

## Accra SGCI STISA-2034 Communiqué

October 18, 2024.

On 18-19 September 2024, African Heads of Research Councils (HORCs) and representatives convened in Accra, Ghana, to deliberate on the STISA-2034 draft document and its development, aimed at rallying support and to strengthen continental collaboration through the SGCI platform.

We, accordingly, issue this Communiqué, titled “Accra SGCI STISA-2034 Communiqué”, summarizing our deliberations to inform the STISA-2034. The highlights of the Communiqué are as follows:

1. We, the African HORCS and Representatives, met on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024 in Accra, Republic of Ghana, to deliberate on our priorities and build a continental alliance towards the effective use of the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) platform to achieve our agendas. We were joined by other continental leaders, African Union Commission (AUC), United Nations Agencies, and Research Organizations. We extended our appreciations to the Rev. Dr. Patrick Nomo, Permanent Secretary/ Chief Director of MESTI on behalf of the leadership of the government of Ghana, and to the IDRC and SGCI consortium funders, represented by Mr. Souleymane Thiam.
2. We recognize the excellent partnership and support our countries enjoy within the SGCI consortium, a critical global initiative. SGCI crowds in development partners’ resources and grants – the biggest source of funding to the African continent for research and development. We extend our profound gratitude to SGCI donors, and re-commit to doing our part to deliver development results and impact for our people. Furthermore, **we commit** to explore and extend **intra-African collaboration of stakeholders in the space of Research, Science, Technology, and Innovation (RSTI)**, between and among countries, academia, regional bodies, RECs, think tanks, and civil societies.
3. We are convening at an opportune time when the continent is developing the second iteration of the **continental STI strategy document (STISA-2034)**. After 10 years of STISA-2024, whose implementation was among other hampered by the Covid-19 global pandemic, African countries are re-grouping and building back.
4. SGCI-funded projects and the initiative support model have a proven record of developmental impact. The initiative has afforded us the opportunities to access support to address management of research and innovation, use of evidence for policy, gender equity, equality and inclusivity mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation, impact reporting among others. It is the single largest continental platform providing resources for the development of the RSTI ecosystem in Africa; SGCI remains our dependable development partner, and we **commit to strengthening the initiative and empowering it to engage multilaterally at continental conventions including AUC STI meetings**.
5. There is an urgent need to invest in Africa’s economic development and transformation to address the continent’s pressing needs which include health, education, climate change & environment, ICT, agriculture. We commit to lead the push to operationalize the pan African fund for STI (African Science, Technology and Innovation Fund (ASTIF)). We commit to engage the African Development Bank to develop this instrument for funding STI within the continent.
6. Realizing the aspirations of our people requires us to build a robust framework of policies, investments, knowledge, jobs and impact with a strong implementation plan and capacity to deliver effectively. The STISA-2034 is a huge undertaking that requires adequate resources, commitment to action, and an elaborate plan for monitoring and evaluation. It needs the continent to act in solidarity, while counting on the support of our dependable partners. As

leaders in the RSTI landscape, it is a solemn opportunity to observe the increasing resource demands to attain our development agenda and respond to external shocks. **We will execute plans to invest more in the African RSTI ecosystem**, which is an essential tool for accelerating the pursuit of the African development and transformation agenda. Similarly, we need a significant and consistent increase in private sector investment in the RSTI and R&D ecosystem both at national and continental levels.

7. Equally, we need expansion of public investment into the RSTI and R&D ecosystem at national levels. **We need to rally our governments to raise their national gross expenditure on research and development (GERD) to at least 1% of their gross domestic product (GDP)**. This commitment will enhance the continent's capacity to drive innovation, productivity and economic growth. In one accord, we call for an ambitious and robust pursuit of the Lagos Plan for Action target.
8. Having observed and experienced enhanced SGC capacity to develop mechanisms for enhanced gross domestic expenditure on research and development (GERD), we look forward and commit to a continued, expanded and fruitful partnership with the SGCI. With the evidenced performance of the SGCI platform in advancing STI in the continent, we will pursue to have SGCI designated as a *special* regional implementation partner, to effectively support the implementation of STISA-2034. This will be important to complement our traditional regional implementation partners' efforts.
9. **We commit, on our part as HORCs, to extend our support by building national and regional capacities and systems to enhance RSTI impact investment through robust governance and strategies** that prioritize private sector investments. We elect to engage in African STI foresighting and mapping initiatives in enhancing successful implementation of STISA-2034; to continue to mobilize public, domestic and international resources and to invest these judiciously, transparently and efficiently; and affirm our pledge to support the delivery of the commitments contained in STISA-2034 and the HORCs Accra Declaration on STI in Africa. We will explore the alignment of our mandate and activities with those captured within STISA-2034 to enhance its implementability.
10. Finally, we encourage the SGCI, partners and donors to equally step up and meet the contemporary global challenges by supporting the mobilization of international resources, the strengthening of the SGCI to help develop and transform Africa and meet the Sustainable Development Goals and global challenges including those of Africa as set out in our full Communique. Special recognition is given to IDRC as a dedicated science advocate and bearing a strong vision to mobilize international resources towards national science systems, and commitment to develop more equitable partnerships.

Therefore, we declare and endorse the following:

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## **ACCRA DECLARATION ON STISA-2034**

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### **Funding Mechanisms and Instruments**

To address barriers and challenges related to funding, funding mechanisms and instruments we have adopted to pursue, among other things, a dedicated funding mechanism and instrument to support STISA-2034 by these actions.

- a. **Align** national documents and instruments such as STI Policy and National Research and Innovation Agenda (NRIA) with STISA-2034.
- b. **Advocate** for budget allocation through a higher GERD in the implementation of STISA-2034, prioritizing research and innovation towards the Lagos Plan of Action targets.
- c. **Fund**, directly and indirectly, research and innovation projects in priority sectors of STISA-2034.
- d. **Fund** research and innovation projects towards scaling up and commercialization of technologies generated.
- e. **Establish and support** the emergence and growth technopolis (innovation cities, innovation and tech hubs) to support startups and foster entrepreneurship, through funding and mentorship.
- f. **Mobilize funds**, using existing fora such as SGCI, as well as philanthropic investments and venture capital to support innovative projects and startups.
- g. Participate in **competitive grants** to respond to calls for proposals.

## Governance

To better the management and successful implementation of STISA-2034, through improved governance structures, practices, and frameworks, we have resolved to:

- a. **Advocate** for funding from national government to funds and support regional and continental priorities.
- b. **Align** council programming and priorities with the STISA-2034 priorities and actions
- c. **Fund** implementation of STISA-2034
- d. **Integrate** STISA-2034 into national STI policy processes
- e. **Publish** and mobilize support for STISA-2034 at national government
- f. **Recognize** the SGCI as a special platform and a special implementation platform for the implementation of STISA-2034

## PPP and Investments in STI

Objective 6 of the STISA 2034 seeks to *Promote and advocate for increased public and private partnership (PPP) and investment in STI*. We have endorsed to:

- a. **Involve** the Private Sector in the identification, conceptualisation and prioritisation during the identification of research projects to drive science-led development.
- b. **Undertake** awareness and advocacy with the private sector on issues regarding financing, collaboration, and partnerships through new mechanisms, like the Business Round Tables and Science Investment Forums
- c. **Establish** Knowledge Sharing Platforms to strengthen knowledge sharing between countries and researchers for cost avoidance and sustainable private sector partnerships, with emphasis on strengthening indigenous knowledge systems.
- d. **Facilitate** the establishment of incentive mechanism (including tax breaks for R&D) to support and incentivise research and science practice
- e. **Encourage** collaboration between academia and industry by establishing mechanisms and funding schemes to facilitate gainful partnerships between the academia and Industry.
- f. **Develop** special programs and frameworks directed at the Private Sector to support the engagement for commercialisation and impact

- g. **Strengthen**, promote, and advocate for increased public and private partnerships (PPP) and investment in these partnerships to de-risk research and science through sharing of risks and rewards across different STI Value Chains
- h. **Undertake** Mapping of Africa's unique Private Sector to facilitate for focused and evidence-based interventions that drive sustainable growth.
- i. **Support** reverse migration and use of Africa's Science Diaspora to promote reverse investment and collaboration in different STI programs through functional science diplomacy platforms (Science Attaché)
- j. **Promote** and increase investment in Start-ups, SMEs and Cottage industry to support employment and inclusive growth
- k. **Map** research capacity (infrastructure and human resources) to support intra-Africa collaboration and investment in equipment and infrastructure
- l. **Mobilize and strengthen** support for data governance in STI to address data gaps in STI reporting and policy compliance.

### **Gender, Youth and Inclusivity**

We deliberated on youth and women's inclusion and integration into the Science Technology and Innovation (STI) ecosystem in the continent. We adopt these actions and strategies.

- a. **Support** women in STEM careers through mentorship & training, special funding for women-led projects, award & recognition, and entrepreneurship programmes etc
- b. **Address** sexual harassment issues at the workplace.
- c. **Champion** and support the development of gender and youth-friendly STI policies
- d. **Engage**, actively and effectively, the youth in STI policy creation and innovation
- e. **Engage** deliberate effort for youth innovative Grants.
- f. **Establish** frameworks or mechanism that will enhance equity in R&D competitive calls for greater participation and success of female researchers.

In closing, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing Africa's STI agenda through robust governance, increased investment, and strengthened partnerships and collaborations, and enhanced private sector engagements.

We, the African SGC HORCs have adopted this Communique in the presence of these high-level representatives. We thank you all very much.

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