



Speech by Hon. Prof. Emmanuel Fabiano, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Government of the Republic of Malawi

at

The Opening Ceremony of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) Planning Workshop for Developing an Implementation Plan for Priority Area 1 of STISA

15 September 2015, Lilongwe, Malawi

All Protocols observed:

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome each one of you to our country, Malawi. Malawi is fondly known as the 'warm heart of Africa' and I hope that you will take this opportunity to explore all the attractions that the country has to offer and come to agree that this is truly the Warm heart of Africa. Welcome to Malawi.

I am pleased to be officiating at the opening ceremony of this important workshop whose objective is to develop an Implementation Strategy and

Plan for the Priority Area 1 of the STISA 2024. As many of you may be aware, the STISA 2024 was approved by African Heads of State and Government last year in 2014 as a key Framework for ensuring that Africa can deliver on its own vision for a prosperous and healthy Africa as encapsulated in the African Union Agenda 2063.

Agenda 2063 envisions “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.” The STISA has been designed into five discrete but interlinked 10 year plans that would support the achievement of the Agenda 2063 vision. The first of the five ten year Plans, STISA 2024, will be the subject of our discussion this morning. More specially, STISA 2024 identifies six priority areas to which joint action is required from key stakeholders and this meeting will work to provide clarity on implementation targets and arrangements for STISA 2024 Priority Area one on ***eradicating hunger and achieving food security***.

I would like to say a little bit more about Malawi and our own aspirations for Science and Technology. Malawi’s mandate for the implementation of science and technology programs, as well as those related to higher education are in the ambit of my Ministry, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Malawi is a country that relies heavily on agricultural production and a majority of our population relies on agriculture for employment opportunities. Malawi is particularly concerned about how to ensure that its population can move out of poverty and that they can enjoy a prosperous and healthy life. The

Government of Malawi has highlighted education and higher education as key components of a broader strategy to enhance Malawi's economic growth. We believe that we need to make the most use of science and technological innovation to change the path that we are currently on. We have immense challenges since we still rely largely on rainfall for agricultural production, and as climate change begins to disfigure rainfall patterns, our populations are increasingly being threatened by hunger and we need to look at how to overcome these challenges. The requisite human resource and institutional capacity is also quite limited.

We are thus pleased that you have decided to host this meeting in Malawi. I want to assure you that the Government of the Republic of Malawi is very keen to see science and technology used to ensure achievement of our broader goals- particularly economic growth.

At the outset, I think an important issue will be at national level, how to enhance the joint working across the different implicated sectors of education, science and technology, agricultural and other sectors in Malawi – and of course other countries for STISA. I am pleased that our colleagues from the Ministry of Agriculture are present in this meeting and we look forward to finding mechanisms to strengthen how we work to improve our outcomes. STISA Priority 1 must also address issues of nutrition sector, which require also engagement with both the Ministry of Agriculture and Health, and others.

Thus, an important value addition of the STISA to our work will be to help bridge the divide between agriculture, education, science and technology. We are committed to strengthening the existing linkages between our universities and agricultural institutions, including the ministry of agriculture. We hope that the education sector can increasingly support and respond to support the agriculture sector.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) in particular for the support that has come through RUFORUM from other universities in the region to support our higher education sector. You may not be aware, but our President, His Excellency Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, the President of the Republic of Malawi, has committed to work towards strengthening the higher education, science and technology sector, not only in Malawi but also to working with other Heads of State to support higher education in Africa. In this light, His Excellency will be organizing a meeting at the United Nations General Assembly in New York to advocate for strengthening the Higher Education sector in Africa. We will also be organizing next month a meeting of about 15 Ministers of Education, Science and Technology and will table this agenda at that meeting.

I thank His Excellency the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology for working with the Government of Malawi and for moving the STISA agenda forward. This initiative is important to ensure that we can meet our broader visions, particularly eradicating poverty.



I wish to once again thank you for finding time to attend this important meeting and hope that you will update me on the outcome of the meeting in due course. I am keen to work with you in moving this discussion forward.

I now have the honor to declare this meeting open.