

Report of the African Regional Preparatory Meeting
2013 Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council

Summary

As part of the Annual Ministerial R

There is a need for Governments to create and nurture an “ecosystem for innovation” – a comprehensive enabling environment for innovation.

- f* A sound policy framework at the national and regional levels is necessary to fully enable the development of innovative capacities.
- f* Close collaboration is needed between universities, governments and

I. Introduction

In July 2013, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will hold its seventh Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) in Geneva, Switzerland. The Review will focus on 'Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals

On 14 March 2013, a Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa was convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in cooperation with the Japanese Patent Office. It was hosted by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The meeting brought together a diverse group of nearly 100 regional stakeholders from Governments, civil society, the private sector and UN system to discuss how the promotion of enhanced science, technology and innovation (STI) policies and targeted interventions can further the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and ensure sustainable development throughout Africa. The meeting provided an important opportunity for African countries to contribute to the AMR, including by sharing best practices and lessons learned over the course of three roundtable discussions.

II. Proceedings of the regional preparatory meeting

Mr. Toshihiro Kose, Director General, Trademark, Design and Administrative Affairs Department, Japan Patent Office, Ministry of the Economy, Trade and Industry, stressed that strong innovation systems are key to development in Africa and achieving the MDGs. He explained the objectives of the WIPO/Japan Fund¹ for Africa and LDCs: to raise people

development and application of agricultural innovation. Education is essential for innovation. Children must be encouraged to create and innovate from a young age. Science education and advancing digital literacy should be an integral part of education curricula. Increased investments and partnerships in research and development are important, along with complementary policy frameworks for developing, financing and marketing

science and engineering; develop education and training structures that are less rigid and that better emphasize practical knowledge and applications; and implement more robust and relevant STI training opportunities. It was also recognized that there are many young or “hidden” innovators not associated with universities. It is important to identify such innovators, such as through open innovation competitions, and establish a specific framework to support them that is outside of the university system.

D. Roundtable Discussion 2: Local Knowledge, Innovation and Sustainable Development: Country Case Studies

This roundtable was chaired by

Molecular Biology Project conducted by the Ministry of Scientific Research and the city of scientific research and technology in Alexandria, among others.

Prof. Mr. Drissa Diallo, National Institute of Public Research Department of Traditional Medicine, Mali spoke on Mali's efforts since 1968 to add value to traditional medicines and be a driver of development. He informed the meeting that at present, the National Institute of Public Research Department of Traditional Medicine employs approximately 40 people that form part of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of

E. Roundtable Discussion 3: Key Policy Messages for the 2013 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review

This roundtable was chaired by Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, and Secretary-General for the International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

H.E. Prof. Ita-Okon Bassey Ewa, Minister for Science and Technology, Nigeria, presented sev

development and investment. Yet this good news has not solved all development problems. To continue on a positive path, it is crucial for African countries to identify a fair and inclusive role of innovation for development. Innovation needs to be valued as a pillar of development, which is currently not the case, and innovators need to be encouraged and supported. A significant challenge exists in promoting innovation through higher education in addition to promoting it among those not associated with institutions of higher education, such as those working in small businesses. He emphasized that Africa requires a culture of innovation. Its leaders need to define a vision and integrate it into national and regional STI strategies, and IP needs to be given its due as a major key to a successful culture of innovation and development.

Participants responded with questions regarding the panelists' thoughts on sharing human resource within the African continent. Barriers exist to the sharing of human resources, which also becomes a barrier to innovations sharing. The panelists acknowledged the challenges. One recommendation was to collectively establish a strategy for resource sharing, particularly with rega

relevance of innovation to the achievement of the MDGs, the 2015 d

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