

JOINT STATEMENT

PRE-CHOGM SYMPOSIUM ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mbarara, Uganda, 13th to 15th September, 2007

(Drafted and adopted: 15 Sept 2007).

PREAMBLE:

We, the participants of the pre-CHOGM Symposium on Science and Technology, hosted by the Mbarara University of Science and Technology, and drawn from academia, parliament, civil society, industry, and partners in development, with participation from the following nations; the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Republics of Rwanda, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Uganda, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom, convened from 13 to 15 September 2007, in Mbarara, Uganda, under the frameworks of Uganda's first National Science Week and the Commonwealth People's Forum, to deliberate on the subject of the contribution of science and technology to social transformation;

BELIEVING that a nation's ability to address its challenges, solve its problems, and initiate and sustain economic growth, thereby transforming society, depends substantially on its indigenous capabilities in science, technology, and innovation;

CONVINCED that capacity in science, technology and innovation is an essential pre-requisite to successfully addressing and attaining the Millennium Development Goals;

REALISING that universities and institutes of higher and tertiary education, and institutions of research and development, both public and private, are central to the process of generation, dissemination and transfer of scientific knowledge, and the provision of skilled human resources, and that higher education institutes are therefore fundamental to a nation's development.

REAFFIRMING our commitments to:

- The declarations of the meeting of experts and the African Ministerial Council of Science and Technology, convened by the African Union in Cairo, 2006;
- The undertakings of the African Union summit of Heads of State held in Addis Ababa in January 2007;
- The attainment of the declarations and objectives of the African Union's Second Decade of Education;
- The Millennium Development Goals and to striving to promote and reach the necessary levels of scientific and technological capacity for attainment of these MDGs;
- The flagship programmes of NEPAD's 2005 Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology in Africa.

RECOGNISING the strong science base of many Commonwealth countries, the longstanding ties between science councils and other scientific institutions of the Commonwealth, and the tradition of technology transfer, partnership, professional exchange and educational cooperation between Commonwealth nations;

RECALLING that the Commonwealth has from time to time made important and timely scientific and technological assessments, for example on climate change and the digital divide, that the Commonwealth for a number of years supported a Commonwealth Science Council charged with strengthening scientific and technological cooperation and that the need for work of this nature has increased;

WE CALL UPON:

THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA to:

REVIEW the process of reform of the education sector at all levels, including the strengthening of technical education;

CONTINUE to work towards the strengthening of capacity in science, technology and innovation, including the establishment of a Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation;

MOVE TOWARDS a self-sustaining science, technology and innovation system;

PROVIDE incentives to universities and the private sector to promote partnerships, and to encourage and reward quality and excellence;

EXTEND affirmative action for women to enable increased participation in science- and technology-related training;

ADOPT appropriate policy frameworks for the promotion of science, technology and innovation at national levels and creating an environment for innovation;

ENCOURAGE the higher education and private and industrial sectors to engage explicitly with one another for constructive and transparent articulation of the market's demand for scientific and technological knowledge and skilled human resources on the one side, and the provision of such resources on the other;

AVAIL themselves of the readiness of the partners in development to contribute to these processes.

THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT at their meeting in Kampala, Uganda, 23-25 November 2007 on the theme "Transforming Commonwealth societies to achieve political, economic and human development" to:

RENEW their commitment to scientific and technological innovation as a key to the transformation of societies, and in particular to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, by strengthening south-south and north-south cooperation, enhancing transfer of technology and knowledge; and extending Commonwealth networks of science and technology professionals, including incentives for utilization of scientists and private sector in the diaspora;

PROMOTE through the Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and other Commonwealth institutions and mechanisms an enhanced role for Commonwealth universities and other institutions of higher education, as well as scientific research institutions, so that they can play an effective role in science, technology and engineering education and development, in particular in Africa;

DEVELOP incentive schemes that attract, encourage and sustain private sector participants in expanding tertiary education particularly in science and technology;

CONSIDER the re-establishment of a Commonwealth science and technology forum, such as a Ministerial Conference;

REAFFIRM the commitments of all governments to commit not less than 1% of GDP to research and development in science and technology.

PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT to:

CONTINUE their commitment to contribute in partnership with Africa to the process of development of science and technology for the betterment of its peoples and for social and economic transformation.

IN CONSIDERATION OF THE FOREGOING we, the participants of the pre-CHOGM Science and Technology Symposium, through our various institutions and in our various individual capacities, commit ourselves to advocate for the implementation of the resolutions above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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