



## Ministerial Communiqué on Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa, 20 - 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2016, Cape Town, South Africa

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) with support of national, regional, continental and international partners hosted a Ministerial Round Table at the Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference at the Century City Conference Centre, Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting was attended by representatives of the governments of Benin, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa and Uganda and was preceded by a meeting of technical experts from respective Governments.

### The objectives of the meeting were to:

1. Discuss and deliberate on key messages from previous relevant meetings to highlight how Africa can respond to key challenges for improving higher education in Africa, such as, among others, the Lilongwe Ministerial Conference in October, 2015; the side event on 'Strengthening higher education to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals' organized by His Excellency, Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of Republic of Malawi at the 70th United Nations General Assembly, 2015; the Khartoum meeting of Principals and Deans; and the First Higher Education Summit held in Dakar, Senegal in 2015;
2. Agree on key issues and priorities for strengthening Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation that require high level policy commitment by African Ministers and Heads of State and Government;
3. Agree on a draft declaration to table before the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government championing Education, Science and Technology in Africa.

We, the Ministers and Senior Leaders of Higher Education, Science and Technology assembled at the Ministerial Round Table on Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation held at the Century City Conference Center (CCCC) in Cape Town, South Africa from 20-21 October 2016:

1. **Noting that** there are several critical challenges for the higher education sector such as: (i) globalisation, increased competition and the need for strong knowledge based economies; (ii) the importance of human capital to support the use of knowledge to support growth; (iii) the low gross enrolment levels of Higher Education in Africa, including research output, compared to the other parts of the world;

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2. **Recognising** that there is limited funding for postgraduate training in Africa and yet knowledge generation is critical for enhancing the quality of Higher Education and Development;
3. **Noting** the large number of small but largely disjointed efforts within the Higher Education sector that are not enabling the necessary transformation of the sector for accelerated growth through use of Science, Technology and Innovation for development;
4. **Recognising** the importance of higher education as a key mechanism to ensure the attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Africa as reflected in the recent establishment of the Committee of 10 African Heads of State and Governments to champion Education, Science, and Technology in Africa. The ten are: President Macky Sall, Senegal; President Ernest Bai Karoma, Sierra Leone; President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, Egypt; Beji Caid Essebsi, President of Tunisia; President Bongo Odimba, Gabon; President Idriss Deby Itno, Chad; President Peter Mutharika, Malawi; President Have Geingob, Namibia; President Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya; and President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, Mauritius.
5. **Noting** the significant expansion within the higher education sector, the spiralling intake of undergraduate students without parallel expansion in resources including funding, infrastructure, equipment, and staff at African universities;

**RECOMMEND** to the 10 African Heads of State and Government championing Education, Science and Technology constituted by the African Union in July 2015 that the following be considered and included in a Declaration to be made by the African Heads of State and Government during the AU January-February 2017 Summit:

1. A Core Planning Committee be formed by the African Union Commission to lead the preparation of the planned meeting in Malawi of the 10 Heads of State and Government championing Education, Science and Technology;
  - 1.1 Provide technical support to the meetings of the 10 Heads of State and Government championing education, science and technology including the first meeting to be held in Malawi;
  - 1.2 The planned meeting of Heads of State, private sector and academia, planned for March, 2017 in Mauritius;
  - 1.3 The Core Planning Committee be constituted by the African Union Commission to include Malawi, Mauritius, Egypt, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, the Association of African Universities, FANRPAN and RUFORUM; and,
  - 1.4 The African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank be approached to participate and support the meeting arrangements and support Higher Education initiatives in Africa.
2. Called for a Marshall Plan to escalate postgraduate training and staffing in African universities. The meeting called on African Heads of State and Government to commission

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RUFORUM to work with member States and Governments, especially Benin, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan and Uganda towards an initiative for escalating postgraduate and postdoctoral training in Africa in alignment with AU educational frameworks;

3. African Governments and Development partners increase long-term funding to the higher education sector, and particularly for postgraduate and postdoctoral training to ensure that there is enhanced use of knowledge to support growth in Africa and the AU Agenda 2063;
4. The private sector and high net worth individuals to enhance investments within the higher education sector and particularly for postgraduate training;
5. Member States to:
  - 5.1 Improve equitable access to higher Education across socio-economic quintiles and across gender;
  - 5.2 Strengthen use of ICTs to improve the decentralization of teaching and learning, enhance access to the wider public, and also reduce the costs of education in Africa;
  - 5.3 Improve the relevance, quality, governance and community impact of higher education institutions, including putting in place relevant frameworks.
6. Member states further commit to:
  - 6.1 establish an 'African university ranking system' that recognizes the specific need for Higher Education in Agriculture and other fields, that would encourage universities to address those needs;
  - 6.2 establish a continental 'accreditation standards and credit transfer system' to allow students and staff to switch between universities and widen their exposure which will improve academic mobility;
  - 6.3 Develop an 'academic mobility scheme' and strengthen Centres of Excellence to enhance mobility, regional level training and enhance economies of scope and scale.
7. African Union Commission to lead the process and put in place mechanisms to harmonise initiatives in support for higher education in Africa. In addition, the African Union Commission to improve the movement of staff and students to various African institutions, across the continent. Mobility can be enhanced by providing an enabling environment, as well as reducing challenges to inter-country mobility;

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Signed by:

| COUNTRY  | SIGNATURE |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Minister of Education, Science and Technology, BENIN                              | _____     |
| 2. Minister of Education, Science and Technology, EGYPT                              | _____     |
| 3. Cabinet Secretary, Education, KENYA   | _____     |
| 4. Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, MALI                        | _____     |
| 5. Minister of Education, Science and Technology, MALAWI                             | _____     |
| 6. Minister of Science, Technology and Higher and Professional Education; MOZAMBIQUE | _____     |
| 7. Minister of Education, NIGERIA  | _____     |
| 8. Minister of Higher Education and Research, SENEGAL                                | _____     |
| 9. Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, SUDAN                       | _____     |
| 10. Minister of Science and Technology, SOUTH AFRICA                                 | _____     |
| 11. Minister of State for Higher Education, UGANDA                                   | _____     |

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