

**REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF
THE 1ST NEPAD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Presented to the 2nd Meeting of the Steering Committee on Science and Technology, Addis
Ababa, Ethiopia 13-14 July 2004

Introduction

1. The first African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology under the auspices of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa 6-7 November 2003. The Conference established a high-level ministerial council and steering committee to provide political and technical leadership for the advancement of science and technology in Africa. It adopted 11 flagship programme areas and specific policy decisions.
2. The NEPAD Steering Committee on Science and Technology held its first meeting 26-27 January 2004 in Pretoria, South Africa. The Committee adopted its own Rules of Procedure, a work-plan for the implementation of ministerial decisions and a tentative budget. This report provides an overview of progress made to implement the decisions, particularly activities or actions leading to the development of a continental strategy or business plan for science and technology.

Design of Flagship Programmes

3. The Steering Committee decided that a comprehensive questionnaire be developed, adopted and used to conduct assessment of regional and national capacities, institutional arrangements and priorities for science and technology. The questionnaire would be used to identify specific issues and projects in each of the flagship programme areas. Emphasis is to be placed on concrete research and development (R&D) activities. The Secretariat of NEPAD commissioned a consultant to prepare the questionnaire. A first draft of the questionnaire is presented to this 2nd meeting of the Committee for consideration and adoption as the key instrument for regional assessments.
4. To coordinate regional assessments and prepare for related workshops, the Steering Committee decided that coordinators be recruited through nominations by members of the Committee. The Secretariat prepared terms of reference for the coordinators. These were submitted to members of the Committee for approval and use to identify and nominate candidates for the positions of regional coordinators. The Secretariat received nominations and made appointments as follows: (a) Eastern Africa—Dr. Z. Nyira, (b) Southern Africa—Prof. A. Ambali, (c) North Africa—and (d) West Africa—Dr. Joseph Gogo. The Secretariat is still expecting nominations from Central Africa.
5. A meeting for regional coordinators was held at the Secretariat 28-30 June, 2004. A work-plan and budgets for regional assessments were prepared and are presented to this meeting for consideration and approval. In addition, the coordinators reviewed the questionnaire and presented constructive comments on it. They agreed on specific documents that they will collect and review as part of the regional assessments effort.
6. To supplement or support the work of regional coordinators the Secretariat has requested the following institutions to prepare desk studies: (a) the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Regional Office for Africa based in Pretoria to prepare a study on water sciences and related trends in technological innovations. This study will provide an overview of current R&D activities aimed at

improving water quality and sanitation in Africa. (b) Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is preparing a survey of science-based or R&D activities for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The survey aims at profiling national and regional institutions with programmes for biodiversity science and related technological innovations for conservation and sustainable use. (d) The Royal Institute for International Affairs (RIIA) and the Secretariat are discussing a proposal to hold a specific workshop on water sciences and technologies, with emphasis on designing a network of centres of excellence dedicated to relevant R&D. It is proposed that the workshop be held in November 2004 at the headquarters of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Botswana. (e) The African Laser Centre (ALC) is preparing an overview of national facilities and capacities for laser R&D. These efforts will feed into the regional assessments.

Policy studies

7. In addition to the flagship programme areas, the ministerial conference adopted decisions that call on the NEPAD Secretariat to commission and/or prepare background studies on a number of issues. The following studies have been commissioned with financial support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada:

(a) Common African science and technology indicators—The ministerial conference instructed the Secretariat to launch a process aimed at designing and adopting common indicators to be used to benchmark science and technology on the African continent. A consultant, Prof Anastassios Pouris has been commissioned to prepare a background study and proposal to (1). Identify, describe and analyze different kinds of indicators, including the sources and applicability of these indicators. It should review international efforts and recommendations of organizations regarding the development and use of indicators; (2) Provide a succinct analysis of the usefulness of ST indicators and examples of how different regions and individual countries use indicators to improve the quality of their ST policies and plans. It should identify 'good practices' of development and use of regional indicators; (3) Provide an overview of African countries' needs or challenges for developing and using indicators; (4). Suggest specific actions or activities to be undertaken under NEPAD to facilitate the development and adoption of common African indicators to benchmark and survey national and regional STI systems; (5). Propose clear terms of reference for an experts' working group that will provide intellectual leadership to the NEPAD process of developing and adopting STI indicators. Draft study is expected by 15th August 2004.

(b) Survey of innovation hubs and science parks in Africa—IDRC has provided funding to the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) to conduct a survey of innovation hubs and science parks. The Secretariat prepared TORs for the study. First draft of the study is expected by 30th July 2004.

© African Innovation Outlook—The ministerial conference instructed the Secretariat of NEPAD to launch a process that will generate a comprehensive outlook of innovation activities and promote the concept of systems of innovation. In collaboration with the United Nations University Institute for New Technologies (UNU-INTECH), Secretariat is completing a draft of the background paper and proposed indicators and well as questionnaire to map systems of innovation in Africa. A consultative session was held in June at the Institute to gather views and experiences from African countries that have conducted surveys on innovation. Draft report is available for members who wish to look at it before it is reviewed.

(d) Intellectual property protection—The ministerial conference decided that a high-level experts' group or panel be established to address issues of intellectual property protection and to suggest ways of harmonizing related instruments and institutions as well as build Africa's capacity to participate in international negotiations. The Steering Committee approved terms of reference for the study. The Secretariat has commissioned Prof. Bury (University of Cape Town) to prepare a draft paper that will be subjected to peer review before being submitted to the Committee. First draft of the paper was expected

on 30 May 2004. The consultant has informed the Secretariat that he will submit the first draft by end of July. The paper will guide NEPAD to identify specific issues and TORs for the proposed experts' group or panel.

(e) Public expenditure on R&D—The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) has offered to prepare an initial survey of public expenditure on R&D. This is using funding from IDRC. The Secretariat has proposed TORs (see attached to this report). The report may be used to promote the implement of the ministerial decision requiring each country to increase expenditure on R&D to at least 1% of GDP.

Resource mobilization or fund raising

8. The translation of the ministerial decisions into concrete projects and projects will require financial resources. The Secretariat has made efforts to raise funds from international partners. Progress so far made include: (a) initiation of discussions with the Government of France through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs to provide funding for regional assessments and workshops. A decision on this will be made in August 2004; (b) finalization of grant negotiations with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to allocate CAD 3 million to NEPAD to initiate processes for the design of the African Biosciences Initiative as a network of excellence in biotechnology and genomics. Funds are now available to start regional activities. This efforts is jointly coordinated with NEPAD Agriculture Unit; and (d) Government of Finland—the Secretariat has request Finland to provide 0.5 million Euro to support the development of flagship programme areas. Other efforts include discussions with the Government of the Netherlands that is keen to assist Africa establish an observatory for science and technology.

9. The Steering Committee may wish to discuss ways of securing commitment from African governments to finance NEPAD S&T activities. In particular, the Committee may need to consider leveraging funds for regional workshops since these will design concrete projects and programmes for larger/bigger funding from the international community.