

**THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ASRIC CONGRESS**

**Communiqué**

**RABAT, MOROCCO**

**5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2023**

## **Communiqué of the African Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC) 6<sup>th</sup> Congress – Rabat, Morocco**

The 6<sup>th</sup> ASRIC Congress was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of December, 2023 at the **Hassan II ACADEMY of Science and Technology Plenary Auditorium; Rabat, Morocco**. The Congress was held in a hybrid mode as participants attended online while others participated physically.

The Congress was preceded by a Pre-Congress Session “The ASRIC 6<sup>th</sup> Scientific Conference” that took place 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 where over 200 scientists from all over the continent attended online and on site. The scientific papers presented focused on the Congress theme “**Science, Technology and Innovation for Development**”. In furtherance, the Congress Members had a field visit to several STI facilities and industries in Tangier, on December 6.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, the Permanent Secretary of the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology, **Prof. Omar FassiFehri and Dr. Ahmed Hamdy** welcomed the participants. The Congress was officially opened by the ASRIC Chairperson, **Prof. Mostapha Bousmina**,

The theme of this year’s Congress was discussed during the Keynote addresses that focused on **STI as the driving force for Africa’s Development in the 21st Century and Beyond and the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution and the AI in Africa** which were presented by **Prof. Mostapha Bousmina** and **Prof. Khaled Ghedira**, respectively. This session, was followed by a presentation of the ASRIC Frameworks and Reports session, where **the African Union Science, Technology, and Innovation Framework on Africa Free of Viral Hepatitis; Africa Free of Hepatitis Project; and the Proposal for designating the ASRIC Centres of Excellence** were presented.

Since the Flagship Projects constitute one of the pillars of ASRIC in regards to both implementing its mandate and achieving its overall objectives, four sessions were allocated to the lead scientists to present status reports on their respective projects, ultimately the presentations attracted intensive discussions and deliberations.

The congress discussions and deliberation resulted in **the following decisions:**

### **1. Keynote Address on STI as the driving force for Africa’s development:**

- a) The Congress acknowledges the need to develop an African agenda for development based on Science, Research and Innovation and to work out curricula that address Africa’s challenges.
- b) The need to change the paradigm of Africa’s Economy from extractive to transformative one driven by innovation, added value and entrepreneurship.

### **2. The 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution and the AI in Africa**

- a) The Congress realises the need for Africa to champion and participate actively in the Fourth Industrial Revolution to ensure its economic prosperity and the wellbeing of its population.

- b) The Congress pleads for the need to develop an African strategy (Position Paper) on the fourth industrial revolution and the secretariat was urged to setup a working group to develop such strategy (Position Paper).

### **3. Hepatitis Framework and the ASRIC Flagship Project on Africa Free of Hepatitis**

- a) The ASRIC calls upon Member States of the African Union to integrate the **African Union Science, Technology, and Innovation Framework on Africa Free of Viral Hepatitis** to the National Primary Health Strategies to ensure the eradication of the Viral Hepatitis by 2035.
- b) The ASRIC Congress recognizes with appreciation the achievement made on the implementation of the ASRIC Flagship project “**Africa Free of Hepatitis**” and commends the takeoff of its pilot phase in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.
- c) The Congress calls upon Member States and International Partners to participate actively in the ASRIC Africa Free of Hepatitis Project by availing their technical and financial supports.

### **4. On the Concept Note on Designating the ASRIC Centres of Excellence**

- a) The Congress notes with appreciation the Concept note on the Proposal for designating the ASRIC Centres of Excellence and appoints a committee of five academies to work along with the Bureau members for further improvement of the Concept note.
- b) An extraordinary session of the Congress will be convened virtually within three-months to examine and adopt the final concept note on ASRIC Centres of Excellence Designation.

### **5. Progress Report Presentation on Technology Hunters Project**

The Congress notes with appreciation the project conceptualization document and calls upon the lead scientist and his team to work closely with the ASRIC Secretariat to finalize ASRIC Technology Hunters Framework.

### **6. Presentation on COVID-19 Treatment Project**

- a) The Congress appreciates and recognizes the implementation of the **COVID-19 Treatment Project** and commends the technical and financial contributions of the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology and the Euromed University of Fez to this project.
- b) The Congress further calls upon the lead Scientist to develop criteria and terms of reference to facilitate the engagement of more relevant scientific institutions in this important project.

### **7. Presentation on African Disaster Management Research Centre (ADMIR)**

- a) The Congress endorses the report made on the Africa Disaster Management Research Centre and recognizes ADMIR as role model for other ASRIC centres of Excellence.
- b) In furtherance, the Congress acknowledges its vital role in building African Capacities and Capabilities in disaster management and calls upon partners to support the centre by availing technical and financial support.

## **8. Progress report Presentation on ASRIC Flagship Project on ASRIC Scholarship Scheme**

- a) The Congress notes the report on the ASRIC Scholarship Scheme and applauds the Euromed University of Fes for championing the Scholarship Scheme.
- b) The Congress calls upon leading African Universities to emulate the Euromed University of Fes by participating actively in the ASRIC Scholarship Scheme. The Secretariat was encouraged to send out calls for participation and to use innovative communication and marketing strategies in popularizing the scheme.
- c) The Congress request the Secretariat to identify innovative ways to enhance the participation of women Scientists in the ASRIC Scholarship scheme
- d) The Congress calls upon the African Union to support the ASRIC Scholarship Scheme to build Africa's talents for the continent advancement and prosperity.
- e) The Congress urges the Secretariat to develop a proposal of programmes for Co-supervision, Student Exchange and visiting Academics in order to attract African scholars and senior scientists in building students and faculty capacity within the ASRIC Scholarship scheme.
- f) The Congress further emphasises the need to tap on each other's comparative advantage and requests the Secretariat to setup modalities for a twinning programme between and among African learning and Research Institutions

## **9. Fighting Stunting in Africa: Waging War on Malnutrition and Pollution**

The Congress calls upon the working group to develop a white paper to be presented to all policy making levels in the AU and its Member States.

## **10. International Platform on Adaptation Metrics (IPAM)**

- a) The Congress appreciates the efforts of the ASRIC representative to IPAM and commends the work done by the platform and calls upon the ASRIC Secretariat and Bureau to be more involved.
- b) The Congress urges the ASRIC Secretariat to setup a virtual meeting to inform the Congress members on IPAM to publicize it and calls upon its members to join IPAM to ensure that African voice is heard.

## **11. Co-delivering School-based Anaerobic Digestors and Show-Labs' to Support Sustainable Circular Waste to energy to Food Security Solutions**

The Congress appreciates the presentation, commends the work done. The Congress further requests the presenter to prepare a cost benefit analysis, setup manuals and guidelines; and to avail engineering designs to ease the dissemination of such technology.

## **12. Presentations on ASRIC Diaspora Chapters on Resources Mobilization**

- a) The Congress appreciates the organization of the Forum of Africa Research in Diaspora (FARID) and notes the recommendation of FARID.
- b) The Congress notes with gratitude the support of Lancaster University in availing resources for the successful hosting of FARID.
- c) The Congress appreciates the ASRIC UK Chapter for the ongoing partnerships aimed at capacity building and fund raising.
- d) The effort made by the Australia Chapter Chair on Technology Transfer and Joint research with African-based Institutions is highly appreciated.
- e) The Congress calls upon the Australia Chapter Chair to explore the possibility of a forum on knowledge exchange capacity building in Australia.
- f) The ASRIC commends the efforts made by the Australia Chapter Chair to establish an African Studies Institute in Australia and recommends the Chair to build on the experiences gained in USA on the establishment of similar institution.
- g) The Congress recognises the need to engage more of the Africa Diaspora in ASRIC Programmes and activities. The Congress urges the Secretariat to work closely with the ASRIC Bureau to organize diaspora Africa Science Dialogue Conference that to be held on 2025.

## **13. Financial and Administrative Matters**

- a) The Congress observes with concern the shortage in financial and human resources that hinders the ASRIC from achieving its mandates, the Congress calls upon the African Union to provide ASRIC with the needed funds to fully play its role as a Pan-African Institution for promotion of STI throughout the continent.
- b) The Congress requests the Chairperson of ASRIC to have an urgent meeting with H.E. the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to report on the achievements of ASRIC and to present the recommendations of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASRIC Congress.

## **14. Appreciation**

- a) The Congress humbly expresses its gratitude and sincere thanks to **His Majesty, Mohammed VI, the King of Morocco Patron of the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology.**
- b) The Congress highly appreciates the support and the successful hosting of the 6<sup>th</sup> ASRIC Congress in Rabat by the Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology-Morocco.
- c) The Congress appreciates our esteemed Reviewers and African Scientists for their efforts, commitment and time in making the 6<sup>th</sup> ASRIC Scientific Conference a success.

- d) The Congress remains grateful to the lead Scientists and the Research Teams within the Flagship of ASRIC.
- e) Further appreciation goes to Members of the Congress who attended ASRIC Congress and meetings despite their engagement and tight schedules.
- f) The Congress finally appreciates the efforts of the ASRIC Bureau and the Secretariat in organizing and coordinating the Congresses and Bureau meetings as well as the working groups despite the minimal number of staff the Secretariat has.

## **15. Endorsement**

The Congress decisions are made and unanimously endorsed by the Congress participants on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2023 at Rabat, Morocco.