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**AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (AMCOST III)  
THIRD ORDINARY SESSION  
12-16 NOVEMBER 2007  
MOMBASA, REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**AU/EXP/ST/10(III)**

**OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN WOMEN  
IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**FIRST AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE OF WOMEN  
IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
29 - 31 AUGUST 2007  
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA**

**AU/HRST/CAWST/Rpt(I)**

**REPORT**

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The First African Union Conference of African Women in Science and Technology took place in Johannesburg in South Africa from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2007. Women are a resource that could be used towards social and economic development of the continent through participating in science and technology programmes. The meeting aimed at addressing under-representation of African women in science, mathematics and engineering fields. The meeting also considered and endorsed a proposal to establish a continental association under the auspices of the African Union.

2. The Conference focused on the following key thematic areas:

- (a) Popularisation and promotion of science and technology among women.
- (b) Women and Science Education.
- (c) Women entrepreneurship in science and technology.
- (d) Networks/ association of women scientists and engineers.
- (e) Women, Indigenous knowledge Systems and Intellectual Property Right.

3. The expected outcome was a framework for enhancing the participation of African women in S&T.

## II. OPENING SESSION

4. The Acting Director of Department of Human Resources Science and Technology (HRST) for the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Beatrice Njenga called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants, expressing pleasure and honour at the presence of distinguished delegates, particularly the deputy President of the Republic of South Africa. She reiterated the need for strengthening the dynamic between women, who form over 50% of Africa's human capital on one hand, and Science and Technology, which form the most important tool at our disposal for social and economic development. She then invited the AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology Prof. Nagia Essayed to make opening remarks, followed by the Minister for Science and Technology of the Senegalese Republic, Her Excellency Prof. Yaye Kene Gassama Dia, who was also the Chair of the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology (AMCOST). She then called on His Excellency the Minister for Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa to invite the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa to give the keynote address.

### **WELCOME STATEMENT BY PROF. NAGIA ESSAYED, COMMISSIONER OF DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

5. The Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union welcomed all the participants and thanked the host country as well as NEPAD and SADC for contributing towards the holding of this historic event. She said that the objective of the Women's Conference was to come out

with women-led initiatives as part implementation of the January 2007 Heads of State and Government decision on science and technology; seize the advantage of the call by the Ministers of education to enhance the participation of girls and women in science and technology; and find ways for women to participate in Africa's science and technology programmes as a resource for development. She also said that women scientists, engineers and technologists, as in all circles of life should also be at the core of Africa's social and economic development, otherwise they would continue to be left out of the mainstream economy.

6. She highlighted the following key issues:

- The commitment of the Commission on progressive gender policies spearheaded by the Directorate of Gender and Women Development. She recommended that a month for women be set aside, in particular August, as there are other countries with such initiatives in this month.
- The exemplary demonstration by the Republic of South Africa of the willingness of Member States to support the implementation of the African Union programmes.
- The need to establish a mechanism to coordinate women initiatives in science and technology and encourage scientific cooperation and collaboration amongst women.

**OPENING STATEMENT BY H.E. PROF. YAYE KENE GASSAMA DIA,  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERS CONFERENCE FOR SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY, SENEGAL**

7. In her opening address, Professor Yaye Kene Gassama Dia, the Minister for Science and Technology of the Senegalese Republic and Chair of the African Ministers Conference for Science and Technology (AMCOST), welcomed the participants, thanked the host country, and noted the following opportunities as well as challenges presented by the Conference:

- This first Conference is of major importance because women have to become more visible in S&T and take ownership of S&T with a view to stimulating the development of our nations and of the continent in general.
- Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) are the essential drivers of development and for the knowledge economy, and there is need for more pragmatism and speed in implementing related policies, ideas and resolutions.
- Women should be more involved in research, and creative activity.

**STATEMENT BY H.E. Mr. MANGENA, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

8. In his opening remarks, the Minister of Science and Technology, H.E. Mr. M. Mangena said that the Women's Conference was a golden opportunity to consolidate

programmes in Africa to achieve gender equity in science and technology, as was called for at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

9. He further highlighted the following key issues:

- The Conference should come out with concrete strategic resolutions to translate gains in women empowerment programmes into measures that Governments in Africa can implement.
- Addressing gender equity would lessen the burden of poverty, enhance education and lower unemployment amongst women in Africa, and implement African Ministers' commitment to promoting greater participation of women and youth in science and technology programmes.
- Women must participate in the implementation of flagship programs articulated in Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action to complement the need for scientifically skilled manpower.

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY GUEST OF HONOUR, H. E. MRS. PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA, DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

10. The Guest of Honour and Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Honourable Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, began her address by welcoming the dignitaries and distinguished women scientists to South Africa, especially during this month of August when the women of this nation were being honoured in the calendar of national events. Madam Mlambo-Ngcuka expressed enormous pleasure that she was witnessing the birth of a very important Forum, namely, the First African Union Conference of African Women in S&T, and hoped that it will not be the last. She observed that the growing understanding among women regarding the importance of education is essential for Africa's prosperity, further stating that educating a woman is synonymous with educating a nation. She also contended that Africa cannot be at peace with itself, nor achieve the promise of prosperity, unless women are brought into the mainstream of S&T education. In fact, she opined that Africa's development will be much slower the longer we delay this vital endeavour.

11. Touching on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Honourable Mlambo-Ngcuka indicated that not only had enrolment of girls increased markedly since the year 2000, but their performance had substantially improved in the context of efforts to achieve universal primary education. However, she expressed deep concern over the low ratios of women at tertiary level education, and called for higher rates of investment in the education of women.

12. She pointed out, however, that increasing the ratios of women in education and in S&T policy studies had to be matched simultaneously with enhancing the quality of that education. Madam Mlambo-Ngcuka stressed that quality improvement would entail the mobilization of communities, parent associations, and entire families. Quality education, she further said, was fundamental in fighting poverty, especially if educational systems are holistic, with safety nets that would ensure, for example, that children are fed without risks of malnourishment.

13. Still on the subject of S&T quality education, Madam Mlambo-Ngcuka called for investment in ICTs and interactive learning through initiatives underpinned by e-schools and e-learning. Sufficient attention should also be directed to weaker students.

14. Efforts to enhance the degree of technological investments were critical in the development of support systems and in improving quality because technology is a cost saver given its ability to reach audiences far and wide.

15. Honourable Mlambo-Ngcuka cited a number of commendable initiatives that have been undertaken by the South African government in enhancing the participation of women in science and technology, including in the area of entrepreneurship.

16. Finally, Honourable Mlambo-Ngcuka underscored the importance of promoting centres of excellence to raise standards of learning and teaching, concluding that the rate of return is very high for educational investments in women and girls, within the context of gender parity.

**AGENDA ITEM 1: PRESENTATION OF BACKGROUND PAPER FOR AU CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY BY DR. BEATRICE NJENGA, AG. DIRECTOR FOR DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

17. Dr. Beatrice Njenga, Ag. Director of Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology presented the background paper on the Conference of Women in Science and Technology. She said that the Conference was called to address under-representation of women in the fields of Mathematics, Sciences and Engineering, from the classroom through to careers and business enterprises, and the need for enhanced networking among African women in science and technology. She added that women achievers in science and technology are relatively under-celebrated and under-rewarded.

18. She explained the following background as providing the mandate for the conference:

- The Conference of African Ministers responsible for Science and Technology (AMCOST) meeting in November 2006 called for greater participation of women and youth in science and technology through networks of women, scientists and other capacity building interventions.
- The African Union Congress of Scientists and Policymakers held October 2006 underscored the need to increase the numbers of students in science and technology, especially women and girls.
- The Conference of Ministers of Education of African Union (COMEDAF) has noted the inadequate participation of girls and women in science and technology, and have included gender in the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015).

- The summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union declared 2007 as a launching year for building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation in Africa.
19. She said that the Conference was expected to come out with:
- A report of the Conference, outlining clear strategies and initiatives for a way forward in each of the key thematic areas of focus, including a recommendation for an award mechanism for honoring women in science and technology.
  - A draft framework for the establishment of a continental association for African women in science and technology, with links to regional and national chapters.
20. She said that such recommendations would be presented to the conferences of relevant African Ministers for endorsement, and to the African Union Summit in January 2008.
21. In response to a question, Dr. Njenga assured participants that the Commission of the African Union endeavoured to take into account existing relevant initiatives, and is forging strategic partnerships with qualified institutions for implementing its programmes in the department.

**AGENDA ITEM 2: PRESENTATION OF AFRICAN UNION GENDER POLICY BY MRS. Y. TERIBA, AG. DIRECTOR FOR WOMEN, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE - COMMISSION OF AFRICAN UNION**

22. Mrs. Y. Teriba, Acting Director for Women, Gender and Development Directorate spoke about the African Union Gender Policy and highlighted the following points:
- The AU gender policy takes into account Goal 3 of the UN MDGs which aims to achieve gender parity in all sectors and levels including STI; and it is also informed by other global declarations and commitments on gender
  - The main challenge is to empower African Women with tools of change towards achieving the goals. Some of the tools for driving gender include the AU Constitutive Act; engaging with civil society; gender mainstreaming in the AU Commission itself and the RECs, and promoting the same in member states.
  - Other instruments include: African charter on human rights, and declarations and protocols on gender which must be ratified by member states to become legally binding. There is also a solemn declaration on women's rights.
  - The AU has developed a reporting system, with the AU Commission required to report annually on the "African Status of Women" to the Heads of State

- There is also a coalition of NGOs which monitors gender issues under the slogan “Gender is my agenda”
- Under all these systems a large body of knowledge has been accumulated through studies and expert inputs, which may be applied to move forward the agenda of African Women in S &T.

#### **Discussion:**

23. In the ensuing discussions, the following points were raised:

- Women can only make a difference in decision making to the extent to which they have appropriate knowledge, skills and experience. But it is necessary that they be there to bring new perspectives.
- It is necessary to be balanced in addressing both boys and girls in gender issues, as there are cases where boys are lagging women in education, ostensibly because the boys would rather make money than go to school.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3: PRESENTATION ON POPULARISATION AND PROMOTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AMONGST WOMEN BY H.E. PROF. YAYE KENE GASSAMA DIA, CHAIRPERSON OF MINISTERS CONFERENCE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - SENEGAL**

24. In her presentation, her Excellency Prof. Yaye Kene Gassama underlined the importance of the African Union’s Consolidated Plan of Action for S&T, which constitutes an important tool capable of helping the Continent in the process of taking ownership of Science, Technology and Innovation for all socio-economic development.

25. She brought out the following major points:

- Science education and training for young people and appropriate science, technology and innovation policies and strategies must be a priority for African States;
- Scientific divide persists between men and women, although the evolution of humanity has been determined for many decades by science. African States should adopt inclusive policies and strategies to reduce and even cancel this scientific divide by promoting equitable participation of women and men in decision-making processes and development, both in urban and rural areas, until we achieve the ratio of one female scientist to one male scientist in every science and technology policy and strategy;
- Women’s creativity should be promoted through greater involvement in R&D activities;

- Efforts should be made to break down intellectual and cultural barriers to the development of a critical mass of women in science, technology and innovation, and popularising and promoting universal access to ICT, Science, Technology and Innovation, with adequate budgetary allocation
- Promotion of young people, young girls and more women scientists would allow Member States to reach the following goals:
  - Increase of human capital in science, of scientific potential at all levels;
  - Promotion of the diversity of Scientific Knowledge;
  - Equitable distribution of spin-offs among the population;
  - Guarantee and promotion of a scientific code of ethics;
  - Adoption of STI policies and strategies in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Science should leave behind its academic ivory tower, avoid obscurity, be democratised and open up to the community;
- The development of a scientific and industrial culture is synonymous with more innovation, Research and Development and promotion of the link between R&D and socio-economic development;
- Follow up and evaluation of policies that promote women in S&T is necessary, using gender disaggregated indicators that will provide an essential tool for advancing gender equality and decision-making in the field.

26. Prof. Gassama Dia ended with the following strategic recommendations:

- Promote women scientists to decision-making positions to serve as role-models to young girls;
- Create special funds for scientific study and research by women;
- Promote the establishment of Women scientists associations and networks at global sub-regional and national level;
- Establish prizes for women for excellence in science, following the African Union initiative, and improving on it in terms of the amount of money granted to women;
- Promote the gender dimension in teaching materials;
- Promote and facilitate access to good practice and women's achievements in science and in policies promoting women's education and creating more posts for women in S&T;

- Increase research to define the problem of girls dropping out, and problems specific to certain regions, for example, where women are weak in science, and so on.

**AGENDA ITEM 4: PRESENTATION ON WOMEN AND SCIENCE EDUCATION BY  
ENG. PROSCOVIA MARGARET NJUKI - UGANDA (FAWE)**

27. A representative of the Forum of African Women Educationalist, (FAWE), Engineer Proscovia M. Njuki highlighted the following key points in her presentation on “Women and Science Education”:

- The Second Decade of Education for Africa 2006-2015, calls for greater participation of women in science and technology at all levels including higher education.
- Statistics show that drop out rates for girls in Africa increase drastically from primary to secondary, reaching an apex at tertiary level. There are exceptional countries such as Lesotho, Tunisia, Mauritius and South Africa that have achieved parity in their education systems.
- There is need to break barriers such as socio-cultural attitudes, institutional arrangements and limitations, religious beliefs and practices and legal systems that hinder women participation and progress in science and technology.
- There are a number of strategies for attracting girls to science, mathematics and engineering fields. These include continuous sensitisation and lobbying public, policymakers and legislators; promoting gender mainstreaming in policy and programs for science and technology; instituting incentives such as scholarships, award systems in specific clusters of science and technology; offering special internships for female students; strengthening career guidance at institutions of learning; establishment of mentoring programmes; curriculum restructuring; and addressing the role of teachers and parents.

**AGENDA ITEM 5: PRESENTATION ON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BY DR. WASILA A. ELASHEG:  
ALFATAH UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF ENGINEERING,  
TRIPOLI - LIBYA**

28. Dr. Wasila Elashæg of Alfatah University in Libya presented a paper entitled “Women Entrepreneurship in Science and Technology”. She observed that the problems of unemployment and poverty have been particularly acute for women. Armed with revealing statistics, she lamented that women have had limited access to material resources, land, capital and education, and owned less than 20% of existing businesses. She expressed dismay that women remain under-represented across high technology fields, a factor that contributes to Africa’s weak competitiveness in S&T domains.

29. Dr. Elashag mentioned adverse conditions facing many female entrepreneurs, including women's lack of confidence in their own abilities; and society's lack of confidence in women's abilities. These are manifested as:

- Family's reluctance to finance women's ventures;
- Banker's reluctance to finance the same;
- Doubting the decision-making potential of women;
- Dismissing women as poor guarantors for loans.

30. These conditions have led to the following barriers in many male-dominated societies, for women in business:

- Insufficient access to finance and credit;
- No business record and poor credit history;
- Limited education and vocational training;
- Family commitments of married women.

31. Despite the massive difficulties faced by women, Dr. Elashag was of the view that small and medium scale businesses have the potential of offering women significant opportunities through employment and entrepreneurship. This, she noted, would facilitate the progress towards gender equality.

32. She said that women's entrepreneurship skills would be greatly enhanced through experiences involving business incubation for women, which is a facility that helps to nurture new enterprises, providing support in S&T as well as business management.

### **Discussion**

33. During the discussion, some members of the audience wished to know which fields of "technopreneurship" would be attractive enough to consider. In response, one of the participants suggested a range of technology-intensive businesses such as agriculture, textiles, packaging, designing, branding, natural products dyes, software, among others. Dr. Elashag explained that incubation periods lasted a maximum of three years.

### **AGENDA ITEM 6: PRESENTATION ON HARNESSING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT BY DR. ROSELYN ACHOLA KATANDI, UGANDA (THETA)**

34. Dr. Roslyn Katandi from THETA made a presentation on harnessing indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) for Africa's development. She raised the following key points regarding harnessing indigenous knowledge systems.

- Africa is endowed with a body of indigenous knowledge which could play a vital role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and constitutes a major source and potential for economic and social transformation of Africa.

- Some African countries have undertaken various initiatives to mainstream IK into agriculture, health care and education sector and some have a national policy on IK within their science and technology programmes with a view to integrating indigenous or traditional medicines into formal national development system.
- Challenges in this technological domain, include (i) the inadequacy of promotion and protection of IK technologies; (ii) Actors working in isolation with inadequate human resource; (iii) fragmented, erratic and insufficient funding to drive sustainable and economical R&D.

### Discussion

- THETA encourages the integration and interaction between traditional and modern practitioners, which allows cross breeding of ideas and best practices. Regarding standardization of Indigenous knowledge, work is in progress to encourage the proper packaging of dosage and promote hygienic needs.
- Networks of laboratories in IKS and statistical indicators to strengthen the IKS initiatives in the continent need to be encouraged.
- AU is in the process of establishing a Pan-African Intellectual Property Organisation as a single African organization to cater for the continent's IPR issues through ARIPO and AOPI.

### **AGENDA ITEM 7: PRESENTATION ON NETWORKS/ ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS BY DR. B. O. TEMA, ADVISOR ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SOUTH AFRICA**

35. Dr. B.O. Tema, the Advisor on African Affairs, Ministry of Science and Technology in South Africa, presented a paper entitled "Networks/Association of Women Scientists and Engineers". In her delivery, Dr. Tema posed a number of questions that revealed the immensity of the issues at hand. First, she observed that women researchers are slightly above 25% of the world total, and that even if women's access to S&T fields is improved, there would still remain the problem of retaining them in S&T careers. Moreover, evidence shows that most women hold lower level positions in S&T careers, and experience considerable hostility in work places.

36. Dr. Tema noted that the plight of women, both in the S&T fields and outside, would be greatly assisted if Africa seeks evidence-based and realistic solutions. She intimated that the current situation is unacceptable and amounts to a serious crisis. In this respect, she poses the following questions:

- What is the real situation, statistically backed, of African women in S&T?
- What are the militating factors against their participation?
- Are problems and solutions derived from international contexts directly applicable to African situations?

- Who will lead, conduct and design the research?
- What are the characteristics of the African policy environment?
- Do paragons for emulation from outside Africa exist, and can they be copied?

37. Dr. Tema advanced several proposals for consideration based on the Gender Advisory Board (GAB) of the UNCST whose objectives include mainstreaming the gender imperative in S&T policy making, stimulating and facilitating national reviews of the S&T gender situation, and devise action plans, building capacity to manage and utilize ICT's, and improve the S&T condition of women.

38. However, Dr. Tema expressed dismay at the lack of organic linkages between the Gender Advisory Board and African multilateral initiatives. She proposed the following:

- Addressing women's issues through national, regional and continental associations with a view to mobilizing a united voice of African women in science and technology, and implementing programmes that would mainstream gender in all S&T endeavours.
- Establishment of an Association of African Women in Science and Technology (AAWST).
- Identification of innovative funding mechanisms to manage AAWST.

**AGENDA ITEM 8: PRESENTATION: DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES BY DR. BEATRICE NJENGA, AG. DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

39. Dr. B. Njenga, Ag. Director of Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology made a presentation on programmes and initiatives of the Department in its major areas of focus namely:

- Science and technology and ICT,
- Education and,
- Human Resources and Youth.

40. She underscored the fact that all the department's programmes were designed to contribute towards the vision of the African Union, of peace, integration, prosperity and peerage of Africa in the global economy. She said the department facilitates the articulation of common priorities by African Union member states, and advocates their implementation. In each major programme area, the department has developed a Plan of Action as a guiding document, and they have all been adopted through conferences of Ministers, as well as by the AU Summit of heads of state and government.

- In the area of science and technology, Africa's Science and Technology Plan of Action contains Africa priority programmes in policy development and R&D, in areas ranging from indigenous technology to space research.

- In ICT, the African Regional Action Plan on Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) is expected to guide African stakeholders in rolling out an inclusive and sustainable information society on the continent
- For Education, there is the Plan of Action for the Second Decade for Education for Africa, 2006-2015, which is designed to improve the quality of human capital through education. The plan of Action focuses on among other areas, Gender and Culture, Teacher Development, Tertiary Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
- The Department has also produced the Youth Charter that is now in the process of ratification by Member States.

#### **Discussion:**

- Key stakeholders of all the AU initiated programs are the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States who should integrate these initiatives into their regional and national development programmes. The AU advocates for strategic partnership with organizations such as Academies of Science, Association of African Universities (AAU), Civil Society Organisations and International development partners so that Africa pursues a set of common objectives with a single voice.
- The Commission of the African Union does not provide funding but facilitates policies for Member States to institute appropriate mechanisms for resources mobilization in the implementation of these programmes. For example, the Khartoum Decision of 2006 calling on Member States to invest at least 1% of their national GDPs towards Science and Technology.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 9: PRESENTATION OF ECA ACTIVITIES RELATED TO EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH ICT AND MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUITY IN POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION BY DR. ALEX TINDIMUBONA**

41. Dr. Alex Tindimubona, Chief of Science and technology at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) highlighted ECA activities related to empowering women through ICT and mainstreaming gender equity in Policy formulation and implementation. His main points and issues raised during his presentation include:

- Since the inception of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) ECA has made great progress in sensitizing its member States on gender mainstreaming in formulation, promoting and implementation of national ICT policies and strategies;
- ECA and UNDP launched the Enterprise Development Facility (EDF) to empower African women entrepreneurs and facilitate their participation in

the information economy as a follow-up to the recommendations adopted by the Africa-Asia Forum on the Economic Empowerment of Women in 1997;

- Support to the institutional capacity building of information managers working for National Machineries for the Empowerment of Women has also been undertaken in collaboration with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

#### **AGENDA ITEM 10: BRIEFING ON BREAKAWAY SESSIONS BY AG. DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

42. Dr. Beatrice Njenga briefed the participants on breakaway sessions and emphasized the need for discussions to be guided by key presentations, the concept paper and expected outcomes. The discussions should be directed towards realising a strategic framework with concrete interventions, timeframes and lead actors. Dr. Njenga explained that breakaway sessions would be under four topics, each with a Lead Discussant as follows:

a) Popularisation and Promotion of Science & Technology among Women

Lead Discussant: Prof. Fotso Laure Pauline, Vice Dean of Faculty of Sciences, University of Yaoundé I - Cameroon.

b) Women and Science Education

Lead Discussant: Dr. O. A. Somolu, Group General Manager, Engineering & Technology Division, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

c) Women Entrepreneurship in Science & Technology

Lead Discussant: Prof. Laila Fikri FOUAD, Vice Chairperson for Training and International Cooperation - Egypt.

d) Networks/ Association of Women Scientists & Engineers

Lead Discussant: Dr Rispah Odwe, Ministry of Science and Technology - Kenya.

43. Participants were informed that the topic on Indigenous knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights could be discussed under both Education and Entrepreneurship.

44. Participants were requested to join a breakaway group of their choice.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 11: FEEDBACK FROM BREAKAWAY SESSIONS**

45. Reports from break-away sessions were presented during a plenary session, where participants made comments and suggestions, which have been incorporated in the final reports annexed hereby.

46. Following were the highlights of the recommendations of the discussions:

**(a) POPULARISATION AND PROMOTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AMONG WOMEN**

- Increase visibility and solidarity of women in science and technology by creating portals (database on women in science and technology, women entrepreneurs in science and technology, intellectual property issues, best practices, success stories, best publications, career guidance, and mentoring programmes among others) through the support of our Regional Communities, Member States and Development partners.
- Lobby and advocate getting more women in strategic, policy and decision-making positions to facilitate and accelerate the implementation of science and technology programs for women.

**(b) WOMEN AND SCIENCE EDUCATION**

- Sensitisation of parents or guardians and the communities to give equal opportunities to both boys and girls, and relieve girls of domestic burden that deprive them access to school; plan and provide remedial solutions for those who fail rather than stigmatise them. Similarly, set up a structured programme to re-admit and guide girls that dropped out of school due to pregnancy;
- Eliminate policies that impact negatively on education in primary schools being the foundation moulding stage (e.g. use of untrained personnel called auxiliary teachers to bridge the pupil teacher ratio gap in some countries) and instead provide adequate training of female science teachers and offer them good remuneration and incentives;

**(c) WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

- Forge structures to facilitate technology and knowledge acquisition and transfer and initiate productive result oriented partnerships and links between researchers, society and industry to promote sustainable rollout of research products with economic-value into the market help stimulate women technopreneurships.
- Promote the establishment of technology incubators and introduce and expand formal and non-formal entrepreneurship training and requisite facilities.

**(d) NETWORKS/ ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS**

- Develop a mechanism to bring together women in science and technology that coordinates their science and technology initiatives and encourages scientific cooperation, networking and collaboration amongst women in science and technology.

- An interim Committee was appointed to work out the modalities of this mechanism with the following six months.

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## AGENDA ITEM 12: ADOPTION OF CONFERENCE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

47. The report was adopted with the annexed Johannesburg declaration.

## AGENDA ITEM 13: CLOSING SESSION

48. H.E. Prof. Nagia Essayed, Commissioner of Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, in her closing statement, thanked the women scientists and the Republic of South Africa for hosting the Conference.

49. On behalf of the host country, Dr. Tema thanked the participants, the Commission of the African Union and expressed hope that this was the beginning of active participation of Women in science and technology.