

AFRICAN UNION

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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 Fax: +251 115 517844
Website: www.au.int

**THIRD ORDINARY SESSION FOR
THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (STC-EST)
10TH TO 12TH DECEMBER 2019, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**HRST/STC-EST/EXP/ (III) 0.2
ORIGINAL: English**

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

1. BACKGROUND

In June 2008, the African Union, taking into account related sectors, decided to reconfigure the Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) Policy Organs. In the process, Education and Science, Technology and Innovation were merged under a single Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST). This STC –EST brings together Ministers in charge of Education and Ministers in charge of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI). The overall objective is to ensure that the continent, through policies, programmes, institutions and partnerships, is endowed with sound educational systems for human capital development, and strong capacity for developing and harnessing STI for its socio-economic development and directly contribute to the Agenda 2063 aspirations and the global sustainable development goals

There is no doubt that the Education, Science and Technology sectors are complementary and should effectively drive Africa's social and economic development and fast-track the transition of African countries to innovation-led, knowledge-based economies. The first STC-EST was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 27th to 30th October 2015, and the second one was held in Cairo, Egypt from 21st – 23rd October 2017.

From 10th to 13th December 2019 the African Union Commission is organizing the third STC-EST at its Headquarters in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The STC-EST 3, will bring together Ministers in charge of Education, Ministers in charge of Science, Technology, and Innovation, Development Partners, Regional Institutions, Representative of Privates Sector among others, take stock of how education, science, technology and innovation may better contribute towards attaining the African Agenda 2063 and to take collective decisions, on education, science, technology and innovation.

The meeting will be a useful platform to advocate for increased investments in education, science, technology and innovation in Africa; and promotion of quality assurance and harmonisation of higher education. Other matters that will be consideration include updates on Innovating Education in Africa; Teacher Development; Safe Schools and Protecting Education under difficult circumstances; Early Childhood Education and Development; Rethinking Secondary Education in Africa; CESA Cluster platforms; Pan African University, Virtual University; Strengthening women and girls' education; and the Chairperson's Youth empowerment Initiative: #1millionBy2021.

Despite the fact that investment in Innovation, Research and experimental Development (R&D) is well known as having a positive impact on the economic performance as well as on human well-being, the average R&D intensity (R&D expenditure as percentage of

GDP) of Africa continues to remain low, presently at less than 0.5% GDP, far below the world average of 2.2 % GDP and calls for more efforts particularly African internal funding mechanisms. A study conducted by the African Observatory for STI (AOSTI) on knowledge production revealed that the African Union produces only 2% of the global knowledge and less than 1% of the world patents. This study further showed that collaboration between African countries in R&D is infrequent, occurring only in about 4 % of scientific publications. That low level of scientific collaboration reflects the intra-Africa trade figure of 17% of exports (2017 data) which compares unfavorably to the figures in Asia (59%) and Europe (69%). Ministers will consider implementation reports of STISA-2024, efforts in supporting research and innovation, emerging technologies, African Innovation outlook; priority setting for science, technology and innovation aligned to AU Agenda 2063; update on African Space Policy and Strategy, and international cooperation in STI. Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Development Partners will also and share their activities and programmes in Science, Technology and Innovation.

2. OBJECTIVES

The third STC-EST will elect a new Ministerial Bureau for the next two year tenure, and specifically:

- i. Update the Ministers on the status of ongoing programmes and share best practices among Member States to enhance intra-Africa collaboration in Education; Science, Technology and Innovation.
- ii. Take stock of the implementation of Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) and Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) from Member States, the AUC and the Development Partners.
- iii. Advocate for increased investments in education, science, technology and innovation in Africa.
- iv. Promote quality assurance and harmonisation of higher education
- v. Contribute to the Draft Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa Education
- vi. Contribute to the Chairperson's Youth empowerment Initiative: 1millionBy2021
- vii. Agree on decision/recommendations, for consideration by the AU 2020 Summit.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Report on the third meeting of the STC on Education, Science and Technology, indicating Decisions/Recommendations
2. Actions for decision during the next AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in January 2020.

4. PARTICIPANTS

Participants will include all Member States Ministers responsible for Education, Science and Technology, their relevant senior officials, and Regional Economic Communities. Key Development Partners are also invited as observers.

5. MEETING STRUCTURE

- **10 - 11 December 2019**
 - Senior Officials/Experts' Meeting
- **12 December 2019**
 - Open Science Forum
 - Policy Dialogue: "Creating Gender Responsive Education Systems"
 - Development Partners Forum;
 - PAU Outreach Partners' Forum,
- **13 December 2019**
 - Ministerial Session

The Senior Officials/Experts' Meeting will be held: (i) in plenary sessions where Education and STI are discussed to enhance common understanding of both sectors; and (ii) there will also be Parallel Sessions to enable more in-depth discussions separately for Education and for STI.

6. DATE AND VENUE

The 3rd STC on Education, Science and Technology will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at the African Union Commission Headquarters, Old Conference Center from 10 - 13 December 2019

7. LOGISTICS ARRANGEMENT

An information note on logistics and Agenda, program and other technical working documents will be sent out in due course to all the confirmed participants.