

Your Excellency (Minister of the Ethiopian Ministry of Science and Technology, represented by Mr. Shumu Tefera)

Your Excellency Professor Jean-Pierre Ezin, Commissioner, Human Resources and S&T, African Union (represented by Mrs. Mrs. Vera Ngosi)

Mrs. Vera Ngosi, Director, (AUC-HRST) Human Resources and S&T, African Union

Nepad/ASTII secretariat here present

ASTII Focal Points

Colleagues and friends

It is with great pleasure and pride that I, in my capacity as Chair of the ASTII Faculty, want to join Ms. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong in welcoming you all to this important meeting. As matter of fact it is the most important ASTII event meeting since that historical First Intergovernmental Committee meeting in Maputo in September 2007 when the ASTII Initiative was officially launched.

Since then we have passed many hurdles in setting up workable and sustainable mechanisms for collecting and storing survey data on STI Indicators. We can now see the very successful results of the first four years of this initiative, the First Phase.

I have together with other Faculty Members followed this exciting process for the last four years, and we have now – at last - reached the end of the first phase. This is really historic! The countries in the African Union will - gradually - for the first time have standardized indicators on Science, Technology and Innovation that will allow for comparisons regionally and globally and will serve as useful tools in monitoring Science, Technology and Innovation Policies and Strategies.

First of all I want to address all you in the national teams, the Focal Points in Phase 1, who done a great job! What I think has been instrumental for the success has been not only your devotion to the task, but also that there has been continuity and we can now in the Focal Points see the emergence of an African Network of STI Experts, corresponding to the OECD NESTI.

Having said this I also want to mention the enthusiastic support given to this initiative by the NEPAD Secretariat to this endeavor! Starting with Dr. John Mugabe and Professor Aggrey Ambali, and recently with Ms. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, and the team dedicated to the ASTII Initiative: The coordinator Dr. Philippe Mawoko, and his team: Lukovi Seke and Nancy Ngum. **Without their work and commitment we would not be where we are today!**

I want to take this opportunity to especially thank Philippe Mawoko for his support and dedication to this project. As you may know Philippe is leaving NEPAD as ASTII coordinator, and on behalf of the Faculty, I want to thank you warmly for having had the privilege of working with you during these four years. I wish you all success in your new capacity as the first Director of AOSTI, the African Observatory on STI, and look forward to continue collaboration with you during the coming years.

I cannot end this short welcome address without mentioning the support to Phase 1 rendered by my colleagues in the ASTII Faculty here present: Fred Gault, Neo Molotja, William Blankley, Rasigan Maharajh, Watu Wamae,....not forgetting the support I have personally received from my assistant, Anna Ekermo.

I welcome Dr. Towela Nyirenda-Jere as new ASTII Coordinator at NEPAD and we all look forward working with you in the next phase of this fascinating project.

It is my strong belief that Phase 2 of the ASTII project will greatly benefit for the experiences of the 19 countries participating in the First Phase. In many countries STI Indicators is now becoming institutionalized, being part of the of the statistical activities of these countries, and not least getting a budget line in government budgets!

So again: a warm welcome to you all! I am looking forward to interesting sessions during these coming days!

THANK YOU