



Association for the
Development of
Education in
Africa

WORKING GROUP ON HIGHER EDUCATION (WGHE)

An Analytical Study to

**Strengthen and Sustain the “African Higher Education &
Research Space” (AHERS)**

Outline of Presentation

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1. Rationale

- HE plays key role in economic & social development
- HE now has even greater role as knowledge producers & in assisting countries to become knowledge economies
- Countries recruit highly skilled knowledge workers globally to support their knowledge drive
- Knowledge, not natural resources, now a key factor in determining a country's global competitiveness

1. Rationale *(Cont'd)*

- Africa desperately needs a strong HE sector to assist in its rapid development
- Cannot afford to lose its trained manpower to other regions
- Needs to produce, seek & adapt knowledge to overcome its developmental challenges
- Must be part of global knowledge economy – locally relevant and globally competitive
- Because of limited resources, this can only be achieved by collaboration among African countries & their HE systems
- Hence the need for a strong continental HE ‘space’

2. Challenges

- Africa's HE & Research Space presently made up of disparate HE systems (Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, Arabophone)
- This handicaps academic mobility within Africa
- Because of under-funding & 'massification', quality of African HE has suffered
- Research output and postgraduate training very low due to lack of research-strong academics
- Insufficient differentiation and articulation within higher education systems limits lifelong learning opportunities

3. Opportunities

- African HE is one of AU's 8 priorities of the 2nd Decade of Education and receiving increasing attention by continental & international organisations
- Revitalization of HE is well under way
- Almost every REC in Africa has identified HE as a major area of reform
- Pledges for support for African HE from many international development/funding agencies & even from emerging economies (Brazil, China, India)
- Africa can learn from the successful Bologna Process in creating its European Higher Education Area

4. Background to Proposed Study

- UNESCO/ADEA Task Force for preparation of 2009 UNESCO WCHE identified creation of a HE & Research Area as a strategic orientation
- 2009 WCHE Communiqué emphasises need to develop an African HE & Research Area through institutional, national, regional & continental collaboration
- Creating a HE & Research Space fits in with AU's harmonization strategy for African HE
- In July 2009 ADEA WGHE Steering Committee decided to explore concept of creating African HE & Research Area through an analytical study

5. Accra Brainstorming Workshop

- ADEA/WGHE convened small group of key stakeholders to a Brainstorming Workshop in Accra in December 2010
- Objectives: to reflect on how to proceed with the Study, identify TOR, agree on approach, propose time frame & estimate costs
- Meeting supported by AUC and hosted by AAU
- Two important outcomes of Accra Workshop :
 - A Concept Note on African Higher Education & Research Space (AHERS) for a wider audience of stakeholders
 - Detailed proposals to undertake the Study through Research Cluster Teams

6. AHERS Concept Note

- Concept Note is available in English, French, Portuguese, Arabic & widely distributed through ADEA-WGHE's list-serve, networks and associations
- Key Steps for creating AHERS proposed in Concept Note:
 - Implementing Arusha Convention
 - Harmonization of Degree Structures and Credit Transfer
 - Promoting Quality Assurance
 - Promoting Research & PG Training through RCEs
 - Using ICT more Effectively
 - Promoting Open & Distance Learning and OERs
 - Building on Regional Initiatives (AArU, CAMES, IUCEA, SARUA, UEMOA, CAPA)

7. Study Methodology and Framework

- Methodology proposed by Accra Workshop was to create Research Cluster Teams (RCTs):
 - Regional Qualifications Frameworks & Harmonisation of Degree Structures
 - Quality Assurance
 - Academic Mobility
 - ICTs Open and Distance Learning and OERs
 - Differentiation & Articulation in HE & Lifelong Learning
 - Research & Postgraduate Training
 - Promoting & Implementing AHERS
 - Funding of AHERS

7. Study Methodology and Framework *(Cont'd)*

- Each RCT to have a team leader & to comprise several regional researchers, identified at Accra Workshop
- Each RCT to carry out a survey on its own topic in order to collect data, then analyse data & prepare a report
- A synthesis of all the RCT reports will then be made
- Secretariat for the Study to be the ADEA/WGHE at AUC, which will commission the RCT reports and coordinate the whole process through a Research Coordinating Committee
- Time frame for Study around 5 months as from commissioning of RCT reports
- Expected cost of Study approx. US\$100,000

8. MOBILISING SUPPORT

- Policy dialogue through ADEA and partners: AUC, UNESCO, AAU, EAU etc.
- Key international and continental H E forums including:
 - AAU-COREVIP, in May-June in Cape Town
 - UEMOA Launch in September in Bamako
 - ANIE conference in Abuja in October
 - IAU Conference in Nairobi in November
- Sub-regional HE bodies: (AArU, CAMES, IUCEA, SARUA, UEMOA, CAPA)
- African and global H E Experts including Diaspora

9. HOW TO CONTACT *AHERS*

AHERS welcomes your views and contributions

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