



**THE FIRST EXTRA-ORDINARY SUMMIT FOR THE
COMMITTEE OF
TEN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT (C10)
CHAMPIONING EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**

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Lilongwe, Malawi

Africa Agenda 2063 in Promoting Education, Science, Technology
and Innovation

Keynote Address of

H.E. MR. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT

Chairperson of the African Union Commission

Presented by

H.E. PROF. SARAH ANYANG AGBOR

Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology

Your Excellency, the President of Malawi, H.E. Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika,

Your Excellency, the President of Namibia, H.E. Mr. Hage Geingob

The Prime Minister of Senegal,

Your Excellencies here present in your different ranks and class representing your various countries,

And Your Excellencies seated in your different ranks and profiles,

The High Level Delegation, Excellencies Ambassadors here present,

The Speaker of the National Assembly,

High Level Delegate members, partners and Stakeholders in the field of Education, Science and Technology

And of course the very enthusiastic youth who are here applauding for us;

Distinguished guest,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the People and the Government of the Republic of Malawi for hosting this important event. I am delighted and honoured to be here today on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, to speak at this highest level of policy-making about a topic that is also crucial in the development of a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. This is the deliberate and consistent development of human capital through concerted investments in Education, Science and Technology.

Our premier continental development blueprint – Agenda 2063 envisions “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.” Our presence here today,

reinforces our commitment in catapulting Africa's development trajectory within the realms of Education, Science Technology and Innovation in Africa.

The Committee of Ten was constituted as part of the efforts to promote the development of Science, Technology and Innovation given its critical role to enhance the realization of economic growth on the continent.

Education, Science and Technology is now at the front and center of the development debate in Africa. As the continent with the youngest population in the world, a trend that is expected to grow, it is imperative that concrete measures are put in place to harness the demographic dividend this accords us. It offers a tremendous opportunity for Africa to build a valuable human capital base that will propel the economic transformation of our continent.

Excellencies,

This meeting is an opportunity for us to reflect on what has to be amplified at the highest policy levels to foreground our commitment. Under the overarching theme of '*Strengthening Education, Science and Technology in Africa*', we need to explore opportunities of enhancing investments through increased mobilization of resources if Agenda 2063 vision of an integrated Prosperous Africa, driven by its own citizens. It is important that we commit sufficient resources and adopt multi-sectorial approaches which is essential to realizing the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The African Union has developed policy interventions that we believe when implemented would strengthen outcomes in Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in Member States. The Strategies are anchored in Africa's development blueprint Agenda 2063 that specifically talks of an aspiration 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."These strategies include;

1. Continental Strategy for Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) to foster Youth Employment. It provides a strategic framework for the development of national policies to address the challenges of Technical and Vocational Training. The strategy addresses the cross-cutting issues of governance, innovation and creativity, employability and relevance, with the main thrust being a paradigm shift through development of TVET systems that prepare young people to be job creators rather than job seekers.
2. Continental Education Strategy for Africa. The strategy sets up a qualitative system of education and training to provide the African Continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and promotes sustainable development at the national, sub regional and continental levels. Among the guiding principles of the strategy is a holistic, inclusive and equitable education with good conditions for lifelong learning which is essential for sustainable development at the national, regional and continental levels.
3. The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024). This strategy aims at fostering social transformation and economic competitiveness through human capital development, innovation, value addition, industrialization and entrepreneurship. The strategy underscores the centrality of Science, Technology and Innovation in developing economies. It also emphasizes need to mobilise and widen the involvement of relevant segments of our population, through reaping its *demographic dividend*, especially the women and youth, whose energy, creativity and courage must drive its development agenda.

It is instructive to note that African countries are embarking on modernizing various sectors of their economies such as agriculture, industry, health, infrastructure among others based on science and technology development. The strategy is thus instrumental in transforming Africa into a modern and powerful continent with attractive economic growth rates and high returns on investment.

These are just part of the strategic policy initiatives through which AUC seeks to leverage opportunities in education, science technology and innovation, and contribute to the building of capacity across the various sectors that are crucial to development. Better developed scientific and technological capability will also help increase and diversify Africa's exports, as well as attract private sector investments, a critical antecedent to the creation of prosperity on our continent.

Other themes we believe are critical include enhancing Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) as this is the pillar for future learning. ECED has been identified by the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) as the next frontier of concerted development and focus if Africa is to realize sustained quality education and training. It is also imperative that Africa reengineers and have a renewed emphasis on the place of the Teacher in the economic development of the continent. Producing well-trained teachers, who will build the human capital of the next generation of young people in Africa, is a costly venture. It requires selective, coordinated investments to optimize limited resources and create synergies across sub-regional groups of countries. The need to build professionalism in teaching at all levels from early childhood to university level, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), as well as non-formal education may be the game changer in our quest to develop our young people and ultimately our nations. In addition, investments in science and technology at the tertiary level can help

provide better training for teachers and enable enhancing of research on national policies for science and technology at every level of the education system.

Another critical theme that I have to mention is the role of the Private Sector in enhancing outcomes in Education Science and Technology. Stronger links with the private sector is the best way to ensure that education meets the labour market needs. Students exiting the education systems must graduating with skills that reflect what employers actually need. They must effectively be the talent pipeline from which our industries grow. This is only possible if the private sector is better represented on our education governance structures, the vocational training programs, and in curriculum design. We must encourage private sector partners to offer apprenticeships, internships, and certification programs. These steps will help bridge the gap between what's being taught in our learning institutions and the realities of the job market.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, let me reiterate that our collective commitment must be followed by concrete actions to strengthen Education Science, Technology and Innovation, for the development of our people and our continent. Your being here today reflects in a powerful way the desire to see positive change in Africa. As we advance with this High-Level engagement, let us be encouraged to take bold and necessary reforms and measures that will strengthen Education, Science and Technology in Africa and also assist in attracting the private sector.

Being here in Malawi makes it clear that the Government of Malawi has a clear focus on measurable targets. Allow me to stress we must focus on: Results, Implementation, and Measurable Targets.

I thank you again for the opportunity to make these remarks, and I look forward to, as African Union Commission, working with you to implement the dynamic

outcomes. The African Union Commission is committed in providing leadership towards this end and need your support in encouraging other Member States to rededicate their efforts towards actions that will strengthen Education, Science and Technology outcomes in Africa. As part of the key influencers we have to ensure that critical linkages across the board from early schooling through tertiary - vocational education, university and ultimately industry.

Remember, I am not an African because I am born in Africa; I am an African because Africa is born in me. It is a duty, a responsibility for us to move the acceleration and implementable actions.

In the spirit of Ubuntu, let all key stakeholders, walk the talk of implementation of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation so that, the youth of Africa, our greatest Asset can be empowered with the right competence and skills for Sustainable Development.

Long Live the Republic of Malawi

Long Live the African Union

I thank you.