, (c) proposal on the establishment of the African Science and Innovation Facility (ASIF), (d) Terms of reference for the Inter-Governmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators, (e) African contributions to the implementation of the Consolidated Plan of Action, (f) preparations for 2007 AU Summit, and (g) strengthening the capacity of the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology

The SC resolved:

Organization of SC and Bureau Meetings:

1. whenever possible, SC meetings should be organised and held as preparatory sessions of the Bureau of AMCOST and should preferably take place one or two days before the Bureau meets;
2. that the AU Commission will convene meetings of the SC and Bureau of AMCOST;
3. that letters inviting countries to SC meetings will be written by the AU Commission addressed to Ministers and copied to Permanent Secretaries and/or Directors General of the member states. Letters of invitation will be sent out at least two months before the date of the meeting;
4. that the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology will be responsible for preparing documents for SC and Bureau meetings;
5. that countries serving on the SC and Bureau of AMCOST shall pay for travel, accommodation and any other costs associated with their participation at meetings;
6. that the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology and AU Commission shall prepare and distribute a calendar of meetings and a work-plan for 2006/7 of AMCOST and its subsidiary bodies; and
7. that the Chair of SC shall write to all countries serving on the SC to request them to provide names of their respective representatives.

NEPAD Office of Science and Technology report on implementation of decisions of SC

The SC meeting considered the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology's report. It thanked the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology for submitting a comprehensive report. It decided that:

- (a) in future, reports on the implementation of the programmes of the Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) shall be prepared jointly by the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology and the AU Commission. The reports will have to provide adequate information on the efforts and progress being made to implement all the programmes. If necessary, institutions implementing the programmes will be invited to make presentations to the SC and Bureau;
- (b) there is a need to improve communication with countries and other stakeholders;
- (c) the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology and AU Commission should develop and submit to AMCOST a comprehensive document with criteria and guidelines for identifying hubs and nodes of centers of excellence; and
- (d) the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology and the Chair of SC should have periodic meetings to ensure better communication and coordination of resource mobilization.

Proposal on the African Science and Innovation Facility

The SC welcomed the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology's policy brief and outline of activities to design the proposed African Science and Innovation Facility (ASIF). It decided that the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology should:

- (a) complete Terms of Reference and engage a consultant to prepare a detailed legal document with options of the nature of a legal entity and mechanisms for mobilizing and managing resources;
- (b) revise the proposed sequence of activities for designing the ASIF to ensure that there is a logical flow of actions and outputs. The SC stressed that it is crucial for it to consider and adopt documents and/or proposals on ASIF; and
- (c) jointly with the AU Commission, through consultative processes, develop and submit to AMCOST a comprehensive strategy for implementing the CPA.

Inter-governmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Indicators

The SC considered terms of reference for the work of the Inter-governmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators. It resolved that:

- (a) the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology should send the TORs to focal points of AMCOST to solicit their comments. These comments would be used to revise the TORs;
- (b) the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology in collaboration with the AU Commission should organise the first meeting of the Committee not later than the date for the extra-ordinary conference of AMCOST in November 2006;
- (c) ways and means should be explored to ensure that existing appropriate international indicators are adopted and used to survey science, technology and innovation in Africa;

- (d) the indication by the Government of the Republic of Mozambique to host the first meeting of the Inter-governmental Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators is welcomed. The SC encouraged the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology to formally request the Government to host the meeting; and
- (e) the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology and AU Commission should ensure that various external and African initiatives on science, technology and innovation indicators are well coordinated

Preparations for AU Summit 2007

The SC welcomed the decision of the AU Commission to have science, technology and innovation as the theme of the January 2007 AU Summit of Heads of State and Government. It stressed that this offers a rare opportunity to build a strong political constituency for the CPA and work of AMCOST. The SC emphasized that the Summit should be used to get key decisions for promoting science, technology and innovation in Africa through the implementation of the CPA. It agreed on the following process to prepare for the Summit:

- (a) The AU Commission will, with technical input from NEPAD Office of Science and Technology, revise the document outlining the preparations and content/agenda of the Summit;
- (b) the Bureau of AMCOST shall meet at the AU Commission on 22 and 23 May 2006. It shall consider recommendations of the 6th meeting of the SC and develop an agenda for the extra-ordinary AMCOST. The Chair of the SC shall represent the rest of the members at this meeting;
- (c) an African Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation for Socio-economic Development shall be held in Addis Ababa on 25 to 27 September 2006 to provide scientific and technical input to the Summit. The AU Commission and NEPAD Office of Science and Technology will develop modalities of organising the conference, including preparation of technical papers;
- (d) the SC shall hold its 7th meeting on 28 September 2006 to review recommendations of the conference and prepare material for the Bureau meeting that will be held on 29th September 2006 in Addis Ababa. The Bureau shall at this meeting finalise preparations for the extra-ordinary conference of AMCOST;
- (e) the extra-ordinary conference of AMCOST will be held on 6 and 7 November 2006 to consider outcomes of the African Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation, report of the High-Level Panel on Modern Biotechnology, revised African Model Law on Biosafety, the proposal to establish ASIF (including specific options on legal status, functions, governance and funding of the ASIF), and a comprehensive strategy for implementing the CPA.
- (f) Inter-ministerial dialogues involving such sectoral ministries as agriculture, health, environment, trade and industry, and finance will be organised as part of the extra-ordinary conference.
- (g) Taking into consideration previous offers by the Government of the Republic of Kenya to host conferences of AMCOST, the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology and AU Commission, will request Kenya to host the November 2006 extra-ordinary conference of AMCOST. The NEPAD Office of Science and Technology will also seek support from UNESCO and other international partners to support the organisation of the conference.

Strengthening the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology

The SC meeting discussed modalities of strengthening the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology and agreed that:

- (a) the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology shall prepare and submit to the Government of Senegal a specific request for Senegal to second person or pay for a post of Communications Officer. The request shall include a job description, time-frame and other needs for this position;
- (b) the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology shall prepare and submit to SC and Bureau member countries specific requests for positions of programme coordinators, particularly for a cluster of flagships covering energy, water and land degradation, and another for science, technology and innovation policy. Member countries are encouraged to support the strengthening of the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology;
- (c) to enable it to manage funds and appropriately account to AMCOST and donors, the SC decided that the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology should develop a draft agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish an interim financial mechanism in the form of a trust fund at the UNDP Regional Services Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa. The draft agreement will be reviewed and approved by the SC on behalf of the Bureau.

Appreciation

The SC thanked the Government of South Africa for its continued support to the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology. It recognised the contributions of South Africa to second a finance officer and provide office space to the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology.

The SC also thanked governments that had sent representatives to the meeting for their commitment and support to AMCOST. It encouraged others to play a more active role in SC and AMCOST as a whole.