

New push to boost Africa's investment in science, technology

by Kennedy Abwao

Nairobi, Kenya (PANA) – April 2, 2012. A new effort is being made to boost Africa's investments in science and technology, amid fresh evidence that most of the continent's economies have received major boosts with the opening up of the telecommunication sector.

Most African countries have gained as much as 75% of their non-oil and mining incomes from the growth in the telecommunication sector which, in some countries like Senegal and Kenya, has been averaging 10% yearly since 2009.

Ministers, researchers and scientists who gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, on Saturday for the first Africa Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) sought the implementation of the African Union's declaration seeking to boost funding for scientific innovation.

Kenyan Science and Technology Minister Margaret Kamar said the meeting, convened by international organizations to seek ways of boosting the funding for science and technology, was a 'watershed' for African countries to re-commit to funding science.

"This Forum is going to provide us with an excellent opportunity to share experiences, especially best practices from all over the world, on science, technology and innovation policies, strategies and mechanisms," Ms. Kamar said.

The forum is being organized jointly by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), a leading educational think tank; the African Development Bank (AfDB); the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and UNESCO.

Ms. Kamar said unless there were adequate investments in science and technology, African countries would not meet their objectives of reducing youth unemployment and addressing the lack of skilled manpo