

DOING BUSINESS

Science can propel Africa- Ethiopia



African countries should develop new scientific solutions to respond to the rapidly growing population

BY EABW REPORTER

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA Ethiopian Minister of Science and Technology Junejdi Saddo has projected that the country's economy is estimated to grow at not less than 10% in the next five years.

"Africa has recorded economic growth of five percent of the gross domestic product despite the global financial crisis that hit the world recently but it is projected to grow at seven percent by the year 2011," he said.

"Ethiopia's economy has also recorded tremendous growth and it is projected to grow at not less than 10% in the next five years," Saddo said at the opening of the Science With Africa conference at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia last week.

He said they are finalizing the country's science technology and innovation policy that will provide a solid ground for the two digit growth rate in the next five years.

Saddo said 10 years ago world leaders proclaimed to the achievement of the

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed at improving the living standards of the people by 2015.

"We are five years away from the scheduled year of 2015 and African countries have taken various steps to ensure these are achieved," he said.

"However we need to redesign our education systems, improve energy supply and the infrastructure, water, transport systems and communication in order to reach the many unreachable people in various parts of our countries."

"Science, Technology and Innovation remain the key instruments that we can adopt in order to achieve these objectives and implement the projects," Saddo said.

Saddo said it was high time Africa paid more attention to the transformation of societies through the adoption of science and technology innovations to accelerate technological and scientific developments and eradicate poverty to ensure security.

"We need to reduce poverty which requires us to find new scientific solutions to meet the needs of our people. We need a strong national system that

can transform and promote the STI and linkages between universities, researchers and the private sector," Saddo told participants.

"It is therefore important that this conference comes up with tools that we can use to meet the challenges that are hindering Africa's development," he advised.

Dar es Salaam University Lecturer Prof. Sospeter Mubongo warned that African countries should develop new scientific solutions to respond to the rapidly growing population.

"We need accelerated utilization of science and technology and innovation to meet the increasing needs of the growing African population," he said.

He said Africa's population now stands at one billion people and soon will be following China's traces than 1 billion people.

"It is good there is political will to invest in research and development with Algeria committing one percent of its gross domestic product to research and development, Tanzania is planning to spend \$200m while South Africa is investing 0.3% of her GDP," he explained.