

Summit Recommendations

THE DECISIONS OF THE 2010 COMESA SUMMIT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Every year the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa chooses a theme to guide its activities for regional integration. Last year's theme was "Consolidating regional economic integration through value addition, trade and food security", reflecting the importance of agriculture in the region and the importance of public policy objectives such as ensuring food and nutrition security, eradicating rural poverty, and advancing agro-based industries. In addition, during the financial crisis and the recession, global trade experienced reduced demand for commodities which had a negative impact on COMESA regional exports, but regional demand was fairly maintained, with intra-COMESA trade continuing to grow phenomenally, which made a strong case for strengthening economic integration in the region. The region will continue to build on progress made last year, particularly under the framework of the CAADP (the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program), which COMESA countries are implementing as a regional priority.

This year had a new theme: "Harnessing Science and Technology for Development". The Chairman of the COMESA for this year, His Majesty King Mswati The Third, of the Kingdom of Swaziland, has placed great priority to coming up with concrete projects that will deliver tangible results for the region, under this theme. In his address to the Summit on the 30 August 2010 in his Lozitha Palace in the Kingdom of Swaziland, he underscored the critical importance of science and technology, and made some concrete proposals. He proposed the establishment of technology parks, the establishment of an ICT

Training and Skills Development Fund, and elaboration of a common curriculum for COMESA in ICT in order to introduce young people to ICT at an early age. And he undertook to do everything possible to ensure that the science and technology programs are implemented as agreed.

The Council of Ministers, at their meeting, reached concrete decisions, which the summit fully endorsed.

Below are some of the highlights drawn from the Report of the Twenty Eighth Meeting of the COMESA Council of Ministers, held in Ezulwini, Kingdom of Swaziland, 27-28 August 2010

Par 589 : The Council received a video recorded presentation from Calestous Juma, a Kenyan national who is a Professor of Development Practice at Harvard Kennedy University. Building on a paper circulated for the meeting as the background document for the agenda item on harnessing science and technology, the presentation underscored the importance of science and technology for development, and provided a historical perspective to cycles of technological revolutions over the years, as well as a critical discussion of contemporary issues that Africa faces in pursuing its development priorities, suggesting concrete ways forward, with examples, on key issues. Copies of the presentation are available.

589. The presentation made the following recommendations for establishing an institutional framework for harnessing science

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and technology in COMESA:

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- a. Creating a high-level committee of science, technology and innovation;
- b. Establishing offices of science, technology and innovation at the highest level of Government in the Member States and at the Secretariat to support the Governments of the Member States and the Secretary General respectively;
- c. Promoting regional academies of science, technology and engineering;
- d. Establishing an Innovation Award for outstanding accomplishment; and
- e. Setting up a professional or graduate school of regional integration.

590. In considering these recommendations, Council urged Member States to establish this institutional framework at the national level. Furthermore, the Secretariat should have an Advisory Office on Science and Technology.

591. In addition, the presentation made specific recommendations on harnessing science and technology in the region in specific areas, including the following, which Council, in its deliberations, noted were only examples of a wide array of possible initiatives:

- a. Available cost effective technology for promoting access to medical facilities particularly in rural areas should be utilised by Member States as appropriate, such as ultra-sound technology and health-services that can be facilitated by mobile telephony;
- b. In the area of education, innovative initiatives for promoting access to education material, such as the one-lap-top-per-child project, currently in use worldwide, including in Rwanda, should be championed by COMESA Member States;
- c. In the life sciences, COMESA should utilise available information generated through the

decoding and annotation of various genomes, to apply it in various areas such as developing crops that are adapted to the geographical conditions of the region;

- d. Noting that the available stock of technological knowledge increases exponentially, doubling every 12 months, and to take advantage of rapidly reducing costs of technological products, COMESA needs to develop mechanisms for harnessing relevant available technological knowledge world wide, but for this to be possible, mechanisms should be put in place for developing the technical capacity to know and absorb the available knowledge worldwide in order to be able to apply it as appropriate in dealing with challenges that face the region in key priority areas such as agriculture, infrastructure, information and communications, public health, clean energy and water, environmental protection, and trade and economics. In particular, there is need to mobilise and organise the region's scientists and engineers, and encourage incremental innovation by individuals and SMEs;

- e. In the area of telecommunications, the various undersea and land cable networks for connecting up Africa and connecting Africa to the rest of the world should be utilised by Member States and stakeholders including the private sector, bearing in mind that Africa has significantly contributed financially to installing them; and

- f. COMESA should utilise the wireless broad band access that is going to be delivered in the tropics around the world by the set of 16 satellites being launched.

592. The Council welcomed the presentation and commended the Secretariat for arranging the presentation from such a brilliant son of Africa. The Council extensively deliberated the presentation and adopted Decisions. In terms of the way forward regarding the institutional framework, the Council noted the need for inter-ministerial coordination in order to avoid uncoordinated approaches, and in this regard,

the vital importance of overarching executive leadership at a high level of Government. At the level of the secretariat, if the Office of Advisor on Science and Technology is set up, it should be structured in a manner that ensures mainstreaming of science and technology in all the other programs and that avoids a silo approach, and should have the primary objective of assisting Member States in their science and technology programs.

Decisions

593. The Council adopted the recommendations of the presentation and underscored the importance of mainstreaming science and technology in all COMESA programs and of adopting a cost effective approach that does not financially overburden the Member States and the Secretariat.

594. Furthermore, the Council urged Member States to:

- a. Promote the commercialisation of research and development, and put in place initiatives for improvement and standardisation of traditional products, innovating them into products that can be commercialised;
- b. Consider using biotechnology in the cropping sector in order to increase the outputs in the region, working with partners such as ECA and NEPAD, and taking into account the enormous biodiversity in the region;
- c. Dedicate at least 1% of the Gross Domestic Product to research and development, in line with the target set within the framework of the African Union;
- d. Consider adopting initiatives for promoting and utilising nano technology and science, given its application in various key areas such as medical treatment resulting from much higher levels of precision;
- e. Put in place concrete mechanisms for leveraging science and technology to address

the key priorities in the region;

- f. Establish data bases for identifying individuals with the right profiles that can assist the implementation of science and technology initiatives in COMESA;
- g. Harmonise and coordinate their policy frameworks on science and technology at the COMESA level; and
- h. Elaborate and adopt master plans and blue prints for leveraging technological knowledge, for harnessing science and technology, and for mobilising the required resources.

595. Council decided also that:

- a. Member States should consider establishing Science and Technology Committees and Advisory Office at the highest level of Government;
- b. The Secretariat should establish an Office of Advisor on Science and Technology; and
- c. An Annual Innovation Award should be established to recognise outstanding accomplishment.

Broad Band Wireless Interactive System

596. Regarding a Broad Band Wireless Interactive System, the Council received a power point presentation, which was presented to the Fourth Meeting of the Ministers of Infrastructure at its meeting on 29-30 July 2010. The Report of that Meeting, reference CS/ID/MIN/IV/2, in paragraphs 384 to 388, provides the deliberations by the Infrastructure Ministers and a recommendation on this matter.

Recommendation

597. The Council noted the deliberations of the Infrastructure Ministers on this matter and endorsed the recommendation that pilot projects be developed to deploy the COBIS system in selected COMESA Member

States following which when successfully implemented can be expanded for region-wide deployment.

DIRECTIVES OF THE COMESA HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT, ON HARNESSING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Heads of State and Government as well deliberated this matter of harnessing science and technology, and listened to the video presentation of Professor Calestous Juma. They directed as follows, endorsing the Decisions of the Ministers:

Member States should:

- a. Where possible, pool resources and combine efforts to establish common science and technology parks;
- b. Promote the commercialisation of research and development, and put in place initiatives for improvement and standardisation of traditional products, innovating them into products that can be commercialised;
- c. Consider using biotechnology in the cropping sector in order to increase the outputs in the region, working with partners such as ECA and NEPAD, and taking into account the enormous biodiversity in the region;
- d. Dedicate at least 1% of the Gross Domestic Product to research and development, in line with the target set within the framework of the African Union;
- e. Consider adopting initiatives for promoting and utilising nano technology and science, given its application in various key areas such as medical treatment resulting from much higher levels of precision;

- f. Develop a common curriculum in ICT that enables COMESA citizens to be exposed to ICT at an early age;
- g. Create a central fund that will concentrate on availing financial resources towards funding programs for ICT training and skills development;
- h. Establish data bases for identifying individuals with the right profiles that can assist the implementation of science and technology initiatives in COMESA;
- i. Harmonise and coordinate their policy frameworks on science and technology at the COMESA level; and
- j. Elaborate and adopt master plans and blue prints for leveraging technological knowledge, for harnessing science and technology, and for mobilising the required resources.

In addition:

- k. Member States should consider establishing Science and Technology Committees and Advisory Offices at the highest level of Government;
- l. The Secretariat should establish an Office of Advisor on Science and Technology;
- m. An Annual Innovation Award should be established to recognise outstanding accomplishment; and
- n. Member States should adopt a policy for harnessing science and technology.

Furthermore, the Heads of State and Government endorsed the COMESA Policy on Intellectual Property Rights and Cultural Industries as adopted by the Ministers.

Namibia's President Pohamba receives the FANRPAN 2010 Food and Security Policy Leadership Award

COMESA Secretary General Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya who is also the Chairman of the Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) Board, participated in the recent FANRPAN 2010 Annual High-Level Regional Food Security Policy Dialogue held in Windhoek, Namibia from 30 August to 3 September 2010. The theme of the five day 2010 Dialogue was, 'Livestock and Fisheries in a Changing Climate'. In the course of the FANRPAN Conference, Mr. Ngwenya officiated at the Annual Food Security Policy Leadership Awards Ceremony during which, His Excellency Hifikepunye Lucas Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, was awarded the 2010 FANRPAN Food Security Policy Leadership Award.

In the acceptance statement read on his behalf by the Namibian Minister for Education Abraham Iyambo, who was on hand to receive the award, President Pohamba expressed gratitude to FANRPAN for bestowing the award on him in recognition of his contribution to national, regional and continental food security, particularly in the area of fisheries and marine resources. He further pledged his continued support to the agenda for alleviating poverty and hunger in the region. Previous winners of this award include His Excellency Professor Ngwazi Bingu wa Mutharika, President of Malawi (2008) in recognition for exceptional leadership in steering Malawi out of food insecurity within a short period of time, and



Sindiso Ngwenya presenting the 2010 FANRPAN Food Security Policy Leadership Award to His Excellency Hifikepunye Lucas Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia.

His Excellency Armando Emilio Guebuza, President of Mozambique for spearheading the recent Green Revolution in his country (2009).

Over 230 delegates comprising farmers, private sector, policy makers, women, researchers, academics, development partners and other related experts involved in the African food, agriculture, natural resources and the climate agenda, converged in Windhoek for the FANRPAN 2010 Dialogue to share country lessons and experiences and, to identify opportunities and best practices for livestock and fisheries development in the COMESA and SADC regions. Threats and challenges posed by climate change on livestock and fisheries development were discussed, and followed by recommendations to support mitigation and adaptation in a changing climate.

The conference reviewed the process

and status on implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) for the two regions. Significantly, the need to expedite the process in member states that have not yet signed the CAADP Compact was noted.

Delegates were briefed on the need to consider implementing the Regional CAADP Compact in the context of the Tripartite Framework involving COMESA, EAC and SADC, as recommended by the COMESA Ministers of Agriculture Meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia on 12-15 July 2010. In addition, the role of the private sector, farmers and civil society, in the entire CAADP implementation process and, their contribution to investment in the national programmes was emphasized, over and above the need for sustained political will and donor supported agriculture investment.

COMESA Stand receives Excellence Recognition Award at the Swaziland International Trade Fair

The COMESA Secretariat participated at the Swaziland International Trade Fair which took place on 27 August to 6 September 2010 at the Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre in Manzini. The Swaziland 2010 International Trade Fair took place alongside other important events that were taking place in the country, namely, the Fourteenth Summit of the COMESA Authority and the "Umhlanga" or Reed Dance which is the premier Swazi cultural activity for maidens. These three combined events made Swaziland a hive of activities as they reinforced each other.

The Swazi public was very keen to know more about COMESA when they visited the COMESA Secretariat Stand at the Trade Fair.

The Trade Fair was officially opened by the Right Honourable DR Sibusiso Dlamini Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland on Saturday, 28 August 2010. Dr Dlamini emphasised the need for Swaziland to develop its human resources in order to spur the country into first world status since the country is not so much endowed with natural resources. He then related this to the theme of the Trade Fair which was, "Facilitating Trade and Investment through Science and Technology". Dr Dlamini appreciated the presence of a number of COMESA countries at the Fair. The COMESA Member States that participated at the Fair were: Burundi, Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"I am pleased to note that this year's trade fair is taking place when the country is hosting COMESA Heads of State and Government Summit alongside the business forum", Noted the Prime Minister. He urged the businesspeople to network and forge links leading to productive partnerships. Furthermore, the Prime Minister proposed the setting up of science and technology parks in Swaziland to facilitate research and

product development and creativity that would spur the country to first world status. He then emphasised the importance of intellectual property to encourage creativity and protect innovation so as to allow for the reaping of the fruits of ingenuity.

During the days of the Trade Fair, the COMESA Stand was visited by a number of dignitaries, among which were King Mswati III, the Queen Mother and Emakhosikati. The Deputy Swazi Prime Minister, too, Mr Themba Masuku visited the stand. Other dignitaries that visited the stand include the Zambian Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Hon. Felix Mutati; the Zimbabwean Minister of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion, Hon. Tapiwa Mashakada; The Zimbabwean Ambassador to Zambia and Permanent Representative to COMESA, Mr Lovemore Mazemo; President of the PTA Bank, Dr Michael Gondwe; The CEO of ATI Mr Otieno; the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry in Zambia, Dr Buleti Nsemukila; and the Acting Executive Director of FEMCOM, Mrs Katherine Ichoya.

The general public who visited the stand were very keen to know more about COMESA and the COMESA Staff present explained to them the genesis of COMESA, its objectives, programmes and benefits that countries benefit from their membership to the organisation. The benefits that Swaziland derives from its membership to COMESA were highlighted including the exports of sugar, refrigerators and coca cola concentrates under the COMESA trade regime. The Trade Fair was an important avenue to disseminate information about COMESA and to explain some of the myths that the people had about COMESA.

On 6 September 2010 the Manager of the Swaziland International Trade Fair, Mr

Sibusiso Mnisi announced stand excellence awards which were presented by the Acting Minister of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Pastor Lindiwe Dlamini. COMESA Secretariat was among the Foreign Exhibitors that received the Stand Excellence Recognition Award.

FEEDBACK

Dear Mr Sindiso Ngwenya,

My name is Olanyo Joseph, a Journalist from East African Business Week, Kampala-Uganda.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and express my appreciation and gratitude, for facilitating my attending the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Business Forum and Summit in Manzini, Swaziland.

My meeting with you during the African Union Summit in Kampala, is yielding fruits for my career. During the COMESA Business Forum in Esibayeni Lodge, I chaired Session IV on "Making Science and technology work for the poor". I am happy to inform you that the feedback I got was good. They said it was a job well done.

This is the first time I am given an opportunity to chair a session in such a big event like this one. I learnt a lot from the guest speakers and questions, observations and recommendations we came up with at the end of it all.

I was also able to interact with various COMESA delegates from whom I got valuable information that can be used in my articles. COMESA information is still limited in East Africa and my articles will help in informing and educating the people in my region. I was the only Journalist from Uganda and for this I appreciate.

I will be sending you links of my COMESA articles as and when they appear so that you can be reading them.

I will also keep some copies of the newspaper articles and find a way of sending them to you. Once again, thank you.

Kind regards
Joseph Olanyo
Journalist
East African Business Week