

UNECA roots for science R&D

By: David Muwanga

Article summary:

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has planned a five day conference to revive scientific Research and Development (R&D) in Africa. The conference to be held under the theme Science with Africa aims to explore how African science-based entities can collaborate with participate in international science research and development projects, said UNECA Director for ICTS and Science and Technology Division (ISTD), Aida Opoku-Mensah.

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"The whole idea of organising this conference is to push and stimulate research and development in African scientists that has declined since 1970s," Ms Opoku-Mensah told HANA. "...in collaboration with other the Intelligence in Science (ISC) organisation of Brussels, we want research and development to be done by and with Africans and the conference will be held on the themes that we want revived."

Opoku-Mensah said on the science side UNECA is focused on energy, transport, health, life sciences, information and communication technology, agriculture and food security climate change and water.

"With innovation, we want research revived in intellectual property rights and patents, technology transfer methodologies, technology transfer centres and innovation networks centers for Africa."

The Science with Africa conference will be an opportunity for African scientist to visit exhibits presented by science and technology institutions, business, agencies and associations on research and innovations in new products and initiatives.

"We feel these areas have to be seriously considered because there is no country that has attained development without R&D," Opoku-Mensah observed.

ISC Director Declan Kirrane decried a lack of collaboration in ongoing research initiatives in Africa.

"We want them to come together and put research and development on top of the African agenda...through private public partnerships," he said.

Opoku-Mensah said that UNECA would continue with advocacy to promote research in Africa. She noted that Participation at GKP is part of UNECA's advocacy.

"We want to see more African countries come on board and get involved in research and development, so that when issues of climate change are being discussed, they already have empirical evidence."

Science with Africa is scheduled to be held in March 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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