

Science, technology register progress since independence

draft report, said the document presents both an opportunity and challenge to scientists, policy makers and development planners to transform scientific knowledge into development programmes for the realisation of Uganda's development aspirations.

"Key among national aspirations is the uplifting of the population from absolute poverty through provision of basic human needs, achieving millennium development goals, transforming the economy from an agrarian to industrial economy, and enhancing its participation in global trade and development processes," he clarified.

priorities of the National Development Plan for the period 2010/11-2014/15.

This draft explained that Uganda's development prospects are intricately linked

with the pace of generation, adoption and utilisation of science and technology in the development process.

Finance minister Matia Kasajja, in the



Results. Kayoola Solar Bus made in Uganda by Kiira Motors Corporation. Uganda has made strides in science and technology. COURTESY PHOTO

Progress. Science and technology has registered progress from being under ministry of Finance to getting an own ministry.

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KAMPALA. At the time of independence, there were no explicit infrastructure to handle science, technology and innovation.

This was revealed by Dr Maxiwe Otim, the deputy executive secretary Uganda National Council of Science and Technology.

He said some of the African governments, started creating institutions to help them tap into science, technology and innovations. They also created universities and other institutions to facilitate the sector.

"As a matter of fact, Uganda created what we call the National Research Council in 1970, that was about 10 years after independence and this was basically to oversee research that was being conducted in the country," Dr Otim said.

He added: "Until 1990 when an elaborate institution called National Council for Science Technology was created by an Act of Parliament. In terms of governance we have really come a long way."

Dr Otim said originally, the science, technology and innovation sector was placed under the Ministry of Finance and Economic development.

He said last year, government created a ministry for Science Technology and Innovation as a dedicated ministry, which is growing and will play a big role in terms of policy and governance.

Heads of State summit in Addis Ababa recommended that each country commits 1 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product annually towards science and technology as well towards research and development. "We did quite well at one point, we went to about 0.6 per cent. But unfortunately it has now dropped at the last assessment it indicated about 0.35 per cent of the GDP," he added.

Dr Otim looking at that as a yardstick, Uganda still have a long way to go but we are making modest improvement.

Presidential support

There other support mechanism is the presidential support for scientists.

This is a funding mechanism to leverage innovations that some scientists come up with and can be picked and rolled out into the economy.

He added that this has worked well as innovations have come up.

There is also the national science and technology program which is also along that road. It is a modest handing that we put up for researchers and innovators to compete for funds.

"You put your idea on the table and compete for money and it is assessed. The idea that seems to be very appealing and credible is one that takes the day and we provide this so that innovators can polish their technology so that it is commercialised," Dr Otim said.

In 2011, the Ministry of Finance drafted a report dubbed "National Science, Technology and Innovation Plan". This was revealing that the government had placed science and



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H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of The Republic of Uganda commissioning powerline in Kalungu district in August 2017.

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