

REPORT ON AFRICA DAY SEMINAR: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES IN AFRICA

PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR:

The Department of Science and Technology hosted an Africa Day Seminar: "Science Technology and Innovation in Africa" on 23 May 2008. The seminar was to celebrate achievements in pursuit of African development in liberation, as well as commemorating the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its successor the African Union, as well as New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Moreover, Africa Day seeks to maintain a focus on the vision of ensuring that the 21st Century truly becomes an African Century.

ATTENDENCE:

The seminar was aimed at research managers, researchers, and postgraduate students involved in science, technology and innovation activities in Africa, and those seeking to extend links to African peers.

Prof Auf der Heyde, Deputy Director General for International Cooperation and Resources at DST welcomed the participants emphasising the importance of this celebration and the importance of science and technology in Africa to make better lives and preventing poverty.

Dr Bothale Tema, a Senior Advisor on African Affairs at DST, gave an overview of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). She further outlined the objectives of OAU that are:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African states and;
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts.

NEPAD involvement with OAU is a strategic framework for Africa's renewal, and to address challenges.

The Africa Day Celebration 2008 theme was "Meeting the Millennium Development Goals on Water and Sanitation".

Ms Lindiwe Lusenga, General Manager: Multilateral Cooperation and Africa at DST gave a presentation on DST involvement in Africa. The programmes that DST is coordinating in Africa are:

- Africa cooperation fund
- Africa scholarship programme for innovation
- Africa bilateral cooperation fund
- Africa mobility fund
- Multilateral funds

The goals and roles that DST aims for in Africa are:

- Post conflict peace and reconstruction
- Private sector engagement in STI projects in Africa cooperation
- More focused regional STI approach and;
- More interdepartmental mission

Challenges that the department are facing:

- Capacity on the secretariat
- Legal institutional framework

Challenges to the stakeholders:

- Link to other economic bloc
- Shared STI goals
- Regional hubs for human capital development

Prof. Luke Mumba, Director of SANBIO at CSIR gave a presentation on NEPAD S&T Consolidated Action Plan. The presentation highlighted the guiding principles, the progress and the challenges. The Vision of CPA is an African well integrated into the global economy and free of poverty.

Guiding principles:

- Building on existing projects
- Funding opportunities
- Importance of sequence

Progress on implementation:

- Hubs identified
- CAD\$ 30 million allocates to hubs
- Short courses on technical

Challenges:

- African government and institutions should take a lead role in funding CPA.

Dr Achuo Enow from ICSU, his present was based on strengthening international science for the benefit of the society. In his presentation he gave a brief overview of what is ICSU. ICSU mandate is to create international and regional networks of scientists, plan and coordinate interdisciplinary.

The role of ICSU in Africa is to:

- Promote indigenous and traditional knowledge skills.
- Establish a database of African experts.
- Promote the application of science policy for development.
- Promote the participation of Africa scientists in international programmes.

In his closing he made an announcement that Africa will for the first time host the 29th ICSU General Assembly on 13-17 October 2008 in Maputo, Mozambique.

Prof. Iqbal Parker, Director at ICGEB presented the activities that the institution is involved in, which include the following:

- In house research projects
- Long-term post doctoral fellowship
- Short-term fellowship
- Organisation of meetings
- Collaborative research grants
- Collaboration with industrial sector
- Scientific services to member countries

Dr Rocky Skeef shared the NRF vision 2015, which is:

- World class research
- Transformed society
- Sustainable environment; and the priorities are promoting equity and equality and adherence