

SUMMARY OF THE MINISTER'S SPEECH

1. AMCOST V is a decisive moment in the search for solutions to accelerate the transition of African economies towards economies based on science, technology and innovation.
2. Since AMCOST I which held in Brazzaville in 1987, the African public has been waiting impatiently for the practical fruits of science, technology and innovation to help in the transformation of their daily lives. This impatience is legitimate and justified.
3. Since independence African countries have been importing everything of importance to their lives and exporting mainly raw materials. As a consequence, they are dependent on a market whose prices they cannot control. In this state they are incapable either of sustainable economic growth or of consistently improving the quality of life for their peoples.
4. Despite their role as the motor for development and transformation of society, Science and Technology receive very low investment budgets because African countries devote most of their resources to the construction of infrastructure and solving socio-political problems.
5. The hopes raised in the 1980s by the recognition of science and technology as basic instruments for development failed to materialize. And today, the majority of African countries devote less than 1% of their GDP, as recommended by UNESCO, to research.
6. I am convinced of the capacities of our researchers and innovators, as despite the difficult conditions in which they work and the low financing, they have proven their worth in their countries, regions or at world level. For example, commendable results have been obtained in the following fields: Agriculture, in the fight against diseases affecting the cassava plant; forestry, in the cloning and production of eucalyptus seedlings, in the Congo; information technology, in the creation of tablets or smartphones and other applications. Taking advantage of better working conditions out of Africa, African researchers are proving themselves in robotics and modeling systems.
7. Countries that by investing massively in education, training, research, innovation and transfer of technologies have thus become emerging

economies provide the model which Africa should follow. That is why you are justified to have included as a mission in your consolidated plan of action research for the rapid transition of Africa towards economies based on science, technology and innovation.

8. African leaders at the highest level need to buy this approach in order that the strategy may also yield fruits for Africa and lead her to the attainment of the MDGs.
9. In my country, the Congo, the President's social change project based on two axes, modernization and industrialization, have led the government to support science and technology especially with regard to applied research and to promote those technologies which tie in with modernization and industrialization, with the aim of making Congo an emerging economy by 2025.
10. To achieve this goal, the new policy requires the creation of research institutes in practical fields such as agronomy, forestry, health, exact and natural sciences, engineering and technical innovations, geographical sciences, and in the social domain. Secondly, the guarantee that scientific and technological research will be funded up to 1% of GDP. Laws for the creation of the first institutes have been passed and organic texts and regulations are being drafted. There is real government determination to attain the objectives set in this domain.
11. All of this will however be in vain if these goals are not based on a new paradigm, a new vision shared by all concerned in the role of science, technology and innovation in our development. They necessarily include values of abnegation, creativity, and overcoming of oneself.
12. Brazzaville 2012 must therefore be the departure point to carry forward the momentum started in the 80s to make science, technology and innovation the real engines of the development of our economies. It is in this light that I exhort the experts to formulate strategies that will permit the Africa of tomorrow to: attain the targets of the consolidated plan of action in science, technology and innovation; overcome the challenge of training for research; to overcome the isolation of research and create conditions to involve the private sector, which is the place of choice for innovation.