



**ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES  
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITES AFRICAINES**

**اتحاد الجامعات الافريقيه**

**Meeting on Regional Harmonization of  
Higher Education for Africa**

**(From 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Accra, Ghana)**

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENT  
FOR  
PARTICIPANTS**

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## Introductory Note

There are diverse systems of higher education within Africa which are based on different national or colonial and other legacies. One of the results of this is the lack of recognition of different forms of certification, and this limits African integration and the mobility of students across the continent. The African Union Commission (AUC) has therefore embarked on a process of developing a framework for harmonization of Higher Education Programmes in Africa. The rationale for this is based on the belief that such an initiative will help to foster cooperation in information exchange, harmonization of procedures and policies, and attainment of comparability among qualifications to facilitate professional mobility for both employment and further study. Creation of centres of excellence will also be optimized when there are mutually acceptable standards for certification and quality in African institutions for higher education.

The African Union Strategy for Harmonization of Higher Education Programmes (AU HEP Harmonization Strategy) will help to develop an African quality assurance mechanism and a rating system for higher education which ultimately contribute to greater quality of education in Africa. It will also promote international, continental, and regional cooperation by creating awareness, and promoting revision and ratification of the Arusha convention. The AU HEP Harmonization Strategy and the establishment of a quality rating mechanism have been endorsed by the Third Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education (COMEDAF III).

A validation meeting was organized in March 2008 by the AAU, on behalf of and in collaboration with the AUC, to discuss and adopt an effective way towards implementing the African Union Harmonization Strategy; the Quality Rating Mechanism; and the revision of the Arusha Convention. It was pledged to sustain the implementation of the processes and embark on aligning organizational activities in support of regional harmonization. In the *Statement of Commitment of the Validation Meeting*, it was agreed to raise awareness about the harmonization strategies; to facilitate interactions with national governments (quality assurance agencies, accreditation bodies, Ministry of education, etc); and to share reports on progress made in the implementation of aligned activities. It was also committed to formalize relationships; and streamline existing initiatives at the continental, regional, national, and institutional levels. As follow-up to the validation meeting and to sustain cooperation for advancing the higher education harmonization process, the Association of African Universities will organize a regional harmonization workshop to be held in Accra, Ghana from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2009.

This document is prepared to provide an overall introduction to the African Union Harmonization Strategy of higher education programmes by highlighting the core focus areas. It aims to facilitate effective preparation of participants to the regional harmonization meeting by providing background input for better conceptualization; and to support effective dialogue in maintaining sustained commitment at regional and continental level for moving the harmonization process forward.

## **HARMONIZATION**

***Harmonization refers to the agreement, synchronization and coordination of higher education provision in Africa. Harmonization is not synonymous with standardization, creating uniformity, or achieving identical higher education systems. Whilst developing and agreeing to minimum standards and ensuring equivalency and comparability of qualifications between and within countries are important elements of this process, a primary focus is to enhance quality across the sector and facilitate processes that lead higher education systems to be able to inter-operate more effectively to the benefit of development on the continent.***

### **Principles of Harmonization**

The following principles underpin all harmonization efforts in Africa:

- Harmonization should be an African-driven process.
- Harmonization should involve the mobilization of all the key players.
- Harmonization should be enhanced with appropriate infrastructural support and funding.
- Harmonization should not disrupt, but enhance, national educational systems and programmes and should involve improvement of quality through appropriate funding and infrastructural provisions in each country.

### **Goals of Harmonization**

The African Union strategy for harmonization of higher education programmes has the following goals:

- Bridge the gap between disparate educational systems that exist as a result of colonial legacies by coordinating efforts of national accreditation bodies;
- Provide an integrating platform for dialogue and action to develop strong regional harmonization initiatives that cohere into a continental process of harmonization;
- Facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications and promote the mobility of African students and academic staff across the continent;
- Promote the development of effective quality assurance mechanisms; and
- Ensure that African higher education institutions become an increasingly dynamic force in the international higher education arena.

**The initial focus of the African Union Harmonization Strategy is on building political commitment and ensuring streamlining of current harmonization efforts at regional and continental levels.**

## **Core Areas of the African Union Harmonization Strategy**

The African Union Strategy for Harmonization of Higher Education Programmes comprises the following five major result areas.

### **MAJOR AREA – ONE: Establishment and Maintenance of Continental Political Commitment to the Process of Harmonization**

- *Endorsement of the Harmonization Strategy by Ministers in charge of Higher Education*
- *Statements of Commitment from Key Organizations*
- *Revision and Expanded Ratification of the Arusha Convention*
- *Creation and Promotion of Forums for Networking*

### **MAJOR AREA – TWO: Cooperation in information exchange**

- *Establishment and Maintenance of a Central Database of African Higher Education Institutions and their Programmes*
- *Establishment of an African System to Measure Performance of Higher Education Institutions*
- *Representation of African Interests in Global Higher Education Harmonization and Ranking Systems*

### **MAJOR AREA – THREE: Development and Maintenance of a Continental Framework for Higher Education Qualifications**

- *Provision of Support to Countries in Establishing and Running Accreditation and Quality Assurance Bodies*
- *Establishment and Maintenance of Regional Higher Education Harmonization Processes that are Aligned with Each Other and Integrated into a Common, Continental Framework of Qualifications*
- *Commissioning of Research in Key Areas*

### **MAJOR AREA – FOUR: Creation of Minimum Standards in Targeted Qualifications**

### **MAJOR AREA – FIVE: Establishment of Joint Curriculum Development and Student Mobility Schemes**

## **ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF CONTINENTAL POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS OF HARMONIZATION**

Key to the success of harmonization is the establishment of political commitment and strong regional collaboration. The first and most critical step in the AU Harmonization Strategy will be to secure strong political commitment for streamlining initiatives at continental and regional levels. It is necessary to create synergy and strong links between the various continental and regional organizations for active involvement in a wide range of higher education harmonization activities. The following specific results are proposed within the first major area.

- Endorsement of the Harmonization Strategy by Ministers in charge of Higher Education
- Statements of Commitment from Key Organizations
- Revision and Expanded Ratification of the Arusha Convention
- Creation and Promotion of Forums for Networking

### ***Endorsement of the Harmonization Strategy by Ministers of Higher Education***

The AU Harmonization Strategy is endorsed by the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III). It is, however, important to ensure that this endorsement is seen by Ministers as part of a process of continuity, linked to other historical initiatives, particularly the ongoing process of reviewing and updating the Arusha Convention. In fact, harmonization of higher education cannot be achieved without the commitment of individual countries to engage in the various continental and regional processes and to contribute the necessary information. From a political perspective, it will not be possible to achieve this without the endorsement and active support of Ministers of Education.

### ***Statements of Commitment from Key Organizations***

It is proposed that Statements of Commitment from Key Organizations will be done through the following process:

- Discuss contributions of each organization to the overall strategy, with a view to identifying specified roles to support the harmonization process
- Review and finalize a work plan for AU Harmonization Strategy based on final agreement on contributions of individual partners
- Prepare and negotiate Memoranda for signature by principals (or their mandated representatives) of key potential partners to the Harmonization Strategy
- Conduct regular bi-annual meetings to review progress and discuss next phases of implementation

The African Union will need to secure strong political commitment from African countries and the regional economic communities. Furthermore, human and financial resources will need to be dedicated to driving the harmonization process if it is to be successful. A critical step towards achieving harmonization will be to coordinate efforts at regional and continental levels in order to eliminate unnecessary duplication of initiatives. It will be important to negotiate signed statements of commitment from each of the organizations regarding their participation.

### ***Revision and Expanded Ratification of the Arusha Convention***

It is proposed that the process of reviewing and updating the Convention be done in partnership with the UNESCO and the African Union Commission, so that the Arusha Convention can formally become a mechanism of the AU Harmonization Strategy. Promoting revision and ratification of the Arusha convention will require the following process to be implemented:

- Finalize negotiations to facilitate cooperation between the AU and UNESCO in revising the Arusha Convention and preparing it for ratification by Ministers.
- Hold meeting of AUC, UNESCO, RECs, AAU, and other key stakeholders to finalize revised Arusha Convention.
- Hold continental conference to re-launch revised Arusha Convention.
- Commission specialized inputs to expand the Convention where necessary.
- Undertake one-on-one lobbying of countries, as well as promoting ratification of the convention through activities of RECs.
- Prepare revised Arusha Convention and Annexes for presentation to Ministers at Fourth Ordinary Session (COMEDAF IV).

### ***Creation and Promotion of Forums for Networking***

The purpose of networking is to create dialogue and to reduce the number of different groups working in isolation, and often duplicating efforts. Networking allows for an appreciation of the benefits of harmonization and commitment to implementing the Strategy at political and academic levels. It can also facilitate in developing a sense of ownership of the processes of harmonization. Various networking mechanisms can be created to facilitate cooperation, exchange of ideas, and collaboration. It will be critical to ensure that ongoing forums for networking, dialogue, and consultation are established that involve all of the key organizations in the development and implementation of the processes. It is important to stimulate the development of:

- Creating a system of networking for quality assurance and accreditation bodies.
- Regular meetings, workshops, and conferences coordinated by the African Union on continental level and RECs at regional levels.

## COOPERATION IN INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The essential, initial building block for an effective harmonization strategy is to ensure that participating countries make their information on higher education programmes available to a central database. The purpose of such a tool would be to improve access to up-to-date, accurate, and comprehensive information on recognized higher education institutions and their programmes at the continental level. The information tool would also be of value for quality assurance agencies, recognition bodies, professional bodies, and employers. Creation and maintenance of a searchable, online database of information on higher education programmes in Africa presupposes a series of actions that demand high levels of cooperation in information exchange. In particular, it demands the following:

- Establishment of reputable, reliable accreditation and quality assurance agencies within each participating country that would take responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and validity of data submitted to the Continental HE Information Tool;
- Agreement on standardized formats for capturing data across countries in order to ensure that data being compared is, so to speak, comparing 'apples with apples', leading to agreed, open data standards for sharing data on higher education in Africa;
- Possible reform of some higher education systems, in order to ensure that programs from different higher education institutions are equivalent where required, without sacrificing the flexibility and autonomy that each institution and discipline will require to design contextually appropriate programs;
- Electronic management of data at national level, in online databases that conform to the open standards defined for Africa and that can allow for real-time synchronization of data from national level to the regional level and into the continental system.

### ***Establishment and Maintenance of a Central Database of African Higher Education Institutions and their Programmes***

This involves establishing a database of critical information, accessible via an online portal, on the status of recognition of higher education institutions and programmes. The portal will need to provide access to basic information on the following key datasets:

- National Higher Education Systems.
- Quality Assurance and Accreditation Bodies (Continental, Regional, and National).
- Higher Education Institutions and their Programmes.

All national higher education accreditation and quality assurance agencies within countries will be required to maintain their data about accredited higher education providers and programmes in some form of managed data system. Thus, it will be necessary to support these national partners in developing database systems where they do not already have such systems. It will need to be clear that all participating national partners provide full rights of use to the AU Commission *for the data that they export to the central Information Tool*. Each national partner will thus be required to enter into a legal agreement with the AU to provide these rights of use.

The development and maintenance of the continental Information Tool will depend heavily on the establishment of national databases that will link to the continental system and this requires the following process to be implemented.

- Identify existing databases and data-gathering processes with which relationships can be established to develop a common, continental Information Tool.
- Develop a draft common standard for sharing of data about registered higher education institutions and their programs.
- Finalize data standard and circulate to all relevant parties.
- Run pilot exercises with at least five countries from different sub-regions and using different languages to test data structure, data import, linguistic, and other relevant issues.
- Sign agreements with identified accreditation and quality assurance agencies to share data with the continental information tool, on at least a quarterly basis.
- Provide capacity-building support where required to assist emerging accreditation and quality assurance agencies to set up and manage data.

Countries will need to commit to systemic reform in order to ensure that their national Education Management Information Systems will be able to submit data to a continental system in ways that facilitate easy recognition and/or comparison.

### ***Establishment of an African System to Measure Performance of Higher Education Institutions***

As a second phase of establishing a reliable database of information about higher education institutions and programmes, it is proposed to implement an African system to measure performance of higher education institutions. The purpose of the quality rating mechanism is threefold:

- Establishing an African system will ensure that the performance of higher education institutions can be compared against a set of criteria that takes into account the unique context and challenges of higher education delivery on the continent.

- Creating a system that facilitates improvements in quality of delivery of institutions across the continent, and allow for an objective measure of performance.
- A continental system will pave the way for African institutions to compete more effectively in similar systems in operation at a global level, while also creating a case for review of the basis on which those global systems operate.

Establishment of an African system to measure performance of higher education institutions will require the following process to be implemented.

- Complete literature survey presenting information on and analysis of existing relevant systems used to measure and, where relevant, rank performance of HE institutions
- Prepare draft sets of criteria for proposed first phase of system.
- Complete consultations (circulation of questionnaires and experts' meeting) to discuss and review draft criteria and to discuss appropriate processes for implementation
- Pilot the quality rating mechanism in selected universities from different regions of the continent
- Apply performance benchmarking system in Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme.

It was noted, in the validation meeting of Accra (March 2008), the need for ongoing refinement and enriching of the existing African Union Quality Rating Mechanism. The proposed mechanism shall be reviewed and further enriched for effective utilization.

### ***Representation of African Interests in Global Higher Education Harmonization and Ranking Systems***

This will entail encouraging African higher education institutions to participate in global institutional ranking systems, while interacting with these systems to understand how they work and to ensure that they take account of the unique context of higher education delivery in Africa. The purpose of these activities will be threefold:

- Lobby international benchmarking systems to ensure that their ranking systems give weight to the unique strengths of African higher education institutions in how they do their rating.
- Encourage African higher education institutions to ensure that their institutional performances are comparable with the best institutions globally.
- Ensure that African higher education is a part of global higher education systems.

## **DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS**

The most important result area for this Harmonization Strategy will be to work through RECs and other relevant bodies to establish a continental framework for comparison of qualifications. It is proposed that the process of establishing a continental framework for qualifications be driven through the RECs, rather than as a single, continental process. This will enable the AU to build on momentum already established through some regional processes, and will allow the process of African harmonization to take account of the varying contexts that exist across the continent, while ensuring ongoing alignment of these different efforts. The process of establishing a continental framework for higher education qualifications is anticipated to operate at national, regional, and continental levels:

### At national level

The establishment and operations of national accreditation and quality assurance bodies will form the backbone of a continental harmonization strategy, ensuring that countries' higher education systems are producing information about qualifications and programmes that can be compared across the continent and working to ensure that the quality of higher education is improved within countries. Different countries are, however, at significantly different stages in the implementation of such agencies, with some already having well-established agencies in operation and other not yet having established any such agency.

### At a regional level

Most RECs have already established commitments to processes of higher education regionally, in an effort to promote economic integration. Thus, it seems logical to continue to support these efforts, placing particular emphasis on those regions where work has not yet commenced and facilitating sharing of information and exchange of experiences in order to encourage simultaneous progress across the different regions. Using this model, it will be possible to ensure that the process of harmonization can take place in a staggered fashion, with both individual countries and regions joining the continental initiative, as they are ready. This is critical, as there are significant differences in the preparedness of countries and regions to be integrated into a system of harmonization and thus in the time it will take them to become meaningfully involved. Thus, a regional approach will allow the work of harmonization to continue even where individual countries and regions are not yet ready.

This will also serve as an incentive for countries and regions that are further behind to accelerate their efforts, in order to join the continental process, without penalizing them unduly for delays. It will also enable the AU Commission to focus its effort on collaboration with and provision of support for RECs, rather than inadvertently competing with them.

### At continental level

The primary function of the AUC will be to ensure that individual regional efforts are aligned with one another, and that they therefore ultimately cohere into a single, common framework of qualifications for Africa. It will also focus effort and investment on developing the capacity of countries and RECs to be able to join the continental process and to be able to perform the functions necessary to ensure that continental framework is fully operational by the end of the second decade of education in Africa by 2015. Initially the priority would be agreeing on a conceptual framework for describing qualifications as there are different ways to express and measure study programs, including time-based approaches, credit points, identification of learning outcomes and competencies, qualifications and level indicators, and subject benchmarks. Without these common approaches, full recognition, real transparency and thus harmonization will be difficult to achieve.

### ***Provision of Support to Countries in Establishing and Running Accreditation and Quality Assurance Bodies***

Given that different countries are at different stages in the development of accreditation and quality assurance bodies, in countries where no such bodies exist, or where the development of accreditation and quality assurance bodies have recently been initiated, there is a need to facilitate the development and growth of such bodies. This calls for the development of accreditation and quality assurance tools, and resources that will provide guidelines to countries to allow them to begin to participate in regional and continental processes of higher education harmonization. It is critical that these tools are designed in such a way that they ensure that the activities of national agencies facilitate participation of the country in processes of harmonization across the continent. Thus, the tools and resources should be developed in such a way that they align national efforts with a broader continental drive towards a common framework for higher education qualifications. This will include:

- Development of tools and resources that support countries in setting up and maintaining accreditation and quality assurance bodies for higher education.
- Needs assessments to establish capacity building needs of Member States.
- Implementation of professional development initiatives to build the capacity of countries to be able to establish and run effective accreditation and quality assurance bodies.

The success of harmonization initiatives depends on having credible and reliable agencies within countries that are responsible for providing standardized information about what higher education programmes are available within countries and for ensuring quality of those programmes.

Thus, there is also a need to build the capacity of countries and such agencies (where they exist) to be able to establish and run effective accreditation and quality assurance processes by implementing ongoing professional development initiatives. As different countries are at different stages in the development of accreditation and quality assurance bodies, it will be possible to establish a mentoring process whereby others who are more advanced in the process can provide support to countries in early stages of development of such bodies. Finally, these accreditation and quality assurance agencies will take responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and validity of data submitted to the Continental Information Tool, and thus further professional development in the use of the tool will be required.

Supporting the development of national accreditation and quality assurance agencies will require the following process to be implemented.

- Needs assessment for capacity building
- Capacity-building workshops
- Implement rolling programmes of capacity building and support for countries, to be coordinated through REC activities

***Establishment and Maintenance of Regional Higher Education Harmonization Processes that are Aligned with Each Other and Integrated into a Common, Continental Framework of Qualifications***

As has been noted, RECs will be the key vehicles through which a common continental framework of qualifications will be established by the end of the second decade of education. Thus, it is critical that RECs are capacitated to drive regional harmonization processes that will ultimately see the establishment of a common continental framework of higher education qualifications. To support RECs effectively, the following activities are required:

- Provision of support to RECs in the development of harmonization plans for the second decade of education, building on existing processes and commitments at regional level as appropriate.
- Achievement of consensus amongst RECs on common frameworks, targets, and methods of operation to ensure that regional harmonization processes lead to the establishment of a common continental framework of higher education qualifications by 2015.
- Development and implementation of joint strategies to ensure that RECs are able to secure the resources – human, financial, and material – that are needed to implement their harmonization plans, including provision of ongoing capacity-building initiatives for RECs. It is anticipated that this will, as a minimum, include securing the funding for dedicated personnel to work within REC offices to drive harmonization processes at the regional level.

Based on this, establishment and maintenance of regional higher education harmonization processes that are aligned with each other and integrated into a common, continental framework of qualifications will require the following process to be implemented.

- Hold planning workshops with each REC to assess progress and to define plans for action
- Based on planning workshops and additional research/consultation, determine resource requirements for each REC to be able to implement its regional harmonization strategy.
- Combine all regional plans into a single, integrated continental plan to ensure consistency of strategy.
- Hold a continental workshop with all RECs and other stakeholders to present and refine single, integrated continental plan ahead of presentation to COMEDAF IV.
- Mobilize fundraising processes and secure financial resources to implement REC plans and to provide ongoing capacity-building support for effective implementation of the harmonization strategy.
- Hold annual meetings of RECs to report on progress, confirm alignment of processes, and verify progress towards establishment of common continental framework of higher education qualifications.

### ***Commissioning of Research in Key Areas***

The final support activity in this result area will be the commissioning of research on important issues to support and feed into the regional and continental processes of harmonization. This will include, but not be limited to, research on:

- The role of cross-border higher education in supporting or eroding national higher education systems in Africa;
- Research-based comparison of progress with harmonization processes from other parts of the world;
- Effective quality assurance of higher education programs;
- Non-educational factors affecting mobility of higher education graduates; and
- Strategies to encourage students from outside Africa to study at African higher education institutions.

It is anticipated that at least one major research project would be commissioned every two years to augment the harmonization process, including at least one major research project on the role of harmonization in achieving gender equity in higher education and extending higher education to vulnerable groups.

## CREATION OF MINIMUM STANDARDS IN TARGETED QUALIFICATIONS

An important parallel process to the establishment of a continental framework for qualifications is the development of common minimum standards in specific identified qualifications. Although creation of standards in certain qualifications will no doubt be an important part of the Harmonization Strategy, harmonization processes need not lead to uniformity in higher education. Rather, the focus is on developing quality and facilitating processes that lead higher education systems to be able to inter-operate more effectively to the benefit of development on the continent.

This should not be confused with standardizing curricula, a process which would be inappropriate in a higher education context and across the multiple country contexts of Africa. However, agreeing on minimum standards in identified areas will facilitate portability of credits by allowing businesses to know that graduates of programmes that conform to these minimum standards can reliably be employed with the appropriate skills and competences in that area.

Issues that would be considered include:

- Criteria for admission of students into programs leading to identified qualifications;
- Programs of study and credit loads;
- Minimum coverage of learning outcomes, subject matter, etc required for a program to be considered to meet the needs of employers;
- Certification obtained at the end of the program;
- Minimum qualifications of teaching staff; and
- Minimum teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure

The quality assurance bodies in each country would be responsible for ensuring that providers conform to standards once these are agreed. Agreement on minimum standards in higher education qualifications will require the following process to be implemented.

- Identify all disciplinary/curriculum areas in which minimum continental standards need to be agreed and order them into levels of priority from a developmental perspective
- Identify existing standards, which can be used as a platform to establish common standards
- Complete desktop research to ensure alignment of standards with international standards that may exist in the identified area

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT MOBILITY SCHEMES**

Joint Curriculum Development and Mobility Schemes contribute towards the exchange of knowledge across the continent, and promote transparency between higher education institutions in Africa. They can take a variety of forms including:

- Academic exchange, including student exchange programs, staff exchange, guest lecturing, and so on;
- Joint study programs and joint degrees, where student studies are carried out in two different institutions;
- Sandwich schemes, where students carry out their research and studies alternately in their home country and in a host country, but the qualification is obtained at the home institution;

Strictly speaking, such initiatives fall outside of the framework of a continental Harmonization Strategy. However, they provide an excellent mechanism for achieving the goals of harmonization through bottom-up collaboration. Consequently, it will be critical for the AU Commission to create an environment that supports such collaborative work on an ongoing basis. In this regard, the following specific activities are proposed.

- Develop a comprehensive African Union strategy for facilitating joint curriculum development and student mobility schemes
- Identify and catalogue existing initiatives that are already focusing on facilitating joint curriculum development and student mobility schemes
- Establish dedicated capacity within the AU to facilitate collaborative schemes and to support interested institutions in mobilizing funding for their collaborations

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The coordinate efforts of relevant organizations at national, regional and continental levels are critical to successful implementation of the African Union Harmonization Strategy. Thus, it is necessary to build strong links, formalize relationships, and create synergy between initiatives across the continent. Clarifying specific roles and responsibilities of key players involved in the process and setting specific annual action plans with time frames is necessary to streamline coordinated activities for taking the process of harmonization forward. The efficient implementation of the harmonization strategy clearly requires securing dedicated funding; as well as appointing full-time technical core staff in the African Union Commission, and coordinators in the RECs, and the Association of African Universities.

## **Key Organizations for Implementing the Harmonization Process**

The following regional and continental organizations play key role in implementing the African Union strategy for harmonization of higher education programmes.

### **Organizations at Continental Level**

- The African Union Commission (AUC)
- The Association of African Universities (AAU)
- The UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa (UNESCO/BREDA)
- The Association for the Development of Education in Africa – Working Group on Higher Education (ADEA-WGHE)
- The African Council for Distance Education (ACDE)
- The Institut Pan-africain de l'Education pour le Développement (IPED)

### **Regional Economic Communities (RECs)**

- The Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- The Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)

### **Regional Associations of Universities / *Regional Council for Higher Education***

- The South African Regional Universities Association (SARUA)
- The Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA)
- The Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur / African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES)
- The Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)
- The Association of Arab Universities (AARU)

**Note:** The Association of African Universities is designated as the lead implementing agency for the African Union Commission's higher education activities.