

# COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE AND 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WEST AFRICA UNIVERSITIES (AWAU) HOSTED BY UNIVERSITE CHEIKH ANTA DIOP (UCAD), DAKAR, SENEGAL, FROM 6<sup>TH</sup> TO 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2018

## 1.0 Preamble

The 6<sup>th</sup> Conference and 8<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Association of West Africa Universities was held at Universite Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD), Dakar with the theme: **“Trans-Border Research and Quality Assurance: Challenges for African Universities”**.

The conference afforded participants a regional networking platform and attracted participants from six (6) countries within the sub-region, namely: Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and The Gambia. The Conference was declared open by the Special Guest of Honour, Minister of Higher Education of Senegal, Prof. Mary Teuw Niane who was represented by Prof. Amadou Thierno Gaye, Director General, Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The welcome address was delivered by the Rector, UCAD Prof. Ibrahima Thioub. Prof. Abdulganiyu Ambali, Chairman, Association of West Africa Universities (AWAU) delivered the Opening Remarks in which he emphasised AWAU's readiness to compliment the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in addressing problems bedeviling West African Sub-Region such as climate change and insecurity. Goodwill message was delivered by the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), Abuja, Nigeria, represented by Dr. Suleiman Ramon-Yusuf. Prof Is-haq Oloyede, Registrar, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Nigeria, delivered the keynote address titled Trans-Border Education and Research: Quality Assurance Implications for African Universities.

Lead papers were presented by Prof. Labode Popoola, President, West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA) and Vice-Chancellor, Osun State University; Professor Domwin D. Kuupole, Former Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Coast, Ghana and Former Chairman of AWAU; Prof. Faqir Muhammad Anjum, Vice-Chancellor, University of The Gambia and Prof. AbdulGaniyu Ambali, Board Member, International Association of Universities (IAU). The respective topics of the lead papers presented were:

- i. Repositioning WARIMA for Relevance.
- ii. Problems of Language Barrier in Dissemination of Research Findings.
- iii. Trans-Border Research and Quality Assurance in West Africa: Situation, Challenges and Solutions.

- iv. International Association of Universities (IAU) : Building a Worldwide Higher Education Community.

There were other contributions in the form of paper presentations during the Conference.

A Colloquium, chaired by Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, was held to chart ways of achieving a durable solution to the challenges of trans-border research and quality assurance. A decision was reached to encourage the internationalisation of admissions into Universities in West Africa. To this end, AWAU, JAMB, NUC and Universities are to collaborate to actualise this objective.

## **2.0 Observations**

The Conference observed that:

- i. There is inadequate trans-border approach to researches in Africa.
- ii. Language barrier hampers effective dissemination of research findings and render many researches irrelevant or less utilised.
- iii. There is inadequate collaborative research activity between West African countries in scope and content, compared to research co-operation between international partners and non-West African Countries.
- iv. Universities rely largely on external evaluators for quality assurance of their programmes.
- v. There is insufficient utilisation of ICT in teaching, learning, research, administration and internationalisation in Universities.

## **3.0 Recommendations and Resolutions**

1. There is the need to fashion out appropriate policies, mechanisms and structures that will enhance the transformation and compliment current efforts towards ensuring quality, relevance and excellence in African Universities' research and education networks.
2. Researchers should make available their research findings in simple and accessible language for the benefit of the majority of readership and stakeholders.
3. There is need for Universities in West Africa (from Anglophone, Arabic-speaking, Francophone and Lusophone divides) to engage in collaborative research activities. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)'s

- Commission can provide platform in that regard through collaboration with Research Institutes such as WARIMA.
4. The promotion of cultural and linguistic collaboration within West Africa and strengthening self-sustained research programmes by leveraging funding from external and government sources.
  5. There is need for Universities to strengthen internal quality assurance units.
6. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) should be utilised to achieve the internationalisation of higher education and facilitate trans-border research among West African Universities.
7. The AWAU should liaise with member States to ensure that teaching and research in their Universities are geared towards addressing common problems of the sub-region.
  8. The ECOWAS should play a key role in harmonising research activities of the Universities of its member-states to address issues of common concern.
  9. There is the need for periodic review of tertiary education curriculum by the relevant agencies to meet national, regional and global needs and demands.
  10. Government and other relevant stakeholders **are** to develop modalities that will harness efforts being made to attain quality, relevance and excellence in African Universities' research and education networks. This can be achieved through improved research funding; provision of adequate and modern research facilities and infrastructure; rewarding research excellence; establishing more partnerships among Universities; strengthening quality assurance agencies and establishing a reliable National Qualification Framework (NQF) among others.

#### **4.0 Appreciation**

The Conference expressed its profound appreciation to the management and staff of the host institution, UCAD, Dakar, Senegal for the wonderful reception accorded the participants.

The Conference also extended its gratitude to JAMB, Nigeria; University of Ilorin, Nigeria; Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria; Sule Lamido University, Kafin Hausa, Nigeria and NUC, Nigeria and all participants for their tremendous support towards the successful organisation of the conference.

**(Signed)**

**Professor Abdullahi Yusufu Ribadu** *FCVSN, MINM*

*Secretary-General & Vice-Chancellor, Sule Lamido University Kafin Hausa, Nigeria*