

Regionalism and Technology Development in Africa

A silhouette of a sprinter in a starting crouch on a track, positioned to the left of the author's name.

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Outline

- ✦ What is regionalism and what are its drivers?
- ✦ Historical evolution of regionalism in Africa
- ✦ Science and technology content of African regionalism
- ✦ New opportunities for using regional S&T
- ✦ Securing and using the opportunities

Regionalism and its drivers?

- ✦ Regionalism involves the opening up and integration of inter-state's economic and political systems
- ✦ Collective processes of harnessing geopolitical synergies and diversity to achieve common goals
- ✦ Tends to occur among countries whose borders affect their mutual security and whose political and economic processes coincide

Drivers of Regionalism

- (a) Rearrangement of the geopolitical landscape of the world; particularly at the end of the Cold War
- (b) Globalization and liberalization of trade and investment regimes
- (c) Technological advances, particularly in ICTs

Historical evolution of regionalism in Africa

(a) The search for new identities at the end of colonial eras in many African countries

(b) Protection against common enemy—former colonial masters

© Search for trading partners and aspirations to access international markets

(d) Means to secure independence of other African countries (e.g. South Africa)

S&T in African Regionalism

- ✦ S&T cooperation provisions in COMESA, AMU, ECOWAS, EAC, SADC and other treaties
- ✦ Constitution of AU provides for S&T
- ✦ EAC and ECOWAS have explicit S&T frameworks
- ✦ SADC Gene-bank

New Opportunities for Regional S&T

- ✦ Globalization and integration of S&T cooperation in international treaties
- ✦ Renewed focus on S&T as drivers of economic change and sustainable development
- ✦ New political leadership and related institutional adjustments (NEPAD and AU)
- ✦ S&T as an ingredient of foreign policy and international diplomacy

Tapping the opportunities

- ✦ New institutional arrangements (lessons from EU and OECD)
- ✦ Building S&T capacity
- ✦ Deliberate regional mechanisms of financing common R&D
- ✦ Common or shared policy conditions

Policy Conditions for NEPAD's S&T

✦ Improving policy conditions

(a) common science, technology and innovation indicators

(b) harmonizing intellectual property protection systems

(c) Building regional consensus on modern biotechnology

Policy Conditions for NEPAD S&T Agenda (cont.)

- ✦ Exploring ways and means to leverage increases in public expenditure on R&D (1% of GDP)
- ✦ Protocol to stimulate and governance mobility of scientists, technicians, etc.
- ✦ Regulatory measures for sharing information