

Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya advised on reaching MDG goals

BY DAVID MUKWANA

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA - EAC and other African countries can only achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) if they are fully committed to the implementation of the country's strategic visions.

"These countries including other African countries have adopted country Vision programmes targeted to be achieved at different times but it will only be possible for them to achieve the MDG's if they are fully committed to the implementation of the vision's," advised the director

general and chief executive officer of Nigeria's national office for technology acquisition and promotion (NOTAP) Dr. Umar Bindir said in a keynote address on the theme "Linkages of Science and Technology to enhance Innovation for Sustainable socio-economic development in Africa".

This was at the opening of a four-day Science With Africa (SWA) conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia last week on the theme "Science, Innovation and Entrepreneurship".

He said Rwanda has adopted a vision on the Information Communication Technology (ICT) revolution, Uganda is

adopting the industrialisation strategy while Kenya is implementing the vision 2030 while Nigeria's has Vision 2020.

He said the three countries are projected to join other developed countries if they effectively implement their country's vision's. "The vision's can further be enhanced by each of the countries in Africa to develop science, technology and innovation (STI) policies and clearly articulate what is implementable within the country's resources.

"They must set up vibrant science, technology and innovation systems that bring together all stakeholders into one building and provide a budgetary provi-

sion of one percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) annually," he said. The conference organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) was aimed at exploring policies, measures and mechanisms to meet Africa's development goals by harnessing the potential of entrepreneurship and innovation to transform new ideas into improved products, processes and businesses.

He said that African countries have for long lagged behind due to lack of coherent STI policies thus forcing them to rely on knowledge provided by foreigners. "The posture of STI in Africa is that each of the three

faces its own direction and that is why you find mechanics being called engineers because people do not know or see what scientists are doing," he explained.

He warned scientists against taking themselves as highly qualified, highly skilled, developers of concepts and pilot projects when what they are doing is not relevant to the people.

"This is the very reason why development partners give us funds and they don't see what we do with the funds resulting into our people remaining in poverty, practicing primitive agriculture, with outdated storage and food marketing facilities among other problems," he said.