



African Union



NEPAD Planning and  
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**ARIPO/WIPO/Japan Patent Office Joint Regional Seminar: Usefulness of Patent Information and Commercialization of Research Results, Zimbabwe-Harare, 9-11 June 2010.**

**A Brief Overview of the NEPAD Agency-Dr Tichaona Mangwende (SANBio Network Programme Manager) at the Opening of the Regional Seminar.**

The representative of the African Union,  
The representative of COMESA,  
The Director General of ARIPO,  
Master of Ceremony,  
All Protocol Observed.

Ladies and Gentlemen, a very good morning to you all. Warm greetings from the CEO of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NEPAD Agency, Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki), the Head of the Policy Alignment and Programme Development (PPDD, Professor Aggrey Ambali) and the Director of the Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBio, Prof Luke Mumba).

I am sure most of us read some articles in the press that variously described the fate of NEPAD hence the need for me to briefly explain some important changes that are underway at the NEPAD Agency. The 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2010 (Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec 283 (XIV))) decided that NEPAD be integrated into African Union structures as the technical body.

The AU technical body, to be known as the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency was mandated to:

- (a) Facilitate and coordinate the implementation of continental and regional priority programmes and projects,
- (b) Mobilize resources and development partners in support of the implementation strategy,
- (c) Conduct and coordinate, research and knowledge management,
- (d) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes,
- (e) Advocate on the AU and NEPAD Agency vision, mission and core values.

To effectively implement the mandate given by the Heads of State, the NEPAD Agency is undergoing strategic reorganization into the office of the CEO and five Directorates namely:

- (i) Strategy and Knowledge Management,
- (ii) Policy Alignment and Programme Development,
- (iii) Programme Implementation and Coordination,

- (iv) External Relations and Communications,
- (v) Corporate Services.

The direction or road map of the NEPAD Agency is defined by the following five thematic areas:

- (i) Agriculture and food security,
- (ii) Climate change and Natural Resources Management,
- (iii) Regional integration and infrastructure,
- (iv) Human development
- (v) Economic and cooperative governance.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is the condensed version of what the NEPAD Agency is set to do in fulfilment of the AU mandate. The story is incomplete without a brief overview of what NEPAD achieved before the integration into AU structures and processes. I am from the new PPDD having helped to implement programmes under the old NEPAD Office of Science and Technology. The following programmes derived from the African Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology are at different stages of implementation on the continent:

- (i) AU/NEPAD Agency African Biosciences Initiative (ABI). This particular programme is home to the Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBio; SADC countries, the Secretariat is based at CSIR), Eastern and Central Africa Biosciences Network (BecANet; the Secretariat is based at KARI, Nairobi-Kenya), North African Biosciences Network (NABNet; the Secretariat is based at National Research Centre in Cairo-Egypt), West African Biosciences Network (WABNet; the Secretariat is based in Dakar-Senegal) and the African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE; the Secretariat is based in Ouagadougou-Bukina Faso).
- (ii) Strengthening Pharmaceutical Innovation in Africa,
- (iii) Mobilizing support for harmonizing medicines registration in Africa: Improving access to priority medicines,
- (iv) AU/NEPAD Agency Africa Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators (ASTII) initiative,
- (v) Building a Sustainable Energy Base,
- (vi) Securing and Sustaining Water,
- (vii) African Institute of Mathematical Sciences,

Ladies and gentlemen, I may have unintentionally left out some programmes but my hope is that the scope that I have given you adequately covers and speaks to the presence of the NEPAD Agency on the ground.

You may be wondering what brings the NEPAD Agency here today. The Master of Ceremony, allow me to say that most of today's innovative research and development efforts are underpinned by intellectual property rights. Securing and exploiting the results of our research activities demand that we keep the researcher and end-user well informed about intellectual property rights. The title of your regional seminar warrants the attention of continental bodies such as the NEPAD Agency. More importantly, the NEPAD Agency through one of its Networks, SANBio, held a workshop on Intellectual Property Management and Commercialization (Meikles Hotel, 19-24 April 2010 in Harare-Zimbabwe) where ARIPO was invited to share its rich experience, accumulated over the past 20 years, with participants. In addition, the NEPAD Agency and ARIPO have already initiated collaboration. At the NEPAD Agency Harare IPMC workshop, a

number of critical issues were raised for example how to adequately protect Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). Today IKS is the buzzword for those involved in research and developmental programmes/projects. The NEPAD Agency-does not want to remain behind-we are here to learn, make friends and get a different perspective on the usefulness of intellectual property rights information.

I sincerely want to thank ARIPO for inviting my organization to attend this critical regional seminar. My hope is that this invitation marks the beginning of a long-term productive collaboration!

Thank you.

Dr Tichaona Mangwende.