

Mozambican Minister Urges for End to Donor Dependence

By Mireny John

A Mozambican Minister has said Africa will stay behind in developing science and technology if the continent continues to over-rely on donors as major funders of this sector.

Venancio Simao Massingue, Mozambican Minister in charge of Science and Technology has said that Africa can especially support development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) out of its own fiscal efforts, as long as right strategies and policies are put in place.

Massingue was speaking to journalists on the sidelines of the 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union taking place in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

Mozambique, for instance, he said, has launched an ambitious US\$ 25 million Science and Technology Park that would be devoted to research and business incubators for ICT related sub-sectors.

He said the move is part of the larger decade and half long Africa Information Society Initiative (AISII) championed by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and aimed at integrating ICTs to catalyze Africa's socio-economic development.

The Mozambican government has recently won an award for spearheading e-government, that is, deployment of ICTs on its governance structures in order to improve service delivery.

Identity cards in that country can now be obtained electronically using biometrics, and the country would soon issue passports online once the national database is substantially improved.

He said its funding mechanism is set to be sustainable, as it is hinged on public private partnership model (PPP).

"The private company hired to provide the services gets its income as a percentage premium based on the number of IDs it manages to deliver. It is therefore an in-built incentive for the company to deliver as many IDs as possible, and earn more", he said.

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