

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

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

Website: www.au.int

**ORDINARY SESSION FOR
THE 2nd SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (STC-EST 2)
21-23 October 2017, CAIRO, EGYPT**

En

**Speech by Dr Mahama Ouedraogo
Ag. Director Human Resources, Science and Technology**

Excellences, Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman

I have the honour to welcome you all to this significant occasion of our second STC-EST ordinary session.

I thank you all for joining us for this meeting and to the Government of Egypt I say a big SHUKREN for hosting this august event and your generous hospitality.

Two years after the first STC, it is time to elect new Bureau, the establishment of the African Space Agency; the consideration of the draft statute of the African Union – International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), which will be endorsed by STC on Justice and Legal Affairs later this year and subsequently for adoption by the AU January 2018 Summit, as per our procedures and lastly an update on the General History of Africa.

As you might be aware, the development and adoption of the African Space Policy and Strategy has led to a renewed commitment to establish an African Space Agency, with Egypt offering 10 million US dollars in their proposal to host it. As we all know, the benefits of space cannot be overemphasised; to the laymen and laywomen present here like myself, allow me to state that space is far more important to Africa than it may seem at first glance. Strategic and practical use of space in communications, atmospheric activities, geographic mapping of our natural resources, remote sensing of unusual demographic activities and changes and so on are critical to our basic survival as well as prosperity.

These applications enable us for instance for navigation, weather forecasting, providing early warning for certain disasters in the natural and human environment, and quantification of our natural resource base. These are just a few benefits to assure us that space is not only about going to Mars and Jupiter! Mind you, outer space exploration has amazing spin-offs that immensely benefit human kind in medicine, nutrition and materials development.

In recognition of this fact, Outer space is one of the early flagship programmes for Agenda 2063. It therefore becomes expedient for us to capitalise on the opportunities offered to establish the African Space Agency.

I am pleased to say that since the last STC session, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) has been adopted by the January 2016 Summit. I look forward to hearing the progress you have made in domesticating this and our other continental strategies, into your national and regional policies and programmes.

Our meeting we will also focused on a key priority for the AU namely girls's education . A Fanti Proverb from Ghana says that 'If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation)'. Our aspiration in 'The Africa we want' is that by 2063, women will be empowered in all spheres with equal social, political and economic rights. Our Heads of States and Government have showed their commitment to educating girls and women by establishing the African Union International Centre for Girls and Women's Education (AU/CIEFFA). AU/CIEFFA aims to provide necessary policies, lines of actions, strategies and guidance to all relevant stakeholders to address gender equality, equity, leadership and advocacy in teaching and learning environments and is aligned with CESA 16-25. AU-CIEFFA's consolidated report on the work accomplished and its coordinating efforts for stronger collaboration with the RECs, specialized agencies, multi and bilateral institutions is available.

The meeting will also discuss the operationalization of the Pan African Virtual University (PAVU) that is one of AU's flagship projects that have been proposed for addressing the Agenda 2063. PAVU aims at accelerating development of human capital, science and technology and innovation through increasing access to tertiary and continuing education in Africa by capitalizing on the digital revolution and global knowledge; reaching large numbers of students and professionals in multiple sites simultaneously- anywhere, anytime.

-

Concerning the General History of Africa, the teaching guide and the learning resources have been finalized and will soon be used in schools across the continent. The ninth volume is presently being finalised. Steps have already been taken by the the Pan African University Council to make the General History of Africa as a compulsory module in all the study programmes.

This meeting also considers the state of the implementation of other AU decisions pertaining to other programmes in Education, Science and Technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The citizens of the African Continent including our partners expect more commitment from us on our programmes than ever before. They expect exceptional collaboration, funding and ground-breaking drives. They expect much action and less rhetoric. But perhaps more importantly, they want to see concrete measures in arriving at the African we want by 2063 and this sets the yardstick for urgency.

Agenda 2063 as we all know it, lays emphasis not only on Science, Technology and Innovation as major drivers and enablers for achieving development goals of the African Union and its Member States but also of the role that the women play in economic and social development of a country.

Our aspiration is to catalyze an Education and Skills revolution and actively promote science, technology, research and innovation, with the ultimate aim of building knowledge, human resources, capabilities and skills for Africa's future.

This is therefore the moment for all stakeholders and partners to forge together a common road map to fast track our jointly agreed programmes to meet the needs of our society.

In conclusion, **excellences, ladies and gentlemen**, this being an ordinary meeting we need to clearly create precedence by focusing on the agenda. This responsibility lies with us.

With these remarks I again thank you for your continuing support and laudable cooperation.