Rethinking Development in Africa: New Innovation Policy Brief

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After three decades of trial and error, innovation policy is taking off in Africa. Our new policy brief tracks the roll out of science, technology and innovation (ST&I) policies in 11 African nations, in the context of various development issues.

Experts from around the world recently met in Nairobi, Kenya to analyse innovation policies in Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Among other outputs, the workshop mapped ST&I policy progress set against each country's 'Developmental Vision'.

These visions address umbrella issues like poverty reduction, employment generation, food security, social welfare, structural transformation and industrial development, information and communication technology (ICT) and environmental sustainability, with ST&I plans and policies being the integral part. To achieve their vision, we found that different countries favour different ST&I policies. For instance, Ethiopia's vision is oriented towards export promotion and growth, Mauritius stresses green growth, and Tanzania emphasises better productivity.

Workshops for Policymakers
This was the first in a series of workshops entitled "Design and Evaluation of Innovation Policies in African Countries" (DEIP-Africa). It included high-level policymakers in science, technology and innovation from among others the Southern African Development Community, the Common Market for Southern and Eastern Africa, and the East African Community.

Part of the long-running 'DEIP' series, the programme was organised by UNU-MERIT in partnership with the African Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation and the Pan African University – Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation, under the auspices of the African Union Commission.

All government institutions in Africa are invited to submit proposals to co-run similar workshops via merit.unu.edu/deip. The policy brief 'Innovation for Development in Southern & Eastern Africa: Challenges for Promoting ST&I Policy' is attached to this press release and available on the UNU-MERIT website.

Note to Editors: *UNU-MERIT is a joint research and training institute of United Nations University and Maastricht University, based in the south of the Netherlands. The institute studies the social, political and economic factors that drive technological innovation, with a particular focus on creation, diffusion and access to knowledge. Working with its School of Governance, UNU-MERIT also covers all aspects of governance in domestic and global organisations, from risk assessment to policy analysis, design and evaluation. For more details:* merit.unu.edu/about-us/

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