



Opening Remarks by Professor Adipala Ekwamu, Executive Secretary of
RUFORUM

at the Opening Ceremony of the

Workshop to Develop an Implementation Strategy and Plan for the
Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa

15 September, 2015, Lilongwe, Malawi

Your Excellency the Commissioner, Human Resource, Science and
Technology of the African Union Commission

The Permanent Secretary for Higher Education, Ministry of Education,
Science & Technology

The RUFORUM Vice Board Chair & Vice Chancellor, LUANAR

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am indeed honored to make these remarks at the opening of our two day meeting to develop **an Implementation Strategy and Plan for the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa Priority Area 1 which focuses on Eradication of Hunger and Achieving Food Security.**

In this regard, let me first and foremost thank the Government of Malawi, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for accepting to host this meeting. In the same token let me take the opportunity to thank His Excellency, Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, the President of the Republic of Malawi for his exemplary support and commitment to the advancement of Higher Education, Science and Technology in Malawi and Africa at large.

In a special way, I recognize and welcome the presence of His Excellency the Commissioner for Human Resource, Science and Technology at the African Union, and his delegation to this meeting. We value your presence and indeed it inspires us to intensify efforts for contributing to achieving Agenda 2063.

I also welcome and recognize the presence of other participants to this planning meeting. Thank you very much for honouring our invitations.

Ladies and Gentlemen: In July 2014, RUFORUM signed an MOU with African Union Commission to support Implementation of STISA with particular focus to STISA Priority 1. RUFORUM was specifically tasked to assist in the development of STISA Priority I implementation Strategy and Plan. Clearly this meant working with a diversity of actors hence the broad representation in this meeting. Since then RUFORUM has hosted three regional consultative meetings to brainstorm on the needed actions to support this process and also make recommendations to strengthen

Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa. The last Meeting, held in Namibia this August 2015 and attended by Vice Chancellors and other representatives from 22 African countries and others from outside the continent made the following observations;

1. STISA provided an overarching (broad) framework upon which several other initiatives and frameworks can be aligned to support achievement of Agenda 2063;
2. Successful Implementation of STISA Priority 1 will require not only investment and focus on agricultural sector but also other sectors and other STISA Priority Areas
3. It will be important to ensure close synergy and operations of all the 6 STISA Priority Areas
4. As articulated in *Vision 2063-Africa We Want-* Higher Education needs to be strengthened to support the various Priority areas. Further that strengthening Higher Education will be critical for all the 6 Priority areas, and as such it was recommended that AUC considered developing a companion document to clearly show how Higher Education would be harnessed, strengthened and mainstreamed to support all the six STISA Priority Areas
5. The Namibia meeting welcomed the positive efforts by the African Union Commission to put Higher Education in the Agenda of African Heads of State and Government. In this regard the Namibia meeting welcomed the formation of the 10 Heads of States to spearhead issues of Higher Education in Africa, and the role His Excellency

President Arthur Peter Mutharika is playing to Champion the cause of Higher Education in Africa. While welcoming these positive developments, the Namibia meeting urged African Union Commission to work with African Heads of State and Government to come up with a Declaration committing needed action by African Governments to strengthen Higher Education in Africa.

I propose that we consider some of the above issues as we deliberate in this meeting. We invited you all because we value your experience and expertise and we believe you would think ‘out of the box and without carrying any institutional baggage’ to help design STISA Priority I Implementation Strategy and Plan. Fortunately, we have the draft overall STISA implementation Strategy and Plan and this should help guide and enrich our deliberations.

Once more thank you for coming and we look forward to your active participation.