



For Immediate Release

ATTENTION: NEWS EDITORS

Regional Science, Tech & Innovation conference set to open in Nairobi

Meeting will bring together policy makers, industry players, academicians, researchers, innovators, students and development partners

Nairobi, 1 March 2024.... The East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) and the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) will jointly host the 3rd EAC Regional Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Conference to be held in Nairobi on 6-8 March 2024.

Under the auspices of the East African Community (EAC), the conference will be held in collaboration with various STI stakeholders in the region and globally in order to provide an avenue for sharing experiences, best practice and applications of STI outputs. It will also serve to strengthen collaborations, facilitate regional integration and enhance sustainable development.

The conference will be opened by Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Education Ezekiel Machogu. Other notable dignitaries expected to attend include EAC Secretary General Dr Peter Mathuki, heads of participating EAC Institutions, and donor representatives.

The overarching theme of the conference will be, "Accelerating development and diffusion of Science, Technology and Innovation solutions for a green, inclusive and resilient East Africa." This biennial conference builds on the deliberations and success of the 1st and 2nd conferences, which were held, respectively, in Kampala, Uganda in 2019 and Bujumbura, Burundi in 2021.

The Executive Secretary of EASTECO, Dr Sylvance Okoth, said the conference will provide an important forum for discussing solutions to a wide range of problems afflicting the region. "There will be four key thematic areas and various sub-

themes, each addressing a unique topic. The emphasis is on attaining sustainable solutions in line with the SDGs and other internationally-accepted guidelines.”

On his part, IUCEA Executive Secretary Prof Gaspard Banyankimbona underscored the importance of research in advancing human knowledge and achievement. “The conference will contribute to the future of science, technology and innovation by encouraging an open exchange of information and cross-border learning, hence providing inspiration to academicians across the region.”

The meeting will bring together diverse actors in the STI system, including policy makers, industry players, academicians, researchers, innovators, students and development partners.

Other stakeholders expected to attend the conference include representatives of EAC Partner States, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, civil society, business and industry organizations, academic and research institutions, and development partners.

The conference will be held in a hybrid mode through face-to-face and virtual platforms. Activities will include a high-level policy dialogue, plenary sessions, an exhibition, and a ministerial session. Special sessions will be held on request from partners and will incorporate a youth engagement session on technologies and innovation of the future as well as a session on entrepreneurship promotion through education, research and development.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

The Treaty for establishment of the East African Community (EAC) recognizes Science and Technology as a key driver for sustainable socio-economic development in the region. Further, the EAC Vision 2050 emphasizes STI as one of the key drivers for sustainable socio-economic development and calls on higher education institutions to mainstream research and innovation towards socio-economic transformation of the region.

Under its overarching theme, the conference engagement sessions will be structured into four thematic areas, namely: (i) Agricultural Productivity, Resilience and Food Security; (ii) Health and Nutrition; (iii) Natural Resources Management; and (iv) Information Communication Technology and Digital Economy. All full paper submissions in the conference will be peer-reviewed and evaluated based on originality, technical and/or research depth, accuracy and relevance to conference theme and topics. The accepted peer-reviewed papers will be published in the East African Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation (EAJSTI) to boost the dissemination of research findings within the region and improve regional visibility and competitiveness.

Existing stakeholders in the region include national institutions; government ministries for science, technology and innovation; national commissions for science and technology; research institutes; academies of science; and non-government organizations. The stakeholders largely work in isolation and their level of collaboration is limited, resulting in uncoordinated research, duplication of research, and failure to implement research activities effectively. Furthermore, most of the research work done in the region remains on shelves and not developed further or circulated adequately. In addition, no clear collaboration mechanisms between non-educational research organizations and universities exist, and platforms for the exchange of scientific information are limited.

The STI conference will therefore enhance networking relations among researchers, technology developers and innovators; establish a platform for stakeholders for setting agenda as well as priorities and niches in STI in the region; enhance linkages and partnerships between academia, industry and the public sector; enhance exposure to stakeholders on priority issues for research, extension services, teaching and learning; and enhance capacity for benchmarking research outputs in the region.

For additional information on the East African Science, Technology and Innovation Conference, please go to: <https://3rdsticonference.easteco.org/>

ABOUT EASTECO

The East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) is a semi-autonomous institution of the East African Community (EAC). The operationalization of the

Commission was finalized in 2015 with the appointment of a Secretariat. The EASTECO headquarters offices are in Kigali, Rwanda.

The main objective of the Commission is to promote and coordinate the development, management and application of Science and Technology in the Partner States (composed of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia). Therefore, EASTECO has an overall function of coordinating and facilitating the activities of the EAC Partner States and national science and technology institutions to promote the development and application of science, technology and innovation in all its aspects.

ABOUT IUCEA

In 2009, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) enacted the IUCEA Act 2009, thus effectively integrating the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) into the EAC operational framework. According to the Act, any university, university college, and degree awarding institution may apply for and get admitted to the IUCEA membership as long as it is properly incorporated in the EAC Partner State where it is operating and is pursuing objectives that are consistent with the functions of IUCEA as spelled out in the Act. Additionally, the Act mandates the institution to advise the EAC Partner States on higher education matters, among other roles and functions.

The main objectives of IUCEA are to facilitate networking among universities in East Africa, and with universities outside the region; to provide a forum for discussion on a wide range of academic and other matters relating to higher education in East Africa; and to facilitate maintenance of internationally comparable education standards in East Africa so as to promote the region's competitiveness in higher education.