

**DECLARATION
OF THE
FIRST NEPAD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Adopted 7th November 2003

Johannesburg, South Africa

WE, the Ministers responsible for science and technology in African countries, meeting at our inaugural conference in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) from 6-7 November 2003 in Johannesburg, South Africa;

Motivated by the solemn pledge by our Heads of State and Government in adopting NEPAD as the socio-economic framework for regional integration, eradication of poverty and sustainable development;

Recalling Article 3 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU), which promotes research in all fields, particularly in science and technology to advance the development of the continent;

Taking into account that the realization of the NEPAD goals as well as those of supportive initiatives, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development is receiving considerable attention of African leaders and Africa's development partners;

Convinced that scientific advances and technological innovations are driving forces for economic growth and sustainable development;

Emphasizing the importance of adopting multidisciplinary approaches, including social sciences or humanities, in research and development;

Acknowledging that the ability of our countries to create, diffuse and utilize scientific and technical knowledge is a major determinant of our capacity to take advantage of

international trade and effectively compete in the global economy as well as improve the quality of life of our people;

Realizing that the gap between poor and rich countries in terms of real income is largely accounted for by differences in the acquisition, accumulation and utilization of science and technology;

Determined further to effectively and successfully address the challenges of food security, environmental degradation, diseases, poor communication, poverty eradication and Africa's marginalisation in the global economy;

Guided by the deliberations and outcome of the Regional Workshop on "Developing a shared Platform for Science and Technology" held from 17-19 February 2003 in Johannesburg, South Africa as well as the preparatory meeting of this conference held from 13-15 October 2003 in Nairobi, Kenya;

WE HEREBY COMMIT TO:

1. **Acknowledge** the need for science and technology to be championed as priority instruments of economic and social development at the highest level of our governments;
2. **Emphasize** the need for science and technology policies and strategies that lead to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty;
3. **Resolve and commit** to find ways and means of strengthening, individually and collectively, science, technology and innovation systems of our countries to attain sustainable development and integration into the global economy;
4. **Reaffirm** our commitment to promote within our countries scientific research and technological innovations and their applications, particularly in the eradication of poverty; seeking solutions to food insecurity, malnutrition, homelessness, unemployment, lack of affordable energy and the fight against disease, especially HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.
5. **Establish** appropriate enabling conditions for scientific and technological advancement of our countries and the continent;
6. **Establish** a Council of Ministers of Science and Technology as the policy-making and overall governance body for science and technology in the framework of NEPAD
7. **Proudly acknowledge** the abundance of indigenous knowledge and technologies accumulated over millennia in our continent, and commit to promote,

protect and develop them as crucial components of science, technology and innovation systems.

8. **Reaffirm** our commitment to pursue all measures possible to increase public expenditure on research and development to at least 1 per cent of GDP per annum,
9. **Resolve** to develop the appropriate policy and regulatory environment, including protection of intellectual property, to encourage private sector investment in research and development.
10. **Establish** networks of centres of excellence in science and technology within the framework of NEPAD;
11. **Undertake** to improve on bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the development and application of science and technology;
12. **Develop** and adopt common sets of indicators to benchmark our national and regional systems of innovation
13. **Resolve** to build regional consensus and strategies to address concerns emerging with advances in new technologies, including biotechnology, nanotechnology, and information and communications technologies;
14. **Establish** national and regional programmes to promote public understanding of science and technology and their role in development;
15. **Undertake** to improve the quality of and enrollment in science, technology, mathematics and engineering education;
16. **Ensure** coordination of science and technology matters between the different sectors of government, and promote dialogue between stakeholders in the science and technology community; and
17. **Promote** networking of departments of science and technology, and ensure that expertise and experiences in various national institutions is shared across the continent;

THEREFORE ADOPT the Outline of Plan of Action as the basis for the formulation of NEPAD's Business Plan on Science and Technology to be finalized within twelve months after this Conference.

RECOMMEND that the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) consider and submit this Declaration to the Summit of the African Union.

EXPRESS our profound gratitude to Dr. Ben Ngubane, Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa for chairing and providing leadership to the conference and kindly request him to convey to H.E. President Mbeki, the Government and People of South Africa our sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality and excellent material and logistical support we received at the conference.