

Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

31 October – 5 November 2013

Scientific and Technological Community Statement

Your Excellences, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

To achieve sustainable development, fundamental issues need to be addressed at local, regional and global levels. At all levels, the role of science, technology and innovation (STI) is crucial to develop scientific knowledge and appropriate technologies that are central to socio-economic development and to resolving environmental problems that make current development paths unsustainable. Integrated innovative approaches that fully incorporate existing and new scientific knowledge are required to be developed and used to bridge the north-south technological capacity divide and make Africa a producer and not only an end user of technology. This will also help to alleviate poverty and promote job creation in the region. The Scientific and Technological (S&T) community can make a leading contribution to the implementation of SDGs in the region. A strong partnership between the S&T community and other members of civil society, the private sector, governments, and intergovernmental bodies is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development.

How can the various S&T communities improve their contributions to sustainable development?

With adequate support, STI will be one of the essential pillars for the generation of science-based knowledge targeted to sustainable development objectives, and in developing cleaner and more affordable technologies. Enhancing the S&T community's capacity to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development will require significant changes which include more policy relevant science; interdisciplinary and trans-boundary research; promoting gender equality in science; new interrelationships between science & technology and society for sustainable development.

The basic changes outlined above are essential for redirecting the present regional STI system towards the sustainable development challenges; blending traditional and scientific knowledge for sustainable development.

Expectation of the S&T community

S&T community recognizes, applauds and appreciates the work done thus far in the process of developing the SDGs for the continent as presented in the documents circulated prior to the meeting.

However, as much as we all (or most of us) accepts the importance of science, technology and innovation in socio-economic development, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that STI is missing in most of the presentations especially in the proposed SDGs for the region.

- The S&T community would like to argue that the SDGs for the region must be based on science and it is important that from the infancy of this process of developing the SDGs, the role of science and technology should be incorporated and made visible in the statement.

- We assert that the best interdisciplinary and trans-boundary research should underpin the sustainable development goals as well as targets and indicators at global, regional and national levels.
- Improving education and capacity development to enhanced science teaching at primary, secondary and university levels is central to scientific and technological capacity building and to a better public understanding of sustainable development issues. As such, a clear distinction between basic education, higher education and innovative research should be made in the final document as they play different roles in socio-economic development
- Bridge the north-south scientific and technological divide capacity through innovation to build and enhance strong scientific and technological capacity in our region and establish bilateral donors and other funding mechanisms to substantially increase funds allocated to S&T for sustainable development.
- The public and private funding of science and technology must focus on developing new clean technologies, and supporting sustainable production systems and consumption patterns. Due emphasis should be placed, whenever appropriate on local, culturally adapted and low-cost technologies.
- The S&T community would like to request that there should be a separate SDG on STI or it should be formulated as part of goal 4 “*Enhance accessibility and affordability of quality education for all*”.