

Honorable Ministers of Science and Technology
Distinguished Colleagues
Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentleman

It is truly a great honor and a pleasure to have the op to speak to you today, and I thank the Conference organizers for being to kind to have given me the opportunity.

UNESCO is proud of our long partnership role with AMCOST, and we are committed to yet further strengthening our efforts. As such, I have two main goals in my brief remarks today:

- The first of to provide an overview of developments in science at UNESCO since the last AMCOST meeting two years ago, and there have been a lot of exciting developments;
- The second is to talk about current strategic initiatives, and their resonance with the new draft Consolidated Plan of Action, which provides a strategic vision for STI in Africa up to the Year 2013.

To set the context, though, it is important to begin by describing UNESCO's vision for STI for Sustainable Development. Very comprehensive – not just STI policy, nor env sciences, but health sciences, ag sciences, engr, etc, particularly wrt job creation

FIRST: Developments since last AMCOST

- Roles of UNESCO in int'l sci and engineering; re-structuring of sector to better qualitatively match these main functions
- Describe two main umbrellas, and science for peace
- Cross-cutting initiatives launched, in biodiversity, natural disaster risk reduction, science education and our UNESCO Engineering Initiative, all with major consequences for our collaborations with African member states.

Some concrete developments:

- In science policy: moving to global efforts: STIGAP and GO-SPIN, while continuing national efforts
- Ministerial Conf on STI in Nairobi in April 2012
- New UNESCO-affiliated research centers formed
- In water: major focus on droughts and floods. Highlight for floods Namibia, droughts, Horn of Africa (GRIDMAP: groundwater resources for emergency)
- In oceans, new IOC regional office formed in Nairobi
- In biodiversity, new BRs created – focus on training for Africa BR managers; collab with Barefoot College on training of grandmothers in solar engineering
- Worked, with leadership from Congo, on tri-basin initiative on sharing best practices in sust forest management (Congo basin, Amazon Basin, Borneo-Mekong)

- In Earth Sciences: Earth Science Education Initiative for Africa, working with universities, research inst's, earth-related industries to launch the African Network of Earth Sciences Institutions (ANESI) *Will be formally launched in Addis in early January*
- In science education, strengthen partnership with CERN, which focuses on secondary school physics teachers education, and digital libraries in Africa
- UNESCO Engineering Initiative, and Biodiversity Initiative developing well in exciting directions – lots of new partners
- Huge amount of effort towards Rio+20 with positive results
- Asked by SG to form new SAB

Second: Thoughts on new directions and strategic priorities

- Excited by the new CAP plan til 2023, lots of resonance with UNESCO
- Of course we will continue to develop areas of current strength, e.g Water, but will talk about connections to 2 of the main foci of UNESCO – Engineering Initiative, and Biodiversity Initiative. Both can be designed to work with partners for the better use of Africa's untapped resources for Africans
- Engineering
 - Infrastructure (esp for water); inclusive innovation; design for sustainable dev, women in engineering, attracting youth, lots of partners
- Biodiversity
 - IPBES, great historic op, in Africa, incl here in Congo tremendous op's
- Higher Education Transformation vital for both – “historic sweetspot”
- Tremendously excited about SKA.....

Thoughts from this visit to Republic of Congo: op for sust forest management

Since this is my first visit to Congo, the heart of the forest basin of Congo, the second ecological lung of the planet, I want to take this op to salute the leadership of the Congo on environmental issues.

The Republic of the Congo is one of the leaders worldwide in sustainable development of forest resources. More than half its forests are certified as FCS. 12% of the total land area is classified as conservations zones. Results are very impressive such as conservation of biodiversity, and the leadership here is to be congratulated.

The govt is working on the concept of protected areas as “living labs for sustainable dev”, a concept which we wholeheartedly endorse.

We also applaud the efforts at the national level to increase investment in STI

In closing

Very exciting time for STI in Africa – UNESCO dedicated to working together with member states and other partners in further strengthening our efforts.