

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

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

**DECLARATION**

**THE JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION OF THE FIRST AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE OF WOMEN IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AUGUST 2007**

**PREAMBLE**

**WE**, African women in science and technology meeting at the First African Union Conference of African Women in Science and Technology convened by the African Union Commission (AUC) in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa 29 -31 August 2007;

**GUIDED** by the principles and objectives of the Constitutive Act and the Vision of the African Union (AU);

**GUIDED BY** the AU/NEPAD Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action adopted by the African Ministers for Science and Technology (AMCOST) in Dakar, Senegal 30 September 2005;

**RECOGNIZING** the critical roles that Science and Technology play in social and economic development of the continent's competitiveness and its integration into the global economy, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

**NOTING** that in Africa, 50% of the population are women and are seriously under-represented in science, mathematics and engineering fields and yet they are a resource that could contribute towards the social and economic development of the continent through participating in science and technology programmes;

**ALSO NOTING** that the Ministers of Education of AU included gender as focus area in the Second Decade of Education for Africa 2006 - 2015 which calls for greater participation of women and girls in science and technology of all levels of higher education;

**TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** the commitment of the Commission of African Union on its progressive gender policies that seek to address gender parity and equity in development programmes and governance in Africa;

**ENCOURAGED BY** our political leaders' decision on science and technology in their January 2007 Summit for Africa's development through science and technology;

**WE HEREBY COMMIT OURSELVES TO:**

1. 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;

2. Empower women in rural areas by promoting experience sharing meetings, fora, workshops between rural women and women in science and technology, including indigenous knowledge systems;
3. To find 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 and recommend that the proposed adhoc Committee by the Conference as an interim arrangement will work out the modalities of this mechanism with six months.
4. Identify, document and share success stories from other AU Member States that have achieved gender parity and have even more women than men in science and technology for possible replication by other Member States lagging behind;
5. Devote time to role-model the younger ones by going to institutions of learning to show case our successes in science and technology, offer career guidance and interact with young girls in science and technology;

**ACCORDINGLY**, we women in science and technology, hereby in light of these commitments, **recommend the following for African Ministers for Science and Technology (AMCOST) to:**

1. Build the capacity of media institutions and practitioners to promote the outreach and community awareness on science and technology programs among women;
2. Lobby and advocate to get more women in strategic, policy and decision-making positions to facilitate and accelerate the implementation of science and technology programs for women;
3. Promote strategic partnership mechanisms with developed countries, international organisations and the Diaspora to support science education in Africa beyond the graduate level especially targeting women;
4. 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;

5. Promote the establishment of technology incubators and introduce and expand formal and non-formal entrepreneurship training and requisite facilities.
6. Create an innovation fund (Venture Capital) for women entrepreneurs in Science and Technology to encourage the development of small businesses through favorable fiscal incentives for women entrepreneurs;
7. The African Union programme on Science, Technology and Innovation Statistical Indicators should be gender disaggregated and include science education from primary and secondary schools levels to facilitate sound decision-making with regard to women and science education;
8. The Commission of the African Union in collaboration with UNESCO should establish scientific chairs for women and define roles to play;
9. Honour women in various clusters of science and technology;

**FURTHER**, we recommend to the relevant Ministries to

1. Set up special all-girls schools including special science schools. Research has proved that girls from such schools perform better. FAWE RWANDA has a model that can be replicated in other countries. AU can help in publicizing, encouraging and documenting it;
2. Sensitization 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 stigmatize them. Similarly, set up a structured programme to re-admit and guide girls that dropped out of school due to pregnancy;
3. 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;
4. Encourage all stakeholders, government, private sector, corporate, multi-national bodies, NGOs and other philanthropists to award scholarships and bursaries to deserving and to less privileged female students to pursue careers in science and technology;

5. Restructure and link science curricula to every day life and make it more useful to the African environment and needs and improve the quality of science teaching and learning materials and make them women friendly;
6. Promote the creation of enabling environment that will assist women in science to reconcile their family and professional life, such as childcare units at workplace;
7. Create quota systems for women in different regards: job opportunities, loans and policy decision making to ensure equitable representation in different sectors and professions;

**EXPRESS** our profound gratitude to H.E. Mr. M. Mangena Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa, and convey to H.E. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, the Government and the People of South Africa our sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality we received during the Conference.

**DONE IN JOHANNESBURG, REPUBLIC OF THIS SOUTH AFRICA 31<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF AUGUST 2007.**