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Third Session of the Committee on
Development Information, Science and Technology
CODIST-III)

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Draft Report of the Third Meeting of the Committee on Development Information Science and Technology (CODIST-III)

12th – 15th March 2013

(Summary, resolutions and recommendations)

CODIST-III OUTCOMES AND RESOLUTIONS

PLENARY RESOLUTIONS
Measuring Innovation Environment in Africa

Noting that:

- Science, technology and innovation is driving factor in the different economic sectors;

- Africa witnessed huge improvements in the financial sector using mobile banking; in health sector, fighting HIV/AIDS through improved diagnostic methods and in agricultural sector, notable progress is done using improved vaccine for livestock;

- The importance of measurement of the innovation environment on the continent is crucial to gauge the successive development progress

Recognising

- The efforts being done for measuring Innovation in Africa named as African Innovation Index development using relevant surveys and statistics from regional and internal perspectives;

- That Innovation is the central economic growth driver, and the need for policies aimed at helping businesses to become more productive and innovative, as well as facilitation and creation of new companies that produce high-value-added products and services;

- That currently Africa would have better opportunities for innovation due to its demand of improved public sector services, renewal of old industries and more demand of new technology based industries.

- The need for Africa to develop its own indicators that reflect the living standards of its people and identify its dominant priority sectors such as mining, agriculture and manufacturing;

Recommends that

Member States, AUC and ECA should:
- Further refine and make the African Innovation indicators more relevant to the African development situation;

- Develop the innovation measurement/index that is policy relevant, by incorporating the continent's opportunities and challenges.

Alignments of the current innovation indicators to Africa's main economic sectors and priorities: Proposed best practice for Africa

- Noting the need for innovation indicators at input, output and impact levels and also the need for a policy framework to guide the process of identifying the right indicators as well as measuring innovation to adequately inform policy makers;

- Recognizing that Africa needs to move to production/manufacturing of goods and services rather that being a net importer of technologies and innovations in order to achieve its development goals, and since innovation is a multi-stakeholder process.

Recommends that

Member States should:

- Play a key role in promoting innovation in Africa by putting in place the right policy environment including developing legislations, protection of intellectual properties, developing competition policies, establishing innovation funds, deliberate intervention and support to innovation in the informal sector;.

- Take a lead on the African innovation agenda including measuring the innovation environment by allocating the necessary resources and alignment to their national development needs and priorities;

- Engage all key stakeholders such as civil society and the private sector in all aspects of innovation policy development as well as measurement alongside the Government.

AUC and ECA should:

- Establish a programme to measure the innovations and patents produced by Africans in the Diaspora in order to encourage African youths and promote the culture of innovation.

Promoting technology diffusion and Innovation

Noting

- The important role that ICTs have played in fueling and driving innovation in a number of sectors of the global economy.

- African countries, they are not active players in the global research and R&D community that are fueling innovation efforts, despite being beneficiaries of the technological advancements.

Recognising

- The needs for stakeholders to be clear on why, how, and what to measure to promote the innovation in Africa in line with the Theme of CODIST III "Measuring the Innovation Environment".

- The significance of strong regional and international partnership of stakeholder in promoting scientific innovations in Africa.

Recommends that

Member States should

- Play a key role in promoting innovation through supporting basic research and R&D work in technologies, including ICTs;

- Empower African universities, research institutions, academia and scientists in general to be part of the process of applying outputs of the industrial/scientific research and the R&D work to prototype innovative products and systems towards their commercialization and mass production.

ECA and AUC should

- Promotion of collaborative development and implementation of regional initiatives in terms of financing and networking in similar activities in order to share available resources, and exchange of information technologies across the region as well as to increase the synergy and avoid duplication.

Methodologies and Frameworks for Measuring Innovation

Recongising the different initiatives on measuring Innovation in Africa such as the ASTI initiative, and the Africa innovation index has the potential to measure efficiency of innovation;

Recommends that
- Member States should develop and support funding mechanisms for measurement initiatives to ensure their continuity as well their full contribution to innovation;

- There should be deliberate policy interventions by African governments to support community and SME level innovations through appropriate legislations, protection and promotion of their products and services

SUB-COMMITTEES RESOLUTIONS

Sub-committee on ICTs

ECA activities in the area of ICTs (2011 – 2012), Enabling Environment and New Trends

The Subcommittee,

Noting

- The significance of ICT data in assessing and reviewing the ICT policy development and implementation process;

- The increasing access to broadband Internet, and issues relating to cyber security and cybercrimes;

- The repositioning of the ECA in the light of Africa's current transformative agenda.

Recognizing
- The need to protect citizens, governments and businesses as Africa is now within the perimeter of cybercrime, making the continent's information systems vulnerable as it is being connected to the rest of the world;
- The tremendous opportunities in innovation in ICTs to spur growth and employment in Africa.

Recommends that

Member States should

- Continuously review their ICT policies/plans in order to re-aligned them with the countries' changing government priorities and new technological developments;

- Review of the existing legal and regulatory frameworks through the utilization of the Convention on cybersecurity guidelines, for the countries to fully benefit from the potential of ICTs; and

- Enhance coordination and harmonization of policies and legal and environments and coordination of data and data collection mechanisms for ICT policy reviews.

ECA should

- Continue the current projects and programmes already started in member States in the area of information society and knowledge economy;

- Coordinate with the AUC and RECs the adoption of the Cybersecurity Convention and promote the transposition and implementation at national and sub-regional levels;

- Support new technology policy research in pertinent areas of applications for Africa's socio-economic landscape to enhance widespread uptake and use of new technologies in line with its transformative agenda;

- Support member States, RECs and other African institutions to develop Knowledge Management platforms and promote Community of Practices for diffusion and exchange of knowledge to participate in the social and economic transformation of the continent, and coordinate with the UN Group on the Information Society (UNGIS) and other relevant UN entities.

ICT Innovation and Economic Growth: Follow up on the Implementation of the WSIS

The Subcommittee,

Noting

- The tremendous advances in the growth and development of the telecoms and ICT sector on the African continent and the range of public-private partnerships witnessed in the last few years in developing infrastructure and enhancing access;

- The significance of ICT data and capacity development in national statistical offices (NSOs) and ministries in charge of ICTs with regard to ICT measurement;

Recognising
- The need to assess the development of the ICT sector further, both in terms of digital inclusiveness of its growth and the spread of ICT applications across all socio-economic sectors; and

- The need for active participation in the ten-year review of the WSIS outcomes which has started with survey that ECA has undertaken on the availability of data on the internationally agreed indicators;

- The continued support of ECA and AUC in enhancing Africa's participation in the global information society issues in general and the Internet Governance Forum in particular.

Recommends that
Member States should

- Undertake national level awareness campaign among stakeholders on the WSIS action lines and the respective targets and indicators in order to enhance the collection and maintenance of data on indicators and provision to the regional stocktaking database (observatory).

- Actively be involved both at sub-regional and regional levels in the establishment of national IGF processes and significantly contribute in making Internet Governance a success.

ECA and AUC should

- Facilitate region-wide consultations on the ten-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and visioning WSIS Targets beyond 2015 and coordinate with the UN;

- Facilitate the setting up of national and regional observatories on the Information and Knowledge Society and to maintain stocktaking database on WSIS indicators;

- Establish standard data collection mechanisms to encourage creation of national observatories; and

- Enhance the ongoing investment in deploying e-government in Africa, conduct capacity building and training on the adoption and use of the internationally approved set of core e-government indicators involving national statistical offices and ECA Sub-Regional Offices (SROs);

- Continue to support and strengthen the African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF) and co-host the AfIGF secretariat.

- Further encourage member States to continue the good spirit of an African common position for the benefit of the continent at international ICT and telecom fora

Sub-committee on Science and Technology

The Sub-committee,

Noting that:

- Emerging technologies (nanotechnologies, ICTs), innovation and their enabling environments are the major drivers of competitiveness of firms and economic growth;
- Research and technology, products development in specialized research centres and transfer to the manufacturing and service sectors are the backbone of industrial progress;
- Innovation measurement is a powerful instrument that could shade light on national, sectoral, regional and global innovation performances, related enablers and barriers and consequences on economic growth, among others thing;

Recommends:

That member States should:

- Build robust and sustainable science, technology and innovation data collection and analysis mechanisms and Institutions;
- Build human capacity on STI indicators and related surveys;
- Promote sound STI policy involving various stakeholders, promoting linkages among them, institutional capacity building and integrating them into development agendas;
- Adopt appropriate STI policies that stimulate technology development and transfer to market places;
- Take stock of the African Innovation Index (AII) being developed by ECA and use it as a benchmarking tool relevant to the African and global contexts;
- Improve national infrastructures to enhance innovation development.

That ECA and AUC/NCPA should:

- Provide substantive support on STI policy advocacy to member States and RECs based on in-depth STI policy research outputs;
- Make the AII and ongoing NCPA STI indicators easy to implement and interpret among policy makers, the business community, investors and all key innovation stakeholders;

- Make the AII an important tool that captures R&D-based and hidden innovations' potential, progress and efficiency in Africa; clearly informing policy makers on best mechanisms for exploiting innovation as an engine of competitiveness and industrial development;
- Advocate the development and exploitation of emerging technologies in member states

SWA III – INNOVATION TO PROMOTE MANUFACTURING IN AFRICA: Performance, Challenges and Opportunities

The Subcommittee

Noting
- The need for a clear framework regarding the national innovation system (NIS) in terms of players and performance metrics derived through measurement to provide the evidence to influence policy decisions and actions;

- That all the elements of the national system of innovation must driven by enabling policies that combine STI with economic development;

- Noting the opportunities and challenges in the promotion of innovation in the African manufacturing sector;

Recognising
- The need for coordination at the highest level in the governance structure to make sure that every player owns the process.

- The challenge that exists on the continent in translating research work in innovative outputs and selling it to policy makers;

Recommends
Member States
- To integrate STI policies with the overall nation development agendas;

- To develop human capacity through designing innovative training programmes that focus on innovation for jobs and wealth creation.

- To start funding strategic research with the basic areas to address development challenges especially focusing on commercializing the R&D, and design R&D programmes based on local problems/needs and not depending on donor driven initiatives;

- Strengthen technology transfer offices to link academia and industry since researchers are not perfect marketers, technology extension workers should be instituted in African Universities to market developed technologies in order to create jobs and wealth;

- Develop and enhance data collection on indicators with regard to innovative capacities to help in policy development and shedding more light on where Africa is heading in terms of STI developments.

ECA ans AUC
- To enhance collaborations and partnership in developing strong innovation frameworks including institutions to support innovation.

- To encourage the development and strengthening of data collection mechanisms in relation to STI indicators.

Sub-committee on Geoinformation

The Subcommittee

Taking cognizance of the current strategic reorientation and refocusing of ECA to support the accelerated socio-economic transformation in Africa, whereby geospatial information activities move to the African Centre for Statistics;

Acknowledging the key role of ECA in providing a regional focus and leadership for geospatial information activities in Africa;

Acknowledging that geospatial information, science and technology and related disciplines are now commonly regarded as the driving forces for many applications and services in industrial and socio-economic development, offering radically a different way through which we produce and use information required to manage our communities and economic activities;

Noting and engaged to value the decades of ECA and Members States' efforts and progress in building Spatial Data Infrastructures in Africa,

Taking cognizance of the global initiative to bring statistics and geography together through the Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) initiative,

Realising the need for the African voice to continued being heard at the global arena of geospatial information management;

Considering the StatCom II resolution on "Statistics and Geography" calling upon African countries to ensure that national statistical, planning and cartographic authorities have effective collaboration between them in the development of respective data infrastructures and systems.

Recommends
- ECA for the merging of geoinformation activities with statistics which is in line with the GGIM initiative and the recommendation of StatCom Africa;

- That the oversight and supervisory functions of the geoinformation subcommittee of CODIST be transferred to an equivalent subcommittee of StatCom Africa with the name of GGIM-Africa

- That ECA should retain specific programmatic activities in the field of geoinformation, particularly the advancement of holistic geospatial information management and governance, the promotion of national spatial data infrastructure, geographical names standardization, common geodetic reference frames (AFREF), the fostering of streamlined online applications, the promotion of geospatial standards and interoperable common tools, and retain a comprehensive, holistic, vision-driven, long-term transformative and sustained capacity development;

- Recommends ECA and AUC to enhance collaborations and partnership on space science technology, particularly on Earth Observation applications, remote sensing and space infrastructure deployment.

- The participation of member States in and contribution to the work of the UN Committee of Experts on GGIM.

KLIS Subcommittee

The Subcommittee

Recognizing:

- That African governments and institutions currently operate in digital environments;
- The benefit to Africa in using new emerging technologies such as Open Access and other emerging technologies including social media, federated searching, mash-ups, Web 2.0 for information management, dissemination and sharing;
- That there are various initiatives in the digital information management and dissemination environment (i.e. OA, ASKIA, TEEAL, Research4Life, DATAD etc.) and efforts to improve access and build capacity resulting into duplication of efforts and investment

Noting:

- The absence of necessary technical, legal and governance frameworks to support the adoption of Open Access model and other emerging technologies;

- The need for coherence in information management and dissemination initiatives existing in Africa;

- That many ECA member States have limited capacities in digital assets management to support innovation for national development;

Further noting that

- The studies indicating that most stakeholders in institutions in Africa are not familiar or aware of the benefits of Open Access and other emerging technologies

The Sub-Committee recommends that:

ECA should

- Spearhead with assistance from member states the development of an action framework to facilitate the adoption of the Open Access publishing and other emerging technologies for information management in member states. The framework should consider technical infrastructure, legal and governance issues.

- Provide a forum for development partners, international organizations and member States to deliberate on the integration of their initiatives to avoid duplication and to leverage on the sharing of resources

Member States should

- Develop information policies that should incorporate management and dissemination of content in digital formats;

- Align Open Access models and national knowledge development traditions in order to take advantage of both systems.

- Build technical and legal infrastructure, and develop the necessary capacities of the institutions and information professionals to enable them participate and contribute to information initiatives at national, regional and global levels.

The Resolutions were recommended for adoption by south Africa and seconded by Niger.