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**AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (AMCOST III)
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AU/EXP/ST/3(III)

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF AMCOST BUREAU**

**8 June 2007
Pretoria – South Africa**

**AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (AMCOST III)
BUREAU MEETING
4th Ordinary Session
8 June 2007
PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA**

AU/MIN/BUREAU /ST/Rpt.1(IV)

**REPORT OF THE

BUREAU MEETING**



1. Introduction

The Bureau of Ministers oversees the implementation of Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action. The Bureau is the overall institutional mechanism to make decisions on policy matters in between Ministerial Conferences. It is supported by the Steering Committee that oversees the formulation and implementation of programs.

The 4th Bureau Meeting of the African Ministers Conference for Science and Technology (AMCOST III) took place 8th of June 2007, in Pretoria, the Republic of South Africa.

2. In attendance

The meeting was attended by the following countries: Republic of Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Arab Republic of Egypt, Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Zimbabwe, Republic of South Africa, and the Republic of Kenya. The African Development Bank also attended the meeting.

3. Opening Session

The H.E. Hon. Dr. O. Muchena, MP and Minister of Science and Technology Development of the Republic of Zimbabwe welcomed the participants and thanked South Africa and New Partnership for Africa's Development for hosting and assisting in the organisation of the meeting.

H.E. Prof Nagia Essayed, the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology opened the session by welcoming the Bureau Members of the African Ministers Conference for Science and Technology (AMCOST). She thanked the South Africa Ministry of Science and Technology and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Office of Science and Technology for hosting and organising this meeting. She also thanked the members of the Steering Committee for working hard in preparation of this meeting. She said that the agenda for the Bureau is centred on programmes and initiatives for the implementation of the January 2007 Summit decisions and Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA), and to prepare for AMCOST III that was going to take place in Kenya, in November 2007.

Prof. Essayed emphasized the need for Bureaus and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to report on the progress of CPA in all future meetings. This will enable us keep track of strides being made in materializing the programs of the Plan.

She highlighted some of the programmes that the AUC has initiated to raise awareness on the central role of science and technology in development, and urged the Member States to embark on programmes to popularize and domesticate the Consolidated Plan of Action. She said that the Department was advocating for the development of a sound science and technology policy framework that would stimulate the development of science and technology in Member States. She said that the Commission has initiated a process towards the establishment of a Pan-African Intellectual Property Organization (PAIPO) and that the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) assured full support of this process.

She also informed the Bureau that on South-South and North-South cooperation, the Commission was exploring ways to establish cooperation with India, South American States and the European Community. She highlighted that the African Strategy on Biosafety has been adopted along with the Report of the High Level African Panel on Biotechnology at the November 2006 AMCOST and that the way forward was the implementation of the Biosafety Strategy and the revision of the African Model Law on Safety in Biotechnology.

Zimbabwe chaired the session since the current AMCOST chair could not attend. The chair applauded the attendance of the Bureau and congratulated Kenya for being the incoming Chair of AMCOST. She thanked the Commission for its determination in driving the African science and technology agenda that led to the adoption of science and technology decisions at the AU Summit of the Heads of State and Government in January 2007, Addis Ababa.

4. Presentation and Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

The agenda was adopted with the following minor amendments:

- This was Fourth Ordinary Session of the Bureau.
- Meeting and Date of Next Bureau to be discussed just before lunch

South Africa moved for the adoption of the agenda.

5. Presentation of the minutes of the last Bureau meeting

The AUC read out the resolutions of the previous Bureau meeting that took place from 15th to 16th of June 2006 in Dakar, Senegal.

The minutes were adopted without amendments.

6. Presentation of the progress Report on the Implementation of the Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action

Dr. John Mugabe, Nepad Advisor in Science and Technology made a presentation on progress made by NEPAD, the AU Commission, RECs and Member States in implementing the CPA, in those areas where NEPAD played a lead role. Dr Mugabe reminded the Committee that the priority of programme areas in the CPA were informed by resolutions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), where the acronym WEHAB was adopted, highlighting Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity.

He said the priorities in the CPA concentrated on fundable programmes that would have maximum impact. He said that launching programmes at the regional level was guided by REC decisions concerning local regional priorities. He noted that a decision was made for Eastern and Central Africa to have a single hub.

On financing, he said that Germany had proposed a joint AMCOST-G8 meeting in October 2007 on implementation of CPA. He went on to highlight specific programme activities, including centres of excellence, biotechnology and the indicators initiative.

With regards to biosciences, it was stated that USD 30 million was allocated to the biosciences hubs and nodes. The research programs are mainly focusing on traditional medicine, livestock, diseases, food security, and agro-biodiversity conservation.

On water science activities, he said that the water sciences network will be launched during AMCOST III. The African Mathematical Sciences Network will also be launched during the AMCOST III. The presentation also mentioned that energy research and innovation business plans will be presented to the AMCOST III.

Finally, he highlighted constraints to implementation of science programmes, such as: lack of adequate funding and resources support from Member States; need for focus on CPA programmes; weak AMCOST on the ground; and weak linkages between the NEPAD and African Union Commission.

Discussion

In the discussion that ensued, following are the highlights:

- (i) With regard to the continent's efforts to establish its Pan-African Intellectual Property (IP) Organisation, it was important that regional integration of IP issues should be considered.
- (ii) There is need to address difficulties in the mobility of scientists across the continent in the course of their duties. Some Member States were applauded for their efforts in assisting with the mobility of scientists across the continent.
- (iii) It was suggested that a small budget from the resources being mobilized for various projects could be set-up to facilitate communication

7. Presentation of Institutional Framework of the AU Science and Technology Ministerial Conference

Mr. Ben Kioko, Legal Counsel of the African Union Commission, made a presentation positioning AMCOST and its organs within the institutional framework of the African Union. He said that AMCOST is a Specialised Technical Committee of the African Union, according to Article Five of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

He noted and expressed concern over Ministerial meetings being held under the auspices of the United Nations to discuss African affairs without reference to the African Union.

With reference to the AMCOST Bureau, Mr. Kioko informed the Steering Committee that AU rules stipulate election of five Bureau members, which is contrary to AMCOST self-rules. The Bureau should consist of a Chair, Rapporteur, and three Vice Chairs. He also noted that the de-link between the AMCOST Bureau and its Steering Committee needs to be corrected, to ensure that the Bureau is fully represented in the Steering Committee. The Commission is Secretariat to all these bodies, contrary to the practice existing in AMCOW and AMCEN.

Mr. Kioko also covered the position of NEPAD as decided by African Heads of State and Government. He reminded the meeting that in 2003, the Heads of State made a

decision to integrate NEPAD into the African Union within three years. Final modalities of integration will be approved at the Summit in Accra in July 2007, after which, all Ministerial Conferences under the auspices of the AU would have to comply.

He said that there was much progress in the process of integrating the NEPAD program into the structures of the African Union. He observed that though the rules of procedure in effect were the 2003 resolutions, the members may opt to embrace uniform ones to be decided upon by a subsequent Heads of State Summit (July 2007 or January 2008).

Discussion

In the discussions that followed, highlights are as follows:

- (i) It is up to the AMCOST to decide who would be the Bureau chair based on geographic distribution.

8. Presentation of the Strategy for Implementing Africa's S&T Consolidated Plan of Action

Dr. Beatrice Njenga presented in detail the strategy report for implementing Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action, which was a result of the AU and NEPAD meeting from 4- 5 June 2007. The strategy had a vision of "Africa that is free of poverty and well integrated into the global knowledge economy through science, technology and innovation". In presenting the goals of the CPA, she explained the need for having a limited number of goals in order to focus efforts.

Dr Njenga highlighted weaknesses encountered in implementing the CPA, which included among others, lack of ownership of the CPA at the levels of Member States and RECs; poor financing, lack of harmonised S&T policy structure, and limited human resource capacity at the AUC and NEPAD S&T offices. She said the strategy lists critical success factors, which will help to overcome the challenges and facilitate effective implementation of the CPA. These include developing a robust publicity and communication strategy, an accountability mechanism, creative financing and technical resource mobilisation, among others. Strengthening the capacity of NEPAD and the AUC secretariats is also a critical success factor. Dr. Njenga went further to describe and justify a strategy for involving Member States, RECs, the Bureau and Steering Committee in following up and reporting progress on the implementation of the Plan of Action. She urged Member States, as the chief stakeholders of the CPA, to be its chief advocates by ensuring its domestication and integration into national and REC programmes.

Discussion

In the discussion, it was highlighted that much time should be invested in planning so that implementation efforts could yield more fruits.

9. Presentation and discussion of AfDB support to the establishment of the African Science Fund

Dr Sibry J.M. Tapsoba of the African Development Bank (AfDB) made a presentation in which he began by reiterating the African Development Bank's (AfDB) commitment to assist AU Commission with mobilizing funds for investment in human capital, as agreed at the AfDB Higher Education stakeholders' meeting in Accra, in response to a request from the HRST Department of the AU Commission. He emphasized the need to support AU Commission in developing capacity aimed at efforts to improve the quality of African education. He highlighted that there was need for Africa to invest in human resources through education, science and technology to stimulate the development of industries and services as they accounted for most contribution to economic growth, as witnessed in Korea and the Asian Tigers, as opposed to the African tradition of depending on exploitation of natural resources.

Dr. Tapsoba outlined two alternative forms of funding mechanisms for the African Education Fund: A trust fund of \$50 million per three years, based on a programme of activities proposed by the AUC; and an investment fund with a starting capital of US\$ 200 million. The amount of the investment fund to be mobilised would depend on the scope of the AU programme of activities. The funds would be available for activities in policy making, capacity building, sharing of experiences and networking. Investments in infrastructure and other key areas of education will be provided by other countries' multi-lateral institutions and bi-lateral partners. The proposed fund was not intended to replace existing funds; rather, it will complement existing initiatives.

He said further discussion with the AU Commission were necessary for developing a full-blown proposal for submission to the AUC for discussion and adoption. The Bank was waiting for the Commission to select the preferred funding mechanism before proceeding. He said as a matter of principle, AfDB would support a single fund for education, science and technology instead of multiple funds. He also said that African countries should include education, science and technology in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, and AUC was called upon to play a role in this.

Discussion

In the discussion that ensued, the Bureau made the following contributions:

- (i) Motivational presentations should be encouraged to stimulate the participants compared to presenting digested materials.
- (ii) The AfDB initiative could form a core fund for science and technology and should be supported as a machinery for establishing the basis for rolling out programmes.
- (iii) The science and technology sector could fund itself if mechanisms such as intellectual property rights and R&D centres of excellence could be focused to assist the sector to produce commercial products that could generate money to sustain its existence.

- (iv) It was proposed to bring the funding issue to the AMCOST III agenda in Kenya, and propose a mechanism for engaging Finance Ministers to facilitate their appreciation of the importance and needs of the S&T sector.
- (v) The Bureau was informed that there is a proposal to revise the structure of Human Resources, Science and Technology with a view to split it into two directorates since currently it has a very wide area of focus. This will be preceded by an audit of all AUC Departments, a process that would rationalise and focus them.

10. Presentation of the Steering Committee Recommendations

The Steering Committee Chair, Dr. Ismaila Diallo of Senegal, informed the Bureau that they had deliberated for two days and come up with recommendations in critical and indispensable areas for the development of science and technology in Africa. These areas included programmes and initiatives towards implementing the Summit decisions, progress and challenges for implementing Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action and more critically, financing mechanisms, among others.

The Rapporteur Prof. Mounir Khaled Berrah from Algeria read out the recommendations to the Bureau. These were discussed and adopted with a few amendments.

Discussions of Recommendations to the Bureau

The recommendations of the Steering Committee meeting were adopted with amendments. The amended list of recommendations now form the resolutions of the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Bureau.

The Bureau agreed that to ensure continuity in the operation of AMCOST and compliance with AU policies and procedures, AMCOST should at the earliest possible align itself to AU structures wherever there are variations between AMCOST and AU rules.

11. Date and Venue of the Next Bureau Meeting

The next Bureau meeting will be held on 14th November 2007 in Kenya, preceding AMCOST III.

12. Consideration of the Proposed Agenda for AMCOST III

The AMCOST III agenda was considered and it was recommended that the current Chair would function until the new Steering Committee and Bureau are elected during AMCOST III.

13. Adoption of the Bureau Resolutions.

The Bureau adopted resolution AU/MIN/BUREAU/ST/RES.1 (IV)

14. Closing session

In her closing remarks the Chair of the Bureau thanked the participants and the hosting country.

**AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON
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BUREAU MEETING
The Fourth Ordinary Session
8th June 2007
PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA**

**AU/EXP/ST/3(III)
Annex**

RESOLUTIONS OF THE AMCOST BUREAU MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The 4th Bureau of Science and Technology met on the 8th of June 2007 in Pretoria, Republic of South Africa, attended by Ministers from: Republic of Zimbabwe, and the Republic of South Africa. The following Bureau Members were represented by senior officials, with apologies from the respective Ministers: Republic of Senegal, and Republic of Cameroon. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Arab Republic of Egypt, were also represented by senior officials. The following attended as observers: Minister from the Republic of Kenya, and Senior Officials from the Republic of Malawi and the Republic of Mozambique. The African Development Bank also attended the meeting.

The Bureau considered the recommendations of the Steering Committee and made the following resolutions:

1. Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action

Based on the deliberations on the Strategy for implementing Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) and the NEPAD progress report on the implementation of the CPA, the Bureau resolves as follows:

- 1.1 There is strong need for the participation of RECs as members in the Steering Committee, and as observers in Bureau and AMCOST Meetings.
- 1.2 Member States and the RECs as the chief stakeholders are urged to domesticate the CPA and implement the decisions, and report on implementation progress regularly during meetings of AMCOST, starting with AMCOST III. RECs should establish science and technology desks with appropriate staffing and budgets.
- 1.3 Member states should address the challenge of weak linkages among stakeholders, especially the AUC, RECs and NEPAD by establishing effective science and technology focal points, and more generally by ensuring a better communication among stakeholders.
- 1.4 To ensure continuity in the operation of AMCOST and compliance with AU policies and procedures it is recommended that the existing rules of procedures of AMCOST Steering Committees should be amended to align with existing AU rules, wherever the AMCOST rules are at variance with the latter, pending the decisions of the July 2007 AU Summit on the integration of NEPAD into the AU structures and processes.

2. Recommendations on Programmes Implementing Summit Decisions

The African Union Commission has initiated a number of programmes aimed at raising awareness of the importance of science and technology for economic and social development. The Bureau resolves as follows:

- 2.1 In all programme activities, existing initiatives should be taken into account to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts, and to develop synergies.
- 2.2 The planned Conference of African Women in Science and Technology should lead to the initiation of women-led programs and projects in the area of science and technology and should address all relevant issues to promote women involvement and participation in science and technology.
- 2.3 The Best Scientist Award for the 2007 edition should be in the Engineering discipline. This initiative should be coordinated with the African Academy of Sciences (AAS).
- 2.4 Member States should share successful experiences and initiatives in science and technology, including biotechnology policies and biosafety laws.
- 2.5 Revision of the Africa Model Law on Safety in Biotechnology is encouraged, taking into account emerging developments and evidence at regional and international levels.

3. Financing and Resource Mobilisation

The Strategy for implementing Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action identified serious challenges in the implementation of the CPA, among them financing and resource mobilisation, as also highlighted by the NEPAD progress report on the implementation of the CPA. The Bureau resolves as follows:

- 3.1 An investment fund should be adopted as the preferred option due to sustainability, and the trust fund as a second option.
- 3.2 The AUC, the NEPAD secretariat, and the AfDB should meet and develop a proposal on the establishment of the fund outlining the investment options and governance modalities.
- 3.3 A three-year costed program will be developed by the AUC in consultation with the NEPAD as the basis for the fund.

4. Appreciation

Appreciation is expressed to the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Zimbabwe for their offers to host the Conference of African Women Scientists, and the Workshop on School Equipment, respectively.

Kenya confirmed their offer to host AMCOST III, and the Bureau agreed that AMCOST III will be held from the 12th to 16th November 2007 in Kenya.