

### **ES's closing remarks**

Honourable Ministers and delegates, distinguished experts, Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen we have come to the end of a long, demanding, tasking and above all very productive three days.

I am sure you will agree with me that this CODIST-1 meeting has provided a platform for reviewing challenges and proposing home-grown solutions pertaining to Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Geoinformation, Science and Technology in relation Africa's development challenges.

I know that for my colleagues in the ICT, Science and Technology Division that the session outcomes will go a long way into determining priorities to appropriately define their work programme in line with the dictates of our member States.

### **Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,**

Although I could not be with you in some of your sessions, I am reliably informed and can discern from your final recommendations that the discussions were indeed rich and deepened our understanding of the centrality of STI and how we can let science and technology play a pivotal role for us to not only address the current challenges, but to lay a foundation for long-run development. We now have to accord greater importance to the power of knowledge, science and technology which has far-reaching effects.

I am delighted to note that most of the challenges I posed at the beginning of this session were addressed and the onus is now upon us to ensure that these challenges are addressed – *from talking to action, from policy to implementation*. I also note that some of the major components towards the delivery of knowledge societies were addressed in the well attended pre-conference events.

As we all know the current global financial crisis has seriously shaken the confidence in the global financial system and precipitated a sharp slowdown in economic activities, with the prospect of a prolonged recession. The scale of challenges facing Africa in the area of science and technology is huge but I am confident that as evidenced by your commitment and hard work during the past three days, we will be able to overcome this together.

Our top priority is “to work together” to “tide over difficulties” as no country is an island and in this global crisis, no country can afford to be. I am happy that that this meeting did indeed draw on lessons learnt from the global financial crisis and how science and technology can be scaled up in our countries.

Our confidence to face the global financial crisis should rely on science, knowledge and talented Africans to help domestic enterprises resolve difficulties, improve management, develop new products and create new technology. We have the opportunity to invest out of the crisis in terms of the delivery of quality education, research and innovation addressing sustainability problems such as the enabling environment and also investing in frontier science and new technologies. This will entail transforming the well-diarized continent’s potential into real tangible benefits for the people.

I would like to reassure you that we in the ECA will continue to play our role in supporting member States in the formulation of policies and programmes that foster economic sustainability leading to the transformation of the lives of poor communities in the continent. We will continue to be your active companion in your efforts to play a more active and positive role in your societies.

In closing, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for their support in facilitating the hosting of this meeting, Hon Ministers here present, distinguished delegates, parliamentarians, policymakers and entrepreneurs scientists, scholars, and international research partners, for the commitment and unwavering determination you have shown during these last few days.

Let me at this stage also express appreciation to our partners who were supportive in the organization and success of this meeting. These include the numerous Development Partners and sponsors of the various events and activities including the Governments’ of Finland and Canada, USAID, UNAIDs, UNCTAD, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, Internet Society, Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), FugroMaps, Geomark systems, Esri, Japan Aerospace Agency, Hagbes Pvt Ltd, Ethiopian Airlines, Microsoft, Alcatel Lucent, Jupiter and Harmony Hotels, Ethiopian Insurance Corporation, Ernst and Young and our international media partners SABC and Africable. The outcome of your tireless effort bears itself out in successfully meeting the intended CODIST-1 objectives.

I wish you all God's guidance and safe journey as you travel back home.

I thank you.