



**ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITES AFRICAINES
اتحاد الجامعات الإفريقية**

COREVIP 2019 COMMUNIQUE

The Association of African Universities (AAU) held its 20th Conference of Rectors, Vice Chancellors and Presidents on 8-11 July, 2019 in Cairo, Egypt, under the theme: ***“The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Promoting Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)”***.

The Conference was held under the Patronage of His Excellency Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

We, participants at the Conference,

1. **Appreciate** the President, the Grand Imam and the staff and students of Al-Azhar University for collaboratively hosting this Conference.
2. **Welcome** the support of sponsors and development partners, including the European Union (EU), TVET Egypt, National Bank of Egypt, Arab Academy for Science and Maritime Transport, Carnegie Corporation of New York and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), in the organization of this Conference.
3. **Acknowledge** the EU's funding programmes available to African higher education institutions, agencies, staff, students and researchers as presented during the Conference.

4. **Note with concern** that, three years into the CESA period, the African Union (AU) is yet to back the CESA with appropriate level of funding.
5. **Observe** that, from the reports by the CESA Higher Education Sub-Clusters, the AU needs re-double its efforts to persuade Member States to ratify the Addis Ababa Convention if the objectives of CESA are to be achieved by 2025; and that areas not covered by the existing sub-Clusters should be taken as cross cutting issues for all the sub-Clusters to address.
6. **Broadly resolve** to accelerate activities at the higher education institutional level that can promote CESA's contributions to the African Union's (AU) vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.
7. **Consequently, urge** Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to take the following critical steps in the thematic areas discussed at the conference, towards realising the above resolution:

CESA Higher Education Contribution in the areas of STEM Curriculum Reforms and TVET

- a. **Raise** the number and proficiency of faculty and teachers in STEM subjects, as well as reform curricula continually to remove misalignment and inconsistencies with neighboring or user disciplines, innovate delivery mechanisms, improve student engagement and promote industry relevance.
- b. **Encourage** African universities to develop Institutional frameworks for systemic change in undergraduate STEM education (at department, faculty, college, and university levels) and address key institutional elements necessary for improving the quality of STEM teaching and learning.
- c. **Reform** the TVET system to enhance an integrated competency-based model, which promotes good governance and management, effective professional development and quality assurance, and productive transition to employment, aimed at enhancing relevant skills as well as addressing skills gaps in various areas of the economy.

CESA Higher Education Contribution in the areas of Revitalization, Research, Innovation and Conflict Management

- d. **Demonstrate** commitment to revitalisation, research, innovation and conflict management by allocating specific proportions of their internal annual budgets to these areas.

- e. **Insist that** host governments allocate the CESA-agreed one per cent of GDP to Research and Innovation; and promote intra-Africa R&D cooperation as well as publication review mechanisms.
- f. **Leverage** the AAU African Research & Education Network (AfREN) project to facilitate improved teaching, learning and research collaborations, as well as use network economies of scale to reduce the cost of high-speed internet access and promote linkages of academics to industry, government and other international research/educational networks.
- g. **Subscribe** to large scale academic research infrastructures, such as Africa Light Source Initiative, to encourage African scientists to do research in Africa.
- h. **Call** for large scale academic research infrastructures, such as Africa Light Source facility, to strengthen the quality of research conducted in Africa.
- i. **Embed** “Educating for a Peaceful Society”, into all curricula at all educational levels, empathy, by inculcating respect for human rights, the golden rule of ‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you’, and the culture of non-violence in conflict resolution.

CESA Higher Education Contribution in the areas of Data Management and ICT

- j. **Integrate and scale up** management information and ICT systems to enhance access and quality, data collection and analysis as well as reduce the cost of data management. This involves, for instance, research management and administration modules that are comprehensive and robust enough to handle such elements as Opportunity Scanning, Grant Management, Research Dissemination, Research Ethics (RE), Student Research, and Professional Development.

CESA Higher Education Contribution in the areas of Mobility (via Quality Assurance and Harmonization) and New Ways of Educational Improvement

- k. **Cultivate and deepen** mutual trust at the governmental level, understanding and respect for educational systems as well as mobility opportunities within Africa and other countries.
- l. **Appeal** to the AU, through AAU, to encourage their host governments to sign and ratify the Addis Ababa Convention, in the spirit of the recent ratification of the Africa Free Trade Areas, in order to promote inter-regional and international co-operation in the field of recognition of qualifications.

- m. **Leverage** international mobility mechanisms such as the European Union initiatives and inter-institutional joint degree programmes, in a manner that strategically benefits Africa.
- n. **Lead evidence-based advocacy and work with the AU** for the creation of an African Academic Network on Regional Integration, including the establishment of such Networks and Centres of Excellence on a pilot scale in individual Regional Economic Communities.
- o. **Work with AAU** to explore and adopt appropriate certificate verification tools, make them available on websites, and use the African Qualification Verification Network to facilitate the process, as a way of improving education and mobility across Africa. Also work with the AAU to support further initiatives with a focus on academic mobility such as the African Jobs Board.
- p. Encourage African governments to give priority to academics in issuing African Passports to overcome visa issuing challenges, facilitate mobility and achieve integration.

CESA Higher Education Contribution to Engagement with the Diaspora for Promoting African Higher Education

- q. Mobilise Africa's diasporans, as the Continent's biggest offshore asset, to help with educating the youth bulge in Africa.
- r. **Develop** strategic partnerships between the African HEIs and diasporans in North America and Europe including the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the USA to contribute to the CESA agendas.
- s. Work with AAU to create an online platform for diasporans to register their contributing capabilities (such as expertise, projects and availability), as well as soften the rigidities that tend to frustrate authentic diasporans' offers.

CESA Higher Education Contribution in Identifying New Directions in Improving Management of Education

- t. **Reduce** the loss of indigenous or traditional research findings to the outside world by encouraging intra-Africa research and publication reviews, patronising Africa-based publishing houses and journals, and ensuring that institutional libraries subscribe to local collections as well as develop integrated Data Management Plans to manage all research data and findings from within the institutions.

- u. **Harness** digital disruption to innovate teaching, research, learning, unbanding of certification through micro degrees programmes;
- v. **Strengthen** the linkages between the world of work and education and training systems to improve graduate employability, lifelong learning and general social impact.

In closing,

We, participants at the Conference,

- s. **Applaud** the AAU for successfully organising the 2019 COREVIP, which has profoundly refocused the HEIs in Africa in promoting *CESA 16-25*.
- t. **Urge** AAU to undertake a review of the implementation of this Communiqué and report the progress achieved at the next COREVIP.

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Rapporteur General