



Declaration

Adopted by participants of the EU-Africa Summit side event on higher education in Cape Town on 24 November 2010

Preamble

The Heads of State and Government of the African Union recognize the core value of Higher Education in:

- catalyzing sustainable development;
- the production of high quality human resources;
- the generation of new knowledge and technology;
- disseminating the results of scientific and technological research.

The African Union (AU) has identified Higher Education as a focal area in the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015).

The EU development policies with Africa emphasize the importance of cooperation in higher education to build high-quality capacity through: networking, mobility of students and scholars, partnership projects, institutional support and innovation.

Because it is the seed bed of advanced knowledge, rigorous analytical skills and high quality human resources Higher Education has a crucial role to play in:

- achieving the Millennium Development Goals, - teachers for basic education, medical practitioners to improve health; scientists and technologists to support agriculture and food security;
- economic growth and societal development;
- educating future generations of citizens, professionals and political leaders who can contribute to improving the quality of life, including good governance;
- ensuring effective, innovative, continuing curriculum development to provide the high level competences needed by all graduates to meet the future economic, social and political challenges.

As African countries face massification and enormous challenges in infrastructure, universal access to quality education must be matched with a responsive higher education system, including financing, retention, training and retraining teachers, harmonisation of educational structures, quality assurance, recognition of qualifications and research capacity.

Recalling

- That because of the 'critical role of universities in national development', the African Association of Universities Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium (2001), calls for 'the revitalisation of the African University, for a renewed sense of urgency in acknowledging the crucial role it should play in solving problems facing [the] continent', and urges African universities to 'give priority to effective and positive participation in global action, exchange and application of knowledge', and

calls upon African governments to assume responsibility for sustaining their universities, in partnership with other stakeholders..

- The 2nd Decade of Higher Education for Africa (2006-15) of the African Union, which confirms the urgent need to revitalize African higher education institutions and promote regional cooperation.
- The Declaration of the 2009 UNESCO World Higher Education Conference, that calls for 'partnerships and concerted action at national, regional and international levels to assure the quality and sustainability of higher education systems worldwide.
- The European University Association Prague Declaration (2009), which stressed the role of higher education in solving the financial crisis, and committed to 'enhancing global collaboration, partnership and presence beyond Europe as a priority for an ever greater number of universities with diverse missions, to ensure strategic presence and promote a more international outlook among students and staff alike, and, in particular in times of global financial crisis, to demonstrate active solidarity and cooperation.'

Noting

- The 11 May 2010 European Council conclusions on the internationalization of higher education that international academic cooperation should continue to be an important means for the EU to support the modernization efforts of its partners. By offering structured partnerships between higher education institutions from the EU and third countries, the EU can contribute to building local capacities - both within and beyond higher education institutions, retaining qualified university staff, and enhancing international academic exchanges and mobility. The Council asks the European Commission to continue to support international higher education partnerships, international academic cooperation and capacity-building actions, and to facilitate policy dialogue in higher education with interested third countries.
- The 2010 revisions to the Cotonou Agreement which recognize the need to improve education and training at all levels, to work towards recognition of tertiary education qualifications, to establish quality assurance systems for education, including education and training delivered on line or through other non-conventional means, and to build technical capacity and skills.
- The November Joint statement of the African Association of Universities and the European University Association on the role of higher education in the Africa-Europe strategic Partnership for submission to the Africa EU Summit.
- The 10 November 2010 European Commission Communication to the Parliament and Council on the consolidated EU-Africa relations (Africa-Europe 2020) which provides higher education a prominent place in the thematic partnership for Migration, Mobility and Employment.

Recommends to Government and Heads of State

- That governments acknowledge the interrelation between education levels and sectors and that a dynamic national higher education system can contribute significantly to the knowledge base of a nation and enhance its ability to connect regionally and globally.

- That governments prioritize higher education as a part of their development strategies, and invest in it accordingly with a view to increase access, capacity and quality.
- That global challenges be addressed through efficiently structured and sustainable higher education partnerships which generate research and teaching capacity, empowering universities as economic drivers and agents of knowledge transfer and contributing to overall capacity development.
- Acknowledge that in Africa and Europe universities contribute to teaching and learning as well as science and innovation. Linkages between higher education capacity development and the science and innovation agenda in the EU-Africa partnerships should be encouraged.
- That in recognising that relevant, innovative curriculum development engaging stakeholders, academics and students is essential to establish a distinctive African Higher Education Area, and to meet the need for the high level competences required by Africa, will support and encourage inter-university and inter-regional curriculum reform and development partnerships as 'beacons' of good practice.
- That in the context of the emphasis on the role of civil society in the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, higher education representative organisations should be involved in a systematic and strategic way in the development of policies and programmes and monitoring their implementation. This would ensure that the higher education community in both regions embraces the Partnership and its activities, has reliable information on these activities and contributes to the implementation of commitments taken.
- In line with the Paris Declaration for aid efficiency, that a sustainable information exchange and dialogue platform be established that could provide an umbrella for enhanced cooperation among the many ongoing initiatives driven by the EU, AU, member states, donor agencies and individual higher education institutions; contribute to exchange and mutual learning in Africa-Europe regional integration projects; include different actors in the higher education community, donors and governments.
- Support European higher education institutions to take up development cooperation activities with African partners, particularly in times of financial strain for many higher education systems and with higher education development cooperation at risk.
- Support the role of higher education and higher education partnerships in European development policy. This would mirror the emphasis placed on higher education in the EU 2020 Strategy and contribute to the EU higher education internalization strategy.
- Strengthen intra- and inter-regional student and staff mobility schemes, by assessing the impact of current initiatives, and considering the resource requirements needed for structuring such mobility at institutional level.
- Reinforce existing programmes and initiatives such as Erasmus Mundus, Edulink and the Mwalimu Nyerere Scholarship Scheme, as well as the AUC Harmonization and the African Quality Rating Mechanisms (AQRM). Such programmes are unique in

that they promote regional and bi-regional level collaboration and create added value to national programme input.

- Support the development of open and distance learning policies and capacities, especially in science and technology, teacher education, research and quality assurance.
- Support mutual learning projects on strategic higher education priorities for both continents to include themes like modernisation of higher education, a regional dimension to institutional quality assurance, development of doctoral education and internationalisation of research.