

Tensions High as Africa's Educational Integrity Is Called Into Question

A recap of the 2025 mock session of the AU's Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science, and Technology

By Cassie Merwin

Friday, November 7th: As delegates filed out of the room around 9:30 pm, the atmosphere felt tense and charged. Some delegates were pleased, as the resolution that passed was well-received, proposing regional research hubs with a practical, Afrocentric curriculum as a means to bolster Africa's continental research output.

Others were less satisfied. Speaking with the delegation of Rwanda, a chief signatory on the resolution which did not pass, outside of the room, he told me that "this is the stupidest thing I have ever been part of. People did not pass my resolution for the reason that I had already prepared the talking points before the committee started. For the other resolution, it seemed as if the resolution did not meet the minimum requirements. It was also written in very poor language and it encouraged international investment into Africa, the opposite of what we were aiming for in this committee session." It is clear that there is some resentment brewing, and some delegations that may not be inclined to support these proposed solutions when the time for implementation comes. Whether or not this will pose a problem remains to be seen.

While it may be in the best interest of the Rwandan delegation to address fellow delegates with less animosity, he is not entirely mistaken. Of the delegations present, Rwanda is to be commended for its evident dedication to this cause. Though it may seem unfair to suggest that its fellow delegates were dismissive of its contributions simply because thorough research had been conducted, some of its points did appear to go unacknowledged. That said, the leadership of Morocco and Côte d'Ivoire was on full display throughout the evening, as both delegations rallied their peers through the resolution drafting process, conducting themselves with impressive decorum even when faced with challenging questions from the press.

On the whole, the session felt hurried and congested. While some delegates were able to distinguish themselves regardless, the fact that only one moderated caucus was held was a significant blow to available speaking time. In conversation with the delegate from South Sudan, she shared that she felt she had not been allotted adequate speaking time. As a result, she was unable to fully articulate her position, leaving other delegates with an incomplete understanding of her perspective, an observation that aligned with this reporter's own assessment.

The conclusion, then, is that this committee session's productivity suffered not from the shortcomings of its delegates, but from a lack of breathing room. Everything was rushed, from the single moderated caucus to the unmoderated sessions to the voting procedures. By the time voting was reached, time was so limited that certain rights had to be suspended, a considerable setback for delegates who had been hoping to elaborate and defend their positions. The resolution that did pass was sound, but felt somewhat incomplete. In their focus on making progress, delegates appeared to lose sight of the finer details, which are, after all, the critical elements when crafting international policy.