

AFRICAN SPACE POLICY

(Draft Version)

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FOREWARD

The lack of mechanisms for resource mobilization, integrated ownership and leadership, and a significant industrial sector on the African continent is a critical impediment that hinders inclusive economic growth and social development. To unblock these impediments require a paradigm shift in the way we think, plan and execute these plans. However, this reform must be contextualized on a collective vision and for this purpose, the African Union (AU) vision provides a good starting point, namely:

“An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and represents a dynamic force in the global arena.”

The realisation of the AU vision must be premised on self-reliance, regional integration, industrialization, and enhanced partnerships. A useful framework for this purpose is Agenda 2063, wherein the key drivers are:

- Promoting Meteorology (Weather and Climate Services)
 - Promoting science, technology and innovation;
 - Investing in human capital development;
 - Manage natural resources endowment in a sustainable manner;
 - Effective private and public sector development; and
- Innovative resource mobilization.
- Monitoring the environment for sustainable development

In driving the AU vision, within the context of the key drivers highlighted above, it is imperative that any plans of action must be undertaken in a sustainable manner and address the challenges of transforming its output and trade, broaden and strengthen its weak infrastructural and human resource base, as well as significantly strengthen and modernize its science and technology capability.

I here recognize the role space science and technology has played in providing a tool for ensuring the sustainable use of our natural resources and the creation of a high tech industrial sector. Furthermore, it has made considerable contributions towards creating an enabling environment for a wide spectrum of pressing priorities that includes job creation, poverty reduction, sustainable resource management and rural development. Hence, the manifold benefits that accrue to society at large from a formal space sector will assist us to translate the vision for a *united, prosperous continent at peace with itself* into reality.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to introduce the African Space Policy, which is the first in a series of instruments that will help us to formalise Africa’s space programme. This Policy provides the guiding principles that should be adhered to in order to ensure a sustainable and fully effective space programme that will serve the needs of the African continent are met.

Chair of the African Union Commission

GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS

Data democracy	Provision of wider and easier access to geospatial data
Data integrity	Maintaining and assuring the accuracy and consistency of data over its entire life-cycle
Earth observation	Gathering of information about Earth's physical, chemical and biological systems
Global navigation satellite system	Constellations of Earth orbiting satellites that broadcast their locations in space and time, of networks of ground control stations, and of receivers that calculate ground positions by triangulation
Navigation and positioning	Skill or study involving the determination of position and direction
Remote sensing	Acquisition of information about an object or phenomenon without making physical contact with the object
Satellite communications	Artificial satellites placed in space for the purpose of telecommunications
Satellite systems	Artificial objects comprising of computer controlled systems that attend to many tasks, such as power generation, telemetry, altitude control and orbit control
Space exploration	Discovery and exploration of outer space by means of space technology

1 INTRODUCTION

Africa presents a significant growth potential, especially given its disparate socio and economic lag compared to other developed regions of the world. However, this growth potential needs to be realised in a sustainable manner when drawing on the people and the abundant resources of the continent. The prime intention in realising this potential, on the African continent, should always be directed toward the improvement of the quality of life and the creation of wealth for all its citizens. For example, in the United Kingdom, space services currently generate 7 billion pounds annually, as well as supports over 70,000 jobs¹.

Space science and technology, and the many practical benefits that can be derived from its utilisation, has played a significant role in the international, regional and national economic and social development efforts. Space presents a unique opportunity for cooperation and sharing of enabling infrastructure (including data) in proactively managing, among others, disease outbreaks; our natural resources and the environment; our response to natural hazards and disasters; weather forecasting; climate change mitigation and adaptation; agriculture and food security; peacekeeping missions and conflicts.

Space derived services (earth observation, [space weather](#), satellite communications, navigation and positioning) is critical to the economic development of the continent. The benefits of these services have accrued to Africa indirectly as consumers of services provided by multi-national companies and inter-governmental agencies. While some of these products and services have helped to serve the social and economic needs of the continent, Africa cannot boast to possess the technical know-how to participate independently in space related activities as a service provider, but only as a consumer of space derived products.

New applications of space science and technology are constantly being discovered and spin-offs from space technologies have led to advancements in such diverse fields as medicine, materials science and computers. Exploiting these applications and technological advancements for Africa's social and economic development provides for immeasurable benefits. However, the high cost of participating in space activities has hindered the ability of many countries, particularly those on the African continent, to fully take advantage of the practical benefits that space science and technology offers.

Space is benefiting Africa and its people in a number of ways. Space applications are effective tools for monitoring and conducting assessments of the environment, managing the use of natural resources, providing early warnings of and managing natural disasters, providing education and health services in rural and remote areas and connecting people around the world. Space-related applications are widely used in agriculture, which remains an important economic sector in much of Africa. Space-

¹ Extracted from Satellite and Space Services Intellect technology Association, UK, Intellect Publication, 2013

based information systems play a significant role in risk reduction and disaster management on the African continent, which is heavily caused by severe weather and extreme climate events, such as droughts, floods, storms (sand and dust) and cyclones and other geophysical hazards such as volcanic ash, earthquakes and tsunamis. Space-related applications are heavily employed in transportation services, which is another essential field that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in Africa. Access to transport allows mobility, promotes commerce and fosters education and health. In many African countries, transport access rates and network quality are low². Severe weather knowledge and applications provide advance warning of potential harm to technological systems particularly in navigation, communication and defence sectors.

If Africa is to leapfrog effectively into the technological advancements of the 21st century, the continent needs to develop indigenous critical mass of trained space scientist and engineers who contribute actively to the solution of the continent's problem. Africa has to build its capabilities in space exploration, constellation programs, earth observation systems, navigation and positioning, satellite systems, communication and education within a global context. In the process towards the development of a continental space programme, Africa will not re-invent the wheel. There are some lead African countries that are in the process of developing their own space related capabilities and programmes, and have proceeded to build institutions to manage these programmes. These national efforts collectively represent the seed that could be nurtured toward a continental programme, without devolving the focus of the national space programmes.

Currently there are a number of fragmented initiatives, that have a regional dimension and the pragmatic challenge is to bring all of these pockets of excellence together so that we create programmatic synergies and complementarities to foster our collective actions towards Africa's development that will eventually enable the continent to be a global space player. There are only a few countries on the African continent that have endeavoured to formalise national space programmes. In many African countries there remains limited appreciation of the potential role and benefits of space in socio-economic development. There is thus a clear and urgent need to build awareness as to the critical necessity of space applications and business among the collective political, scientific and industrial leadership of African countries.

The use of space for development presents many opportunities that cannot be ignored, and Africa has to respond to these challenges and opportunities. Hence, within this context, there is a critical need to make the benefits of space science and technology available to all African countries. There is thus a growing need for Africa to develop a well structured policy framework that guides the implementation of a continental space programme that will enable the continent to exploit its space resources in a more coordinated and systematic manner with the overarching objective of contributing to Africa's socio-economic development.

² Extracted from Space Benefits for Africa, draft report of the United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, 2009

2 BENEFITS OF SPACE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Humanity is facing major challenges in ensuring the adequate provision of basic necessities, such as food, shelter, a clean and healthy environment and proper education for the growing population of planet Earth. Only through sustainable development can one hope to address these challenges – otherwise we expose ourselves to additional challenges. The concept of sustainability is closely linked to the carrying capacity of ecosystems, which sets the physical limits to economic development and may be defined as the maximum rate of resource consumption and waste discharge that can be sustained on a permanent basis in a defined planning region without impairing productivity and ecological integrity. Political, social and economic commitments are only effective if there is a global partnership for sustainable development and to ensure the equitable allocation of available resources.

Earth observation/remote sensing satellites use modern instruments to gather information about the nature and condition of Earth's land, sea, and atmosphere. Located in various orbits, these satellites use sensors that can "see" a broad area and report very fine details about the weather, the terrain, and the environment. The sensors receive electromagnetic emissions in various spectral bands that show objects that are visible, such as clouds, hills, lakes, and many other features. These instruments can detect an objects temperature and composition, the wind's direction and speed and environmental conditions, such as erosion, fires, and pollution. Included below is a selection of specific examples of the benefits of remote sensing.

Satellite navigation uses satellites as reference points to calculate positions accurate to within a meter. With advanced techniques and augmentations, satellite navigation can make measurements down to centimeter levels. Navigation and positioning receivers have been miniaturized and are becoming economical thus making the technology accessible to everyone. For example, Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) receivers are currently built into cars, boats, planes, construction equipment and even laptops. Navigation and positioning is the main element of the international air traffic management system providing worldwide navigation coverage to support all phases of flight. With appropriate augmentation systems, navigation and positioning satellites will enable gate-to-gate navigation and all weather capabilities for suitably equipped aircraft. GNSS has also recently been applied to the surveillance of illegal shipping activities, such as fisheries and extended to monitor oil spills and the ensuing environmental damages.

Satellite communications is the key technology that could bring developing countries to participate in the buildup of the global information infrastructure. Research indicates that wireless systems are the most cost effective way to develop or upgrade telecommunications networks in areas where user density is lower than 200 subscribers per square kilometer. Such wireless systems can be installed 5-10 times

faster and at a 50% lower cost than landline networks. Technologies for education and training, in particular distance learning and multimedia, may be instrumental in meeting the needs of African countries that have to train and integrate a large number of workers in widely dispersed and under-equipped areas. Many African countries have to cope with large-scale disease outbreaks and telemedicine may help to meet these challenges by improving the organisation and management of health care delivery.

3 POLICY GOALS

The policy drivers for an African space programme is to be expressed through high level policy goals, which are as follows:

3.1 To establish an African Space Programme.

- 3.1 To use space science and technology to derive optimal socio-economic benefits that both improves the quality of lives and creates wealth for Africans.
- 3.2 To develop and maintain indigenous infrastructure, human capital and capabilities that service an African market, which caters for the geospatial and space information needs of the African continent.

4 POLICY OBJECTIVES

In striving towards the policy goals for an African space programme there are a number of objectives that would need to be met for the attainment of such goals and these are:

- 4.1 **Addressing user needs** - to harness the potential of space science and technology in addressing Africa's socio-economic opportunities and challenges.
- 4.2 **Accessing space services** – to strengthen space technology applications on the continent in order to ensure optimal access to space derived data, information services and products.
- 4.3 **Developing the regional market** – to develop a sustainable and vibrant indigenous space industry that promotes and responds to the needs of the African continent.
- 4.4 **Adopting good governance and management** - to adopt good corporate governance and best practices for the coordinated management of continental space activities.
- 4.5 **Coordinating the African space arena** – to maximize the benefit of current and planned space activities, and avoid or minimize duplication of resources and efforts.

- 4.6 **Promoting international Cooperation** – to promote the African led space agenda through mutually beneficial partnerships.
- 4.7 Monitoring of the environment, weather and climate.

5 POLICY PRINCIPLES

5.1 ADDRESSING USER NEEDS

To harness the potential benefits of space science and technology in addressing Africa's socio-economic opportunities and challenges.

- 5.1.1 **To improve Africa's economy and the quality of life of its people** - Although Africa is one of the wealthiest continents in terms of natural resources and with a relatively high economic growth; it is still, however, one of the poorest with a relatively low level of Gross Domestic Product. The key challenges for Africa are to improve its economy and the quality of life of its people in a sustainable manner. Space science and technology, particularly earth observations, can play a key role in the economic development of Africa through sustainable usage of its natural resources.
- 5.1.2 **To address the essential needs of the African market** - It is anticipated that the space derived services and products will address the essential needs of the African market. The space resources vested in a few African space nations shall be used to provide technological know-how and knowledge transfer on data and information dissemination, and operational services and products to non-space nations in Africa in order to leverage the full socio-economic benefits.
- 5.1.3 **To develop services and products using African capacities** - African space technology services and products have to be developed by African capacities so as to ensure sustained ownership of the space resources managed by Africans. This will ensure timely response to the essential user needs to improve sustainable development in Africa and thereby promote its economy, alleviate poverty and reduce risk hazards.
- 5.1.4 **To develop the requisite human resources for addressing user needs** - Africa has a challenge for sustaining its space services and promoting the use of space technology services among all African nations. This requires significant capacity building of human resources and therefore Africa shall adopt learning programmes to build its capacity and maintain the widespread use of space applications.
- 5.1.5 **To maintain an efficient and sustainable African space programme** - There is a need for efficient monitoring and evaluation mechanisms during the implementation phase of an African space programme. Therefore Africa shall adopt key performance indicators for regular review of its products and services. This approach shall ensure the best fit

capacity building initiatives and methodologies, as well as the up-to-date user needs for shared services and products.

5.2 ACCESSING SPACE SERVICES

To strengthen space technology applications on the continent in order to ensure an optimal access to space derived data, information services and products.

- 5.2.1 **To use existing space infrastructure** - Joint research and development initiatives using existing space infrastructure will help strengthen the capacity of African countries. This will enhance our technical development, technology transfer, management of intellectual property rights and international cooperation.
- 5.2.2 **To promote capacity building for the development of space services** - The development of capacity and capabilities in space science and technology will create an enabling environment for knowledge generation and exploitation, which will ensure optimal access to space services on the Continent.
- 5.2.3 **To adopt data-sharing protocols** - In line with the spatial data infrastructure (SDI) framework, data sharing protocols need to be adopted and implemented to ensure equitable access and data democracy that is cost effective and acceptable to all member states. The protocols will encourage member states that have space assets to share data services and products with member states that do not presently have such capacity. Furthermore, this will encourage the commitment of all member states to data gathering and sharing.
- 5.2.4 **To develop and increase our space asset base** - The current space asset base on the continent is limited and there is, therefore, a need to develop and increase this asset base to ensure optimal accessibility and interoperability. Any extension of our current space asset base must be premised on ensuring complementarity and minimising duplication. This core capability can only be optimally achieved if we nurture a culture of collaboration rather than competition and where possible we need to draw on the competencies of existing national space programmes on the continent.
- 5.2.5 **To establish regional and sub-regional centers** - In order to ensure that the continent is appropriately capacitated and serviced in space science and technology, it is important that the varied interests of all regions of the continent are catered for. This will be accomplished through the establishment of regional and sub-regional centers that have localized span of control, but links up with the continental space agenda.

5.3 DEVELOPING THE REGIONAL MARKET

To develop a sustainable and vibrant indigenous space industry that promotes and responds to the needs of the African continent.

- 5.3.1 **To create a people-centered, market based industrial capability** - As African countries embark on the development of an indigenous space

capability it is imperative that the core focus remains a people-centered, market based industrial capability. Right sizing the market based industrial capability with the relevant human expertise and skills will ensure a cost effective continental space programme. Free market transactions should be encouraged within the African continent in order to effectively use the core industrial and human capability.

- 5.3.2 **To develop a globally competitive African space programme** - Appropriate interventions must be put in place to ensure the global competitiveness of African space technologies, products and services. In order to achieve this, the quality and process maturity of an indigenous space industry must meet the globally accepted space industry standards. The African space industry must demonstrate its ability and successes by ensuring a formidable space heritage that will serve as an attractor for pursuing and capturing a market share of the global space market.
- 5.3.3 **To promote public private partnerships** - To develop an innovative indigenous and sustainable space industry, public private partnerships must be pursued. These partnerships must draw on the complementary capabilities and expertise through effective technology transfer and intellectual property management arrangements, at an intra-continental level. These partnerships must also be bolstered in collaborative R&D efforts that focus on the development of space services and product in response to the market needs. In this regard, appropriate commercialisation frameworks and agreements must be put in place.
- 5.3.4 **To coherently develop, upgrade and operate cutting edge African space infrastructure** - As we develop the indigenous space industrial capability we need to ensure the coherent development, upgrade and operation of cutting edge African space infrastructure that ensures optimal coordination, utilisation and cost effectiveness. For this purpose, a technology roadmap needs to be identified for the development and strengthening of the industrial capability, underpinned by an appropriate governance structure that draws on both national and regional capabilities in a seamless manner.
- 5.3.5 **To promote R&D led industrial development** - The technical capability and infrastructure must be used to support R&D and in so doing promote an innovative indigenous space industry. The space asset base is a precondition for a fully sustainable, efficient and effective industry, which also forms the basis for cutting edge R&D that further promotes industrial development.
- 5.3.6 **To use indigenous space technologies, products and services** - Development of an African space market will be primarily through the commercialisation and use of indigenous space technologies, products and services. In order to achieve this it is imperative that we become intelligent users of geospatial data and where such use reflects and responds to the user needs of the continent. Hence, the development of technologies, products and services that are to be developed must respond to the African space market and hence must be largely market driven.

5.4 ADOPTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

To adopt good corporate governance and best practices for the coordinated management of continental space activities.

- 5.4.1 **To establish an organizational framework** - African states will have to establish an organizational framework that will integrate the whole African space capabilities and assets to serve the goals of this policy in an efficient and cost-effective manner. African countries with space science and technology experience will help less experienced African countries to access space services and applications, develop its space capabilities and promote human resources in space science, technology and applications. The organizational framework shall organize and allow equal opportunities to all African states for accessing space services and products.
- 5.4.2 **To financially support the African space programme** - Funding schemes of space activities shall preserve the independence of the African space programme and thus guarantee the orientation of space activities with the user needs. Therefore, African governmental financial support will be the main funding source for space activities.
- 5.4.3 **To promote knowledge sharing** - Knowledge sharing is one of the main strategic tools that will ensure the sustainability of an indigenous space sector. Knowledge shall be disseminated over the African continent in a non-contradictory way that will promote the development of an African space market. On the other hand, space based intellectual property exchange will have to be controlled by the same framework, to assure proper usage and avoid improper dissemination.
- 5.4.4 **To monitor and evaluate space activities** - The organizational framework must firmly state the monitoring and evaluation procedures that will assure compliance with the national, continental and international laws and regulations.
- 5.4.5 **To regulate space activities** – The African space programme will need to be regulated in order to guarantee attainment of the strategic objectives; proper return on investment, significant investment in people, best resource utilization, proper funding approaches, an efficient risk management and mitigation policy, creation of conflict of interest management procedure, and an indigenous objective oriented implementation strategy. Also, a regulatory environment will need to be created to allow industrial entities to access space technology and promote African commercial private sector participation in the space arena.
- 5.4.6 **To maintain an awareness campaign** - Space technology, applications and services and the related socio-economic benefits related thereto are not generally appreciated by all African member states. Hence, there needs to be a significant awareness campaign that will educate and inform African decision makers, politicians and the public.

5.5 COORDINATING THE AFRICAN SPACE ARENA

To maximize the benefit of current and planned space activities, and avoid or minimize duplication of resources and efforts.

- 5.5.1 **To promote public private partnerships** - Joint collaboration and synergy among academia, industry and government in all fields of space science and technology in Africa must be fostered in order to ensure comprehensive involvement by all sectors. All sectors will need to work in concert in order to deliver an efficient and effective African space programme.
- 5.5.2 **To commit funds to optimise and improve effectiveness** - Space technology has many benefits, but the high capital cost is a significant barrier to entry. Therefore, the African space developed nations have to make available their assets and space resources and African member states need to commit funds to optimize and improve the required operational and envisaged services and products.
- 5.5.3 **To harmonise and standardize all infrastructure** - African member states will need to harmonize and standardize all infrastructure to ensure interoperability and seamless integration of data, data integrity and data security/protocol.
- 5.5.4 **To establish communities of practice** – For each of the space application areas, it will be necessary to establish communities of practice for the sharing of experiences and best practices. These communities of practice will also assist in articulating the user needs and technical requirements for each of these areas.

5.6 PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

To promote the African led space agenda through mutually beneficial partnerships

- 5.6.1 **To promote space in Africa, for Africa and by Africans** - A key driver to ensuring the development of an indigenous space capability and capacity, will be the level of independence maintained by an African space programme. This principle should be pursued in developing the African market and also taken into account when leveraging strategic international partnerships to address technological gaps.
- 5.6.2 **To ensure a reasonable and significant financial and/or social return** - All international partnerships should be based on a fair and mutually beneficial ~~win-win~~ approach and should ensure socio-economic return to the continent. All such strategic partnerships should be premised on the notion of mutual benefits.
- 5.6.3 **To observe international agreements** - In our pursuit of an indigenous space capability, it is important that we observe all appropriate international treaties, conventions and agreements.
- 5.6.4 **To promote intra-continental partnerships** - Intra-continental partnerships must be promoted to leverage on national strengths, activities and programmes. Such partnerships remain central to endeavours relating to human capital development, infrastructure development and development of an indigenous space industry sector.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This African Space Policy identifies the key policy drivers (goals) that inform the agenda for any formal space initiatives on the continent. The policy drivers are supported by a set of objectives that emulate the critical factors that need to be addressed in maintaining a viable and sustainable space programme. The objectives include:

To establish an efficient Space Programme

- Addressing user needs;
- Accessing space services;
- Developing the regional market;
- Adopting good governance and management;
- Coordinating the African space arena; and
- Promoting international cooperation.

In addition, the objectives are underpinned by a set of guiding principles that form the basis of all decisions and action and in turn inform the core building blocks of the African space agenda.

The African Space Policy is thus a guiding framework for the formalisation of the African space agenda, but will need to be complemented by an African Space Strategy and an Implementation Plan to give effect to the Policy.