

ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

12th General Conference Held at the International Conference Center, Abuja, Nigeria, from 4th – 9th May, 2009

1.0 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) coined the term “sustainable development” in 1980. Since then, it has received several interpretations confirming the definition given by the Brundtland Commission in 1987. The report defined sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Brundtland Report was specific on three components of sustainability, namely, equity, growth and the environment.

In a world undergoing rapid changes, driven prominently by technology and globalisation, it is often forgotten that the drive towards sustainable development is about change in people - their ideas, their fears, and the capacity to imagine and work together for a different and better future. More than any other region of the world, Africa remains unprotected and at risk of being exploited without due recognition and remuneration of its resources. There is also the fact that Africa’s sustainability problems hinge on threats to food security, poverty, disease, land degradation, water security, climate change, conflicts, deforestation, natural disasters, and urbanization.

It is now widely acknowledged that education is crucial to the achievement of sustainable development. However, it was at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio that the centrality of the role of education for achievement of sustainable development was particularly highlighted. Agenda 21, as it is commonly referred to, had 41 African nations endorsing a comprehensive international framework and action programme for sustainable development. This consensus of the international community was consolidated by the UN General Assembly at its 57th meeting in December 2002, when it declared the period 2005-2014 as the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN DESD) to be implemented by UNESCO. UNESCO, in fact, defines Education for Sustainable Development as “a dynamic concept that encompasses a new vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future”.

The UN DESD offers a strategic guide to the African higher education community to review its curricula, set and undertake development relevant scientific research, forge partnerships and set practical examples towards ensuring social, economic, environmental and overall inter-generational equity within the concept of the Millennium Development Goals and other African development agenda.

The essence of education is to explore the edges of possibility and probability needed to transform and improve upon the conditions of both the learner and the community. Though basic education is essential in providing literacy and a knowledge of how and why things happen, higher education has a special responsibility to conduct the scholarship and scientific research necessary to generate the new knowledge needed, and to train the leaders and teachers of tomorrow, laying emphasis on integrative learning and the ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings.

The three main activities of higher education, whether in Africa or elsewhere, are teaching and learning, research and development and service to the community. Within the ambit of sustainable development, African higher education institutions are provided with the tools to redesign their educational structures to provide answers to the environmental and developmental challenges confronting the continent.

The 12th General Conference of the Association of African Universities with the theme **Sustainable Development in Africa: The Role of Higher Education** was co-hosted by the University of Ilorin and the University of Abuja, Nigeria, and held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja, Nigeria from 4th to 9th May, 2009.

The Objective of the Conference was to address the mandate of higher education institutions regarding teaching and learning, research and community service including greening the campuses as they relate to sustainable development in Africa.

The Conference was executed in two parts:

- i. The AAU Business Session that concentrated on AAU issues such as reports on the Association's 4 year programmes, deliberations on the next 4 year programmes leading to another General Conference, and elections to the Executive Board; and
- ii. The Scientific session, the Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities (COREVIP) that dealt with the presentation of papers on the Conference theme.

2.0 PARTICIPANTS

The Conference was attended by 250 participants from 28 African countries and 7 countries outside Africa. Participation at the Conference also comprised other stakeholders of university education and development partners.

3.0 DAY 1 (Monday May 4, 2009)

3.1 OPENING CEREMONY

The Conference was declared open by Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The president who was represented by the Honourable Minister of State for Education, Hajiya Aisha Jibril Dukku, welcomed participants to the

12th AAU General Conference, considering it a great privilege for Nigeria to host. The President was of the view that the theme of the Conference “*Sustainable Development in Africa: The Role of Higher Education*” was apt and timely as the African Continent was experiencing among others, serious socio-economic problems ranging from poverty to corruption, diseases, illiteracy and political instability. He considered the Association of African Universities the most qualified institution to provide the basic platform for lasting solutions to the challenges of the continent by helping to stimulate debates and providing the framework through Conferences of this nature.

Further in his speech, the President stated that improving education was one his administration’s 7-point Agenda and the Government was vigorously pursuing it because it was convinced that through education, development could be fostered and sustained. According to the President, the 7-point Agenda, which in addition to education focused on power and energy, food security, wealth creation, transportation, land reforms and security of lives and properties, had the capacity to turn around the economy and project Nigeria into the group of the World leading economies by the year 2020. He reiterated that the vision could only be achieved through rapid investment in higher education and human capital development; adding that the reforms in the education sector were aimed at ensuring the attainment of acceptable international standards for all. The idea, he said, was to evolve a strategic development plan that would promote educational excellence in both teaching and learning in the sciences and humanities.

He charged African Universities to be in the vanguard of this renewal and restoration by living up to their expectations of being Centres of Excellence not only in generating ideas but also in research and inventions. Their efforts, as expressed by Mr. President were, expected to service the continent’s developmental needs and prepare university products to address local challenges and be appropriately positioned to compete globally. He encouraged African Universities to imbibe the spirit of networking particularly in research and pedagogy, as no African country or universities in each of the countries could handle the challenges of the continent alone.

In conclusion, President Yar’Adua stressed the commitment of the Federal Government of Nigeria to addressing the problems of higher education and indeed the entire education sector in Nigeria occasioned by inadequate funding, adding that the task of turning around the fortunes of education would require renewed commitment. He expressed optimism that the Conference would proffer reasonable and sustainable solutions to the challenges facing the continent.

Earlier in his welcome address, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja, Professor Nuhu Yaqub, recalled that the AAU Conference was holding in Nigeria three decades after it was hosted by the University of Ibadan. He stated that Abuja was favourable to host the Conference because it had, over the years, grown to become an international center and a safe haven for participants. According to the Vice-Chancellor, out of the 250 delegates that registered for the Conference, a sizeable number were Nigerians. Consequently, he hoped that Nigeria would be given more hosting rights.

The Conference, according to the Vice-Chancellor, was coming up at a critical time when the World was going through economic meltdown and when African countries rank low in the Human Development Index. Since higher education by design, should address the production of skilled manpower and generate ideas that would move the society forward, he hoped that lasting solutions to these challenges would emerge from the Conference. He expressed appreciation to the General Assembly, the AAU Secretariat, the Local Organizing Committee and all those who contributed to the successful hosting of the Conference.

In his statement at the Opening Ceremony, Professor Njabulo Ndebele, President of AAU, expressed appreciation to the two host universities for their collaborative generosity and hospitality. He drew the attention of participants to what he tagged 3 major hopes for the continent to include: greater prevalence of peace and stability, upholding the norm of democracy and emergence of market economies. He emphasized the role of the universities in mediating this trend of hope and expressed expectation that the Conference would proffer solution to management of conflicts and violence.

He recalled that 4years ago, the President and Executive Board members were elected at the General Conference that held in South Africa. He added that what had happened in the Association within this period had been remarkable. Professor Ndebele stated that this year's Conference was significant in the sense that elections would be held to usher in a new Executive Board.

A total of 17 goodwill messages were penciled for presentation at the Opening Ceremony. However, 14 goodwill messages were delivered. The Minister of the Federal Capital territory, Senator Muhammad Adamu Aliero, in his goodwill message considered it a rare opportunity for the Conference to be held at the Federal Capital City of Nigeria and congratulated the AAU and host universities for a successful outing. He invited delegates to explore the tourist attractions that abound in the Federal Capital Territory and wished them fruitful deliberations.

The goodwill message from the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) described the Foundation as one that builds capacity through collaborative graduate programmes. The Foundation wished the AAU the best as it promotes the development of university education in Africa.

The goodwill message from the African Development Bank underscored the commitment of the Bank to the AAU which it described as a key partner institution that stands at the forefront of the continent's efforts to harness the power of education to foster economic growth and development. The Bank hoped that the meeting would help to identify new and better ways to support higher education for sustainable development.

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) considered the theme of the Conference apt as there is a growing recognition and appreciation of the role and contribution of higher education and research to Africa's development. The

Association expressed its delight in its association with the AAU through its Working Group on Higher Education (WGHE), which is based in the AAU Secretariat since 2002.

A sister organization of the AAU, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) in its goodwill message, informed participants of its role in the promotion of university education throughout the world. It advocated for a stronger relationship with the AAU stating that “We are Stronger together” should be the motto of the two Associations.

The Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) Africa in its goodwill message informed participants that it had collaborated with the Association of African Universities and other partners to promote quality in the delivery of higher education in Africa. The President of the Association, Professor Peter Okebukola hinted that we have the daunting task of steering our higher education delivery to respond to the global economic crisis and concluded that Africa, through the instrumentality of education, especially higher education and with the new dynamism shown by AAU, will emerge as a region with the greatest hope of addressing its sustainability challenges.

Delivering its goodwill message, the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (PHEA) which is a conglomerate of 7 private Foundation in the United States of America, informed participants that it promotes human resource development and intellectual capital development to deal with sustainable development in Africa and expressed solidarity with the AAU in its quest for the development of university education in the continent.

In its goodwill message, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation informed the Conference that it sponsored some participants to the Conference which was a pointer to its belief in the ideals of the AAU.

Other organizations that presented goodwill messages at the ceremony included UNESCO and the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC). The thrust of the goodwill messages was the development of knowledge-based institutions.

3.2 AAU BUSINESS SESSION I

The first Business Session, chaired by the President of AAU, Prof. Njabulo Ndebele, held immediately after the opening ceremony of the Conference. The meeting:

- Approved the programme of the General conference;
- Elected the conference Bureau;
- Approved the rules of Procedures for elections of President, Vice-Presidents and members of the Executive Board;
- Approved membership of the Election Committee;
- Constituted Working Groups and Election of Chairpersons of the Groups; and
- Left the appointment of Conveners of the Regional Caucuses to the Regions

3.3 CONFERENCE OF RECTORS, VICE-CHANCELLORS AND PRESIDENTS OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES (COREVIP)

The Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities (COREVIP) which was chaired by Professor Njabulo Ndebele, commenced with the presentation by the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), Abuja, Nigeria titled *Overview of Nigerian Higher Education*. The paper which was presented by the Deputy Executive Secretary, NUC, Professor Ignatius Uvah examined the Higher education sector in Nigeria which comprises Universities, Polytechnics/Monotechnics and Colleges of Education. He gave a run down on development of Higher Education in Nigeria which started with the establishment of Yaba Higher College in 1932. The other landmarks in the development of higher education in Nigeria according to the paper were the establishment of University College of Ibadan in 1948; the increase in the number of universities to 13 by 1977 through the establishment in 1970 of the University of Benin and during 1975 – 1977, of the seven second generation federal universities; establishment of State Universities in 1979-1983; and the establishment of Private universities based on Act 9 of 1993.

The paper also gave the picture of the Nigerian Higher Education Sector which currently comprises 95 approved Universities (27 Federal, 34 State and 34 Private), 115 approved Polytechnics/ Monotechnics (53 Federal, 46 State and 16 Private); 83 approved Colleges of Education/Institutes (23 Federal, 43 State and 17 private). There are also 7 Polytechnics offering National Certificate in Education (NCE) programmes (2 Federal and 5 State); 3 Polytechnics and 5 Colleges of Education offer degree programmes; and 4 Inter-University Centres which support universities in language immersion and proficiency training as well as documentation and advocacy

The presenter also discussed the challenges of the Nigerian Higher Education System and various interventions towards ameliorating the problems.

3.3.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The paper by Professor Okojie was lauded for his candid opinion of HEI sector in Nigeria and elicited a myriad of questions and comments. The following issues were raised:

- Accreditation of courses and programmes;
- Bureaucratisation and homogenisation of Universities;
- Lack of internal democracy in University governance
- Quality, focus and employability of graduates,
- Intervention deficits in the area of funding and provision of accommodation to mitigate financial flows and social vices.

In his response, Professor Okojie clarified the issue of accreditation. According to him, the process of programme accreditation does not vitiate University autonomy neither does seek to repress or control the University system. Rather, it as an assessment of the minimum benchmark that Universities are expected to maintain and in the process,

programmes are either granted full, interim or denied accreditation. Programmes that are granted interim accreditation are deemed to be sufficient, but deficient in certain areas to enjoy full accreditation status, but those that fall below expectation are denied accreditation. While programmes with interim status are given time to redeem their deficiencies, fresh admission into courses with denied status are suspended. He also made it clear that the federal government has put in place certain policy measures, including special allocations, institution of public – private partnership and advocacy to address the issues of funding and provision of hostel accommodations in the Universities. He concluded that in spite of its politicisation, there is no running away from the issue of tuition fees payment in federal universities for the sustainability of the system.

3.4 KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

3.4.1 FIRST PAPER

Two keynote addresses on the *Sustainable Development in Africa: The Role of Higher Education* followed the presentation of the Executive Secretary, NUC. The first keynote address was presented by Dr. Kevin Urama, Executive Director, African Technology Policy Studies Network, Kenya.

Dr. Kevin Urama commenced his presentation by defining the elements of Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa (HESDA). According to the presenter, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is “a dynamic concept that encompasses a new vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future” (UNESCO, 2005). It aims to integrate the principles, values and practices of Sustainable Development into all aspects of education and learning (UNESCO, 2005). On the other hand, Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa (HESDA) is “the mainstreaming of ESD in higher institutions of learning in Africa”.

He reviewed some literature on the Science of Sustainable Development and inferred that the impact of Higher Education on Sustainable Development in Africa is still very low. He buttressed this by stating that University enrollment rates in sub-Saharan Africa are among the lowest in the world, averaging 5% (compared to greater than 60% elsewhere, and up to 72% in USA). In addition, there is a higher relative government spending on tertiary student trained per capita than the U.S. or Europe.

Dr. Urama proposed a complete re-engineering of the system to effectively achieve HESDA and that some reforms were required to move from Disciplinary to Trans-disciplinary Science; from Science and Technology Knowledge Transfer to Responsible Innovations; from Silo Thinking (Sector based approaches) to Systems Thinking (Integrated holistic Approaches) to knowledge generation; from knowledge hierarchies to participatory governance and full socialization of science; and from “Publish or Perish” to more inclusive Performance Incentives to favor problem solving, innovation and socialization of science in Africa.

3.4.1.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Questions and comments on the paper by Dr. Kevin Urama centred on the following issues:

- African participation in the global academic sphere
- Emphasis on academic excellence and not academic innovation
- Dislocation in Social equilibrium between Africa's HEIs and the wider public.
- Low level of enrolment in Africa's HEIs
- Impact of Research Assessment Exercise.

In the comments, a differentiation was made between Distinguished Professors and Extinguished Professors and that what is needed in Africa's HEIs are attitudinal change, harmonised and holistic thinking on issues of sustainable development and willingness to take action. In this way, curriculum content in Africa's HEI should be designed to match and have direct impact on Africa's developmental challenges and towards the need of future generation. In rounding up, the issues of the socialisation of science in Africa, systems thinking and need to promote collaboration and innovation were emphasised.

3.4.2 SECOND PAPER

Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of Earth Institute, Columbia University presented the second keynote address. Since Professor Sachs was not physically present at the Conference, a video presentation of his paper was made.

Professor Sachs expressed delight working with AAU and commended the leadership role of African Universities in improving Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development according to him is very important to Africa and does not only relate to economic growth but also to human well being. He added that economic growth should meet human needs (both the poor and the rich) and attenuate the ecological realities of the planet such as pollution, over fishing, degradation of natural capital.

He explained that economic development goes with social economic equity and justice and that no part of the world has succeeded in marrying economic development with social equity and justice for Sustainable Development.

Professor Sachs talked about the grand design of the Earth Institute which was designed to meet cross discipline challenges with a horizontal connection across discipline to resolve the grand puzzle of sustainable development. He identified four of the puzzles and these include education through integrated study of sustainable development, research, practical work in the field to solve large scale challenges and public education involving mass media and similar means of communication. The University, according to the presenter, is endowed with the scientific knowledge and talents to understand the problem, because they have the trust of the public and objectivity to provide perspective solution on a long term basis.

He went on to link this with the Land Grant Colleges in the United States by Abraham Lincoln. The Land Grant Colleges were established to produce practical solution from problems arising especially from agriculture. He emphasized the importance of agriculture to African economies.

Prof Sachs said the mandate of universities is to teach, research and educate. These combine to form the basis for the establishment of the Millennium Villages Project to empower local rural farming communities with Science-based knowledge in 5 concrete ways: Agriculture, Primary Health Care, Education, Basic Infrastructure and Business Development.

The second project, he explained, was the Global Master's in Development Practice (MDP) for Development professionals (Earth Institute). The 2-year Master's degree programme of development practice emphasize a multifaceted approach to development encompassing policy sciences, management sciences and physical sciences. The programme is organized by the Earth Institute, Columbia University, in collaboration with universities that are receiving seed funding to implement the programme. It is one of the first MDP programmes offered anywhere else in the world and is designed to train generalist sustainable development leaders with the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to make decisions regarding the interconnected and complex crises of climate change, extreme poverty, and epidemic of diseases, among other human degradations.

3.4.2.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The presentation by Jeffery Sachs elicited some disquiet and brought to fore the challenges facing Africa's HEIs in the quest for active engagement with the global academic community. The consensus among participants was that it should be made mandatory that Extra Continental institutions and organisations that are interested in engaging in academic programmes and pursuits in Africa MUST be willing and ready to work with African HEIs in a collaborative partnership.

4.0 DAY 2 (Tuesday May 5, 2009)

4.1 SCIENTIFIC SESSION I (Plenary)

The first Scientific Session on *International Perspectives on Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa* was held on the second day of the Conference and chaired by Professor Shamsudeen Amali, Vice-President, Association of African Universities. Three papers were slated for presentation at this session; however two were presented.

Dr Akpezi Ogbuigwe, Head of Environmental Education and Training Unit, UNEP presented the first paper. She charted the history of Sustainable Development from the 1960s beginning with the seminar work of Rachel Carson on Toxicology, Ecology and Epidemiology to show the effect of agricultural pesticides to humans and animals. She

ended with 2002 when the UN General Assembly designated 2005 – 2014 as the UN Decade on ESD.

She identified social political, environmental and economic factors as the three pillars of Sustainable Development. These pillars offer a platform for dealing with issues of sustainable development. To prove her point, she went on to give facts and figures about the deplorable state of African countries in the quest for SD. This is in spite of the fact that Africa is a resource-rich continent. In addition, Africa has a large higher education sector and this is a powerful force which can be used in addressing issues of SD. Consequently, UNEP launched a partnership programme with African Universities called Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities (MESA) to integrate environment and sustainability in the curricular and develop capacity through networking. She concluded with the following statements:

“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”

Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock

The second paper was from the Earth Charter and presented by Professor Peter Blaze Corcoran, Director of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education, Gulf Coast University, Florida, USA. He began by stressing the urgent need for Sustainable Development and introduced the Earth Charter as an instrument to guide efforts towards this. He then identified the four elements of the charter to include care for the community, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, democracy, non-violence and peace.

4.1.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Question, comments and answers on the papers presented by Dr. Akpezi Ogbuigwe and Professor Peter Corcoran were taken together. The issues raised include the following:

- Recommendation to the AAU to adopt the Earth Charter and MESA Principle.
- Accessibility and number of visitors to the local African language Website of the Centre for Environmental and Sustainability Education.
- The commendation of Wangari Mathai’s tree planting programme is appreciated, however the developed countries should not lose track of the real issues of environmental sustainability in Africa.
- The burden on Africa of being asked to pay a heavy price for the problem of climate change and the need to bring a sense of proportion to the issue of environmental degradation
- The applicability of spiritual development, ethics and morality in teaching, research and development in the context of the growing schism between education, cultural practices and social life.

- Ability of teachers to learn, unlearn and relearn paying attention to the centrality of students in the learning process in reforming the curriculum in the face of a generational shift.
- The high cost of deploying students of community service.

The necessity for a new orientation in addressing the issues listed above was quite evident. The emerging consensus is that teaching and research in Africa's HEI must not only prepare the next generation of Africans for the challenges of the 21st Century, but in doing so the work of the Global Forum for Responsible Education should be taken into consideration. The University, within the multiplicity of its responsibilities must not exist in a vacuum. Rather it must engage the local communities and seek to deploy its huge intellectual property to proffer solutions to the challenges facing the society. The government, private sector enterprises and other stakeholders should come together to provide necessary funding.

4.2 SCIENTIFIC SESSION II (Plenary)

The second Scientific Session focused on *National Examples on Shaping Higher Education for Sustainable Development* with two papers presented. The first paper in the session was presented by Professor Zióle Zanotto Malhadas of the Federal University of Parana (UFRU), Brazil.

The presenter explained that the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development seeks to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage behaviour changes that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all, through four objectives. These are:

- Facilitating networking, linkages, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD;
- Fostering an increased quality of teaching and learning in education for sustainable development;
- Helping countries make progress towards the attainment of MDGs through ESD efforts;
- Providing countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.” (UNESCO)

She reiterated that DESD means a time for changing and that the proper time for that change is now.

Brazilian universities have not been able to mainstream SD in their curriculum except in Environmental Education i.e. Environmental Engineering, Environmental Management or disciplines but these are not enough to generate sustainable development.

She invited the AAU members to join Brazil to plan for how to implement conjunct projects and motivate the cooperation between South-South and North-South to multiply the ESD concepts and good practices to the Latin American and African Higher Education Institutions.

The second paper for the session was presented by Prof. Heila Lotz-Sisitka of Rhodes University, South Africa. The paper was based on two theoretical frameworks- System theory and Social change theory. She described higher education institutions as knowledge centres and centres of learning which have critical roles to play in development of the country. According to the presenter, scientists and people everywhere are worried about the following three interacting factors: unsustainable development models; loss of ecosystem services and climate change impact. New concepts of development include equity, sustainability, resilience, adaptation and transformability.

Challenges of SD are increasingly more complex and difficult to reconcile putting the world at risk and the universities are confronted with serious epistemological, political and ethical questions. These include non-integration of local knowledge with 'scholastic' knowledge. She, thereafter, explained how South Africa is dealing with these issues and concluded by stating that a stronger systems approach is needed to understanding the SD in Higher Education relationship and this calls for re-evaluation of HEIs social contract and role in development.

4.2.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the questions, comments and answers session of the presentations of Professors Mahaldas and Lotz-Sisitka, the domineering issues are as follows:

- Development of solidarity and cooperation to develop common objectives and practise, and to pursue and implement educational programmes to build capacity and promote sustainable development.
- Integration of all agencies of education, especially the home towards a common goal of sustainable development.
- A curriculum review at all levels of education to enhance teaching and research. In doing this, linkages should be established between African HEIs and governments at all levels as well as with the United Nations system and other stakeholders.
- Increased GDP spending on education.

It was agreed that Africa, unlike the developed countries are dealing with all issues relating to sustainable development concurrently. The capability of HEIs to influence policy formulation and outputs was emphasised with an admonition that HEIs should strive to create a working synergy with policy makers, both in the public and private sectors. In doing this, Universities should strengthen their research capabilities and pay attention to their countries' developmental priorities. The session came to an end with the admonition that change is constant, cyclical and dynamic and need to embrace it for the sustainable development of Africa.

4.3 GROUP SESSIONS

GROUP A

Professor John Tarrant, Secretary General ACU, chaired the Group A Session. A total of five presentations were made.

1. **A Sustainable approach to teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa by Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah**

The presenter made reference to the MDGs and EFA goals as the rationale for TESSA approach that by the year 2015, every African child should have Primary education. In order to achieve these stated goals, Sub-Saharan African countries need 4million teachers which cannot be achieved with the present conventional ways of teacher training. Hence, the need for TESSA.

TESSA initiative stands on three pillars:

- i. Affordability and accessibility of ICT;
- ii. Open Educational Resources (OER) philosophy which allows materials to be put on the net and accessible to all for free;
- iii. Research studies in cognitive science which gives current information on how learning takes place.

TESSA resources are geared to capacity building of primary school teachers, including teacher content knowledge, classroom practices and activities, teacher competencies and skills and teacher theoretical and pedagogical orientation.

The areas addressed by TESSA include literacy, numeracy, science, social sciences, arts and life skills. TESSA materials are sustainable because:

- They are accessible online;
- Facilitate the training of more teachers;
- Enable practicing teachers to use the materials within their school location;
- Provide a more practical component to theory;
- Enhance investigative and creative approach;
- Could be easily integrated into existing curricula

The resources have been versioned into four languages and these are French, Kiswahili, Arabic and English. TESSA is a consortium of 18 organisations including 13 institutions, 9 African countries and 5 international organisations.

2. **A House with Twenty-Five Front Doors: Practical Teaching and Learning for Sustainable Development in Africa by William R. Godfrey**

The presentation was based on the premise that existing structures of African Universities and education programmes are not responsive to the problems of sustainable development facing the continent. To address this problem, UNEP and Environmental

Foundation International partnered with the support of AAU and UNESCO, to develop a curriculum containing ESD courses. One such course is *Sustainable Societies in Africa: Modules on Education for Sustainable Development* which could be used in African Universities. The courses use learner centred pedagogy and has modular structure that complement existing discipline-based courses. The curriculum was part of a 10 year project captioned *Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African University (MESA)* partnership.

The course was peer reviewed and tested by students in America.

3. **The Curriculum as a Living Document for Achieving Education for Sustainable Development by Joe O. Akinmusuru**

The paper emphasizes the importance of the curriculum as an on-going activity in the teaching-learning process which should not be imposed on the operators. The presenter advocated for university-industry partnership, interaction with alumni and accreditation agencies to enrich the curriculum for relevance. It calls for the adoption of an outcome-based curriculum in higher education in Africa, in order to achieve the right kind of education for sustainable development. It advocates for a paradigm shift from teacher-centred to student-centred approach which calls for measurable milestones to assess the attainment of the intended outcomes. The presenter cited illustrative examples to back up his position and suggested that in outcome-based curriculum, one has to work backwards by identifying the outcomes and the planning decisions to achieve them.

4. **Sustainable Cultural and Nature-based Tourism Development in Higher Education by Matilda De Beer**

The presenter started by establishing that tourism is one of the leading industries in South Africa confronted with challenges which need to be addressed by tertiary institutions in partnership with national and international collaborators. To tackle the problems associated with tourism in South Africa, many of the country's tertiary institutions have developed new curricula which cover areas such as management, marketing, sport and adventure, hospitality and administration, ethics and entrepreneurship. The University of the Free States is one of such higher institutions which have developed a 3year Bachelor's of Arts degree tourism programme which cuts across different disciplines. The content encourages students to be part of the project which is in line with the Government White paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa, regarding Community-Based Tourism (CBT). The curriculum is yet to be implemented.

5. **Sustainable Development and the Role of Students in Africa by Oludare Ogunlana**

All-Africa Students Union (AASU) commended and indicated that AAU has served as a pillar of support for them for several years and this has encouraged them to grow and

think strategically for the development of their continent. The presenter expressed the need for African students and organisations to demonstrate significant strides in the Sustainable Development efforts in their various countries. As one of the major groups under the UN Commission for Sustainable Development, AASU is overseeing the development of Agenda-21 on the Environment and Sustainable Development. The Union also engages in several programmes to educate and train different community members across the continent in partnership with educational establishments, trade unions, business men, local authorities, and other interested partners. Local students groups are also encouraged to participate in the use of renewable and sustainable resources on campuses. Some AASU member unions have assisted in establishing sustainable IT Centres with virtual classrooms in rural communities. They have networked with higher educational institutions such as Benghazi Polytechnic in Libya and University of Benin in Nigeria. Young African students have also been trained in areas of their interest to learn new skills and techniques such as web design, computer programming and organic sustainable agriculture techniques particularly in South Africa. AASU members in Ghana were involved in monitoring the recent elections in Ghana and many of them carried out campaigns on internet on HIV Aids.

CRITICAL ISSUES

- Why is there resistance among senior Professors to adopt new innovative strategies?
- There is the need to introduce spiritual development in the school curriculum;

GROUP B

The Group B Session on Greening the Campuses started at 2.17 pm. It was chaired by Dr. (Mrs) Akpezi Ogbuigwe, Head of Environmental Education and Training of the United Nations Environmental Programme, Nairobi, Kenya.

The presentations in the group consist of the following papers:

1. Anthony Petroutsas, *Greening the Campus: Participatory Approaches from Canada.*
2. Is-haq Oloyede, K.L. Ayorinde and F.A. Oladele, *Greening the Campus Environment: The University of Ilorin Experience*, presented by F.A. Oladele on behalf of the group.
3. Moussa Mbegnouga, *Logical Controversy of African Universities in the Promotion of Sustainable Development: The Universities in between Protective Theories and Destructive Practices of the Environment. The Case of UCAD's Waste Management* which was presented in French language.
4. Chris Ukachukwu Manus, *Greening the Campus: An Humboldtian's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Initiative at OAU, Ile-Ife, Nigeria*, which

was not originally scheduled, but was allowed to be taken on compassionate grounds.

5. Ralf von Kaufman, Aisssetou Drame Yaye and Irene Annor Frempong, ***Strengthening Capacity for Innovation in Africa's Agricultural Industry: A Case of Learning Platforms***, presented on behalf of the group by Ralf von Kaufman.
6. Alioune Kane, Jacques Quensiere and Awa Fall Niang, ***Integrated Management and Sustainable Development of Coastal West Africa: The Experience and the Project of UCAD Chair***, presented on behalf of the group by Alioune Kane in French language.
7. Valtencir Maldonado, ***Sustainable Paths in Higher Education***

In her opening address, Dr. Akpezi Ogbuigwe stated that the essence of the session was to share experiences on greening the campuses with a view of adopting and applying the best practices. According to the presenter, it was time to walk the talk with a new generation of students to enable them understand and practice the tenets of sustainable development.

The first presenter, Anthony Petroutsas is geography/environmental studies graduate student at the University of Victoria, Western Canada. The objective of his paper is to share experience on how the environmental friendly programmes of the University of Victoria had moved the Campus to attain a Carbon Neutral Status. This feat was attained under the ambit of the Campus Climate Network which brings together people from a variety of social and academic background to agree on a common ground to attain environmental sustainability. Among the measures adopted in pursuing this objective are: i) incorporation of aspects of sustainability into the entire University curricula; ii) development of the cycling culture; iii) establishment of local market for organic food; iv) positive engagement with the state government and civil society; v) utilization of renewable energy sources; and vi) building of global networks through the Leadership Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) programme. The successes achieved through these initiatives have propelled the British Colombian government to mandate all University within the state not only to attain work towards attaining carbon neutrality by 2010, but also to work towards stopping all sources of carbon emission through increase reliance on renewable energy sources. The presenter then gave an insight into the work of the Africa Youth Initiative on Climate Change in promoting social and ecological sustainability. He recommended the adoption of some of the identified environmental friendly measures of UVic for greening the Campuses of African Universities.

The second paper was presented by Professor Oladele who gave an overview of the efforts by the successive administrations of the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, in embracing the concept of sustainable development to enhance the quality of life on campus. With a land mass of about 15,000 hectares in which only 5 percent has been utilized, the University is faced with various land use challenges. Perhaps the greatest

challenge is how to manage the huge expanse of unutilized land to protect it from environmental degradation. Among the various measures adopted by the University in meeting these challenges are: i) formulation and implementation of 5-year Strategic Plan that included an Environmental Policy driven by an Environmental Protection Committee to pursue the beautification of the campus; the establishment of a Zoological and Biological Garden, the planting of Teak and Cassia trees and an Orchard; the construction of a dam to ensure adequate water supply; the prohibition of indiscriminate felling of trees and burning of bush; the adoption of viable conservation and waste management measures; and engagement with the local communities through the Community Based Experience and Services programme.

At this point, the chairperson, Dr. Ogbuigwe called for an interactive session with the participants asking one another the real meaning of greening the campus and what each participant could do to contribute to the process. The participants gave wide and varied answers of the lessons learnt and how they will actualise what they have learnt. While some talked about an increased awareness of the benefits of tree planting, increased efforts towards reducing carbon emissions and waste management and positive engagement of the communities outside of the University gate, others emphasised the need for individual efforts at energy and water conservation and at "taking the town to the village" by information dissemination and practical demonstration of water and energy generation through the use rain water and solar panels.

The third presenter, Moussa Mbegnouga is a doctoral student in geography at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal. In the presentation which he gave in the French language, he highlighted the disparity in the theory and practice of sustainable development, especially in the areas of waste management, erosion control and depletion of natural resources. He then gave an overview of the efforts at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in promoting sustainable development thorough its educational and training programmes. These programmes which have gained both national and international acclaim are undertaken by the Department of Geology, the Institute of Science and Environment and the Department of Geography, He identified the establishment, in 1997, in the Department of Geology, of the UNESCO Chair on Integrated Management and Sustainable Development of Coastal Regions and Small Islands as an important step in the training of professionals for the integrated management and sustainable development of West African coastal and littoral states. In spite of these achievements, the University of Cheikh Anta Diop, according to the presenter, is a great polluter of the environment through its teaching and research activities. The University, along with other Universities in Senegal, produces huge amounts of solid and liquid waste, some of which are toxic and poses a danger to human beings and the ecosystem. The challenge is for the University and indeed the wider community to come up with innovative ways of disposing toxic and biomedical waste in a safe and ecologically friendly manner.

The fourth presentation by Professor Ukachukwu Manus was not originally scheduled. The chairperson however sought the indulgence of the participants to allow Professor Manus, who is facing some health challenges to present his paper. In the paper, the presenter who is the Coordinator of the OAU-MESA Group gave an overview of the

activities of the MESA Group in creating awareness and promoting environmental protection through the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Programme. The presenter shared some new directions and innovations in sustainable development practices with the participants. These include discarding old ways of doing things and adoption of new methods, respect for the environment and care for human life, preaching the cross instead of prosperity from the pulpit. He then challenged the participants to become part of the movement for positive change towards environmental and social accountability and responsibility. He argued that through unsustainable environmental practices, man is poisoning his own food and drinks and committing a crime against nature and against himself. Professor Manus concluded by advocating the adoption of value ethics as the basis of human conduct and interaction with the environment.

The fifth paper was presented by Ralf von Kaufman on behalf of his colleagues. In the paper, von Kaufman talked passionately about the urgent paradigm shift in agricultural practices to tackle Africa's food crisis and interaction with the world economy. He made the point that policy formulators and decision makers in many African countries do not have enough evidence at their disposal to function effectively resulting in lack of evidence based decisions. Attenuating this problem requires opening up channels of communication, promoting innovative ways of sharing and learning together, changing from supply to demand driven production, as well as massive investment in capacity building and infrastructural development. According to him, agricultural production accounts for 27 percent of African Gross Domestic Product and that this percentage could be greatly increased with improved productivity, reduced losses and more value adding from processing and marketing. To bring this point home, he informed the participants that while the sale of cocoa generates only US\$4 billion per annum, the sale of chocolate, one of the derivatives of cocoa generates US\$75 billion per annum. To overcome the continent's developmental challenges, there is an urgent need to develop good education systems and effective research institutions and a necessity for African Universities to redesign and review their curricula and training programme in agriculture not only to produce a new generation of well trained professionals and technicians but also to address the issues of economic globalization, climate change and health hazards. Efforts towards addressing these issues is evident in the establishment of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) with an emphasis on land and water management, rural infrastructural development and increased market access, food security and dissemination and adoption of agricultural research and appropriate technology. The presenter informed the audience that the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) through its initiative on, 'Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa' (SCARDA) is already working in Botswana, Burundi, Congo, The Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Rwanda, Sudan, and Zambia in pursuit of these objectives. Von Kaufman concluded by asking Africa's Higher Education Institutions to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa to strengthen their capacity by introducing positive changes into their teaching and learning systems to generate increased return on investment in agriculture and to address Africa's quest for food security.

Professor Alioune Kane presented the sixth paper on behalf of his other colleagues in the Department of Geography, University of Cheikh Anta Diop. The paper, presented in the French language gave a detailed description of the work of the UNESCO/UCAD Chair Integrated Management and Sustainable Development of Coastal Regions and Small Islands. Established in 1997, the transdisciplinary programme based on collaboration between various training institutions, public and private entities, local community and civil society groups provides post graduate and practical training in integrated coastal management for sustainable development to students from Senegal and other West African states. He emphasized the importance of the programme on the management of coastal wetlands given the fact that many cities with a high level of population are located along the West African coast. This huge population not only depends on the exploitation of the resources of the coastal areas for their survival, but the people in the hinterland and the respective countries depend on these cities for their potential as centers of economic growth. The objectives of the programme include; i) ensuring the optimal and sustainable use of natural resources in coastal areas to safeguard them for future generations; ii) identifying new opportunities for underutilized resources; iii) ensure and maintain biodiversity in the context of a country's development priorities; and iv) ensure rational development of the coastal resources. In the last 11 years, the UNESCO/UCAD Chair, through its various training, research and community service activities, have been able to achieve some success through its pilot project on reforestation, water resource management, restoration of degraded ecosystem and wildlife.

The paper by Valtencir Maldonado is the seventh and last paper. He narrated the events leading to the establishment of the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) in 1999 and then outlined some of the successful experiences that are being developed within the African context. This is with the view of evolving the best practices in the area of curriculum development, application of science based knowledge to issues of sustainable development and building positive linkages with the civil society. The summary of these initiatives is to bring the critical role of Higher Education Institutions to the fore in African development.

5.0 DAY 3 (Wednesday May 6, 2009)

5.1 GROUP SESSIONS

GROUP C

Group C worked on the theme: Research and Development for Sustainable Development: Priorities, Action and Follow-up. There were four presenters.

The first presenter was Prof. Dongjie Niu of Tongji, University College of Environmental Science and Engineering who spoke on the topic: **Higher Education for Sustainable Development in China**. He stated that ESD was started in China in 1994 and Environmental Education (EE) was extended to ESD making EE part of ESD. Sustainable Development courses are available in many universities. Many bodies including UNESO, EPD and SEPA take active part in ESD activities. Their activities are

however not well organized at state level as there are doubts about the definition of ESD and about measurement of proper behaviour and lifestyle. He stated that China has had very fast development. Many lessons have been learnt from this including severe environmental pollution, air pollution and acid rain. Efforts have been made to combat this environmental threat through institutional approaches, making laws and regulations and instituting positive action such as green accounting. However, there is still poverty.

IESD-UNEP TONGJI INSTITUTE of Environment for sustainable development was established in 2002 to address this issue. The objectives include participating in regional and global environmental projects and capacity building program, establishing international educational institution for ESD, conducting global environmental studies and promoting environmental academic exchange.

Achievements have been in areas of leadership programs , International Masters in Environmental Management and Sustainable Development and PhD program and crop research.

It is interesting that although the above measures were taken to address China's problems, the leadership and graduate programs seem to target Africans.

The second paper titled, **African Higher Education Online (AHERO): A Model for Sustainable Academic Research and Development** was presented by Pascal of AAU who stood in for the author, Shehaamah Mohamed, of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education of the University of Western Cape, South Africa. The presenter indicated that sustainable growth cannot occur without a strong research base and adequate access to information. African academics face challenges such as high subscription fees and imbalance in the flow of information, and poor scientific output. To address these issues, an open education resource, AHERO which stands for African Higher Education Research Online, has been established to lift some of these barriers. It addresses access to information through the open access movement and archives research data, journals, chapters of books and conference proceedings on the African continent. Survey conducted indicates that AHERO is successfully delivering relevant content to African scholars. Authors are generally satisfied with the database records in AHERO associated with their research with most of the visitors to the website from Africa. The challenge that remains is for authors to archive their research and other documents.

The third paper was on the **Challenges of Financing Research in HE in Africa** by Ngotho Wa Kariuku. Financing HE in Africa is very expensive but it has been left predominantly to governments even with their dwindling budgets. Private sector has become involved in university education but these are run mainly as businesses. The Structural adjustment program (SAP) affected the educational sector through cuts in spending, deepening poverty, marginalization of vulnerable groups, cost sharing and gender imbalance. The problems of funding research in Africa include: the low priority given to research funding, embezzlement of research funds and the inability of the universities to raise funds internally. The author quoted case studies from the Cameroon and East Africa and he cited problems including over burdened facilities, inadequate

staff, limited number of programs, low student success rate and high dropout rate. The author suggested that universities generate their own fund through parallel programs such as consultancy and partnership with the private sector.

The last paper was on **Strengthening Natural Science Research and Education in African Universities- Lessons from Eurasia** by Marilyn Pifer. The author admits that African scientists are in the best position to understand African challenges. She stated that strengthening the capacity of scientific research in African universities will help them tap into the resources of the global research community. The author cited successful case studies linking basic research to the development and training of scientist in traditional universities in Russia and Eurasia. She concluded that integrating research with HE can enhance the scientific capacity of African countries through empowering the next generation and slowing brain drain, increasing scientific publication, and enhancing scientific research collaboration.

CRITICAL ISSUES

In the first paper, the following question was raised How can the coordination and teaching of the trans-disciplinary courses be improved?

In the paper on AHERO, the issues are:

Why are African HEIs resisting putting their theses online? How can Africa guard against plagiarism? How can HEI help change the attitude of academic staff toward using and adding to open education resources? How can infrastructural problems that hinder use of open sources be tackled? Do universities have clear policies on open education resources? If so what are the contents?

In Third paper:

How should universities collaboration with private sector for funding of research? How can politics be separated from research in funding of research?

GROUP D

Professor Alioune Kane of the Universite Chekh Anta Diop, Senegal Chaired Group D Session. A total of five presentations were made.

1. **Facilitating Entrepreneurial Competence for Informal Sector Development: Challenges and Insight into the Cameroon Tertiary Sector** by *Fomba Emmanuel Mbebeb*

The paper explores the link between existing education provisions and entrepreneurial competence. The presenter noted that despite the importance of sustainable human

capital development strategies in higher education, tertiary institutions in Cameroon are still grappling with relevance and quality issues.

Despite ongoing policy efforts in Cameroon, the current strategies cannot significantly constitute a sustainable platform for facilitating entrepreneurial and informal sector development. Universities should engage the informal sector through participatory and transformative pedagogy. There should also be a shift from poverty reductions training strategies to wealth creation strategies thereby transforming graduates from job seekers to job creators. There is a need for a change of mind set by all stakeholders.

The author concluded by raising the question “what do we think of African HE under globalising forces and perceived sensitivity of indigenous learning values in mainstreaming culture-fit competence and a sustainable Africa?”

2. Sustainability Compliance in Higher Education in Nigeria by *Iyenemi Ibimina Kakulu and B.B, Faka*

The paper examined SD activities in Rivers State University of Science and Technology and the progress made so far and the long term goals for achieving total SD compliance in curriculum, instruction and campus management. The activities examined include capacity building initiatives which include international training programmes, proposed life-long learning centre for SD, mainstreaming environment and sustainability workshop, collaborative capacity building in waste water management. She also examined RSUST global partnership in e-learning, RSUST MESA implementation strategy and finally the eco-campus project i.e., campus greening project. She concluded that RSUST is capable of achieving Sustainability compliance by the end of Decade of Education Sustainable Development (DESD) which will require the collective efforts of all stakeholders. That university leaders ought to respond to issues of climate change, environment and SD through active participation in on-going debates, encouraging institutional research in the area and implementation of virile sustainability policies.

How can African Universities cultivate the cooperation of Government, NGO and all Stakeholders including the university community itself.

3. A Rural Clinical School as Leverage For Sustainable Rural Development: An Opportunity for the University of Stellenbosch’s Health Sciences Faculties by *Theresa Fish*

The author’s paper was based on the premise that rural origin and rural medical exposure can positively influence practice location through the creation of Rural Clinical Schools observational data suggests that undergraduates or graduate rural exposure, strengthen the resolve of rural origin students to choose practicing in rural locations.

A number of proposals were made for the RCS and the potential advantages were also spelt out. In conclusion there is the need to develop research agenda for the project, engage with the communities, and engage in teaching and learning.

4. Engaging Communities in Soil Fertility Management for Sustainable Agricultural Production: Case Studies from Kakamega and Nakuru Districts by *F.N. Wegulo et al*

The paper examines the opportunities and synergies that exist between university researchers and local community for sharing such knowledge and skills for improved decision making for sustainable soil management, increase food production and reduce poverty.

With concerted efforts, decline in soil fertility can be successfully mitigated. The project has demonstrated the efficacy of established networks in mitigating challenges associated with SD. It has also created demand amongst farmers for knowledge and skills services to innovate with various soil fertility management options. The author observed that farmers are receptive to well-conceived and executed innovations.

5. A Pedagogy of Hope: Higher Education and Sustainable Development in Africa by *H. Russel Botman*

The paper re-examines the traditional notion of education in developing countries. From the pedagogy of hope, the author identified the over-arching strategic plan based on the five themes of the MDGs. He indicated that the faculties responded to 21 visionary project proposals many with ESD values. He used an example i.e Centre for Transdisciplinarity Sustainability Assessment Modelling in analysis.

Africa's success in transforming our economies and societies is tied to research based on transdisciplinarity that cut across all social and human dimensions of sustainable development.

6.0 DAY 4 (Thursday May 7, 2009)

6.1 SCIENTIFIC SESSION III (Plenary)

6.1.2 REPORT FROM GROUP SESSIONS/COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Following the presentation of the group reports, the following are the issues that came to the fore:

- The need to emphasis spirituality in the curricula for sustainable development of Africans.
- The need for forge partnership with government and the private sector.
- Commitment to greening the Campuses.
- Development of research capacity in the Africa and the need to identify strategies for funding such undertaking.
- At least 3 percent of national GDP should be devoted to education.

- Establishment of Foundations by HEIs and 50 percent of its resources should be used to fund research activities as sustainable development requires sustainable funding.
- Acceptability of HEI graduates by industries and the need for an integrative approach to curriculum development involving industries and other stakeholders.
- Incorporation of Entrepreneurship in the teaching curriculum to enable students to be job creators and not job seekers and the need for retraining faculty staff in handling this.
- Attention should be paid to the cultural relevance of the sustainable development programmes and teaching resources external to the continent bearing Africa's cultural peculiarities.
- HEIs were encouraged to develop indigenous teaching methodologies appropriate to the African situation.
- Concern on the lack of adequate trans-disciplinarity in research and how to operationalise this by emphasising programme integration and synergy to promote staff and student exchanges.
- HEI's should adopt outcome – based curricula that are periodically assessed.

6.2 PARALLEL EVENTS

6.2.1 Research and Education Network Unit

The event started at 10.53am and was chaired by Professor Adow Obeng, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Coast. There were three presentations as follows:

- i. Research and Education Networking in Africa: Challenges, Achievements and Opportunities, by Boubakar Barry of the Research and Education Networking Unit, Association of African Universities, Accra Ghana;
- ii. Fibre Infrastructure: Opportunities for African RENs, by Dr. Iman Abuel Maaly Abdelrhann of UbuntuNet Alliance;
- iii. Addressing the Demand for Connectivity of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the West and Central Africa Region, by Paul Hamilton, Independent Consultant, Hamilton Research Ltd.UK

The first paper highlighted the mandate given to the AAU at the 11th General Conference in February, 2005 in Cape Town to develop ICT for higher education in Africa. The AAU Secretariat followed up on this mandate by assuming a focal point role for ICT initiatives for African HEIs. The objective of this mandate was the improvement of access to information and knowledge. The AAU established a Research and Education Network (REN) unit with the support of Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (PHEA) and the International Development and Research Council (IDRC) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).

Among the activities of the REN Unit is the establishment of strategic partnership, organisation of workshops, and acting as clearing house on research and education networking and ICT policy. The presenter identified two factors that are crucial for Africa in establishing REN to include High bandwidth cost and isolation of African scientists and researchers. The presentation highlighted new developments in National Research and Education Networking (NREN) in Africa consisting of established (South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria), new (DRC, Mozambique, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan and Tanzania) and emerging (Zambia, Namibia, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire) NRENs. He highlighted the progress that have been made and the challenges to be met.

The second paper focused on the need for HEIs in Africa to improve connectivity, ICT usage, e-learning, content provision and participation in global research community. There are infrastructural, bandwidth, financial, policy and regulatory challenges. The presenter proposed the development of optic fibre infrastructure to meet these challenges. She identified five building blocks of connectivity and ICT usage ranging from individual users in African HEIs to the global REN infrastructure. Although Africa remains largely isolated from the global REN infrastructure, however there are efforts on information and national REN across the continent.

The third paper by Paul Hamilton is a report on a research on the connectivity survey of 51 HEIs across West Africa in June 2008. The purpose of the research was to compile data on HEIs' connectivity in West and Central Africa, determine the actual bandwidth/user available and compare with HEI's connectivity available in other parts of the world. This is with the view of determine the minimum necessary ratio for performance-leading work and learning conditions, investigate the availability of dark fibre in the sub-region and raise awareness among decision-makers on the need to facilitate access to more and cheaper bandwidth for African HEIs. The presenter painted five scenarios based on the outcome of the findings which indicated the low level of internet connection among HEIs within the sub-region. He recommended two strategies in ameliorating the situation. These included taking advantage of the new submarine cable and regional fibre optic networks which will become available during the next five years and the formation of a bandwidth buying consortium which can negotiate lower cost.

6.2.1.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the comments and discussion on the AAU Programme on Research and Education Network, the following points were raised:

- Creating national and regional champions to drive ICT
- Emphasis on vision, coordination, financing and regulations in addressing all issues relating to REN.

- Engagement with policymakers, industry and business leaders with a view of impressing on them the benefits of supporting infrastructural development for REN
- Promoting collaboration and pooling of resources in negotiating with service providers to cut cost.

6.2.2 Database of African Theses and Dissertation

Three papers were presented as follows:

- i. The Database of African Theses and Dissertations (DATAD), by Dr. Pascal Hoba, Head of Communication and Services, Association of African Universities and DATAD Program Coordinator,
- ii. The DATAD Project, Copyright Issues and the Librarian: The Situation in the University of Jos, Nigeria, by Dr Adakole Ochai, University Librarian, University of Jos,
- iii. Open Access Initiatives in Nigeria: A Case Study of Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria, by Ezra Shiloba Gbaje, Department of Library and Information Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

The first two papers emphasized that the need for access to Africa research was responsible for the establishment of DATAD. DATAD was to contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to research, improve access, develop and provide support for AAU programmes. The implementation adopted a mixed model and is regionally coordinated at the AAU Secretariat. The DATAD consists of data from graduate schools, computer centres, libraries, graduate students and faculties. There is access to other networks.

For the success of DATAD, there is need for adequate financing, improved data model, quality control, preservation and archiving, sustainability and taking account of the situation of African Universities. The major challenges are those of copyright management, higher level of advocacy, development of sustainability with strong partners and full text access.

The next phase in DATAD development is DATAD II which will cover both abstract and full text. The phase will encourage the set up of national repositories, encourage non DATAD institutions to contribute meta data to that of DATAD database, integrate DATAD into AAU plan and budget and expose the research outputs of African HEIs to the wider research communities.

Dr. Ochai's paper is a case study of the DATAD project in the University of Jos, Nigeria, with emphasis on copyright.

The third paper by Mr. Ezra Gbaje discusses the advantages of Open Access which include that the library can own copies of e-journals without special permission and provides access without authenticating users and without negotiation for pricing or licensing. It also gives visibility to research findings and showcases institutions' research profiles. Two strategies for providing open access were discussed to include making journals accessible on the web and archiving theses. However, users must always acknowledge the authors. There is an ongoing pilot programme in the University of Jos and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, which seeks to develop capacity for depositing theses and dissertation and journal articles in the institutional repository.

The Way forward is to develop appropriate framework and policy to guide Open Access Initiative, work in collaboration with NGOs and other International organizations to promote Open Access; build the capacity of staff in the institutions in the use of Open Access, and encourage stakeholders (lecturers, researchers, librarians and students) to deposit their articles and other materials on Open Access network.

6.2.2.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the comments and discussion on the AAU Programme on Data Base of African Theses and Dissertations (DATAD) the following points were raised:

- Commendation of AAU work with national groupings, whose repositories are facilitating inter-library loans.
- Development of appropriate software to address concerns on intellectual property protection and plagiarism.
- The need for improving the technical features of DATAD to make more accessible.
- Making programmes and research outcome available of open access platforms.

6.2.3 HIV/AIDS and Quality Assurance and Harmonization of Higher Education

Two major areas were discussed at this session viz: HIV/AIDS and Quality Assurance and Harmonization of Higher Education.

Three papers were presented on HIV/AIDS and they include:

- i. AAU HIV & AIDS Programme 2003 – 2009 presented, by Dr. N Malangu (Gustav) Coordinator : Southern Africa Subregion,
- ii. West African Sub-regional Network of Tertiary Institutions On HIV/AIDS Coordinator's Report, by Dr. N.A. Akani, and
- iii. UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education – Higher Education Responses Liu Yongfeng, UNESCO.

Dr. Melangu reported on the activities of the AAU in respect of the HIV/AIDS programme. He explained that the first phase of the programme was initiated in 2002. The phase extended from January, 2005 – December, 2008. The activities of the AAU during this period concentrated on four areas i.e. advocacy, capacity building, skills development and research documentation.

In December, 2008 the activities of the AAU in respect of the HIV programme was assessed. The findings showed that the AAU/HIV programme impacted positively on the Universities. It helped these institutions to develop HIV policy in response to the HIV pandemic. It also helped some universities to review their curricula and integrate HIV issues into their courses. The study recommended that a Monitoring and Evaluation System must be agreed upon when funding is disbursed to member institutions and that training on Monitoring and Evaluation of staff involved in the funded programs should be encouraged. In addition, a little more focused effort is needed particularly in the Francophone sub-region because of glaring disparities between regions and more funding should be generated for the project.

Dr. Akani reported that the network which is hosted by the University of Port Harcourt was launched in March, 2008 and all Vice-Chancellors were informed about this. The presenter went through the terms of reference which included sharing of best practices as well as prevention, mitigation and management of HIV/AIDS. He gave an update of the HIV activities and situation in the various universities. He talked about upcoming events and shared some of the challenges facing the programme.

The third paper emphasized the importance of prompt response to the HIV pandemic because it constitutes a threat to young students aged between 15 and 24. The presenter said that UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Education which was established in 2002, aims at improving and accelerating the education response to HIV and AIDS by promoting and supporting best practices in the education sector.

The task force generates awareness and mobilizes commitment to education response, documents good policy and practice, promotes coordination, harmonization and alignment. The presenter concluded by raising issues on the challenges facing leaders of higher education institutions in the context of HIV and AIDS.

6.2.3.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the comments and discussion on the AAU Programme on HIV/AIDS, the following points were raised:

- The need for HEIs in French speaking African countries to participate in the AAU HIV/AIDS Programme.
- The need for collaborative platform among HEIs in Africa in order to share best practices in HIV/AIDS activities.
- Support should be sought from international agencies.

6.2.4 Quality Assurance and Harmonization of Higher Education

Three papers were also presented at the Quality Assurance and Harmonization of Higher Education session as follows:

- i. The African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN), by Professor Mayunga Nkunya,
- ii. Harmonising Higher Education in Africa, by Mariama Sarr-Ceesay, Higher Education Unit/DHE, UNESCO/BREDA and
- iii. Serving Higher Education in Africa by Ms Adwoa Sey, Project Officer, Quality Assurance, AAU.

The first paper pointed out the importance of harmonization elements in African universities and the principles behind harmonization. He emphasized the fact that harmonization does not entail standardization or achieving uniformity. The Presenter referred to the AU harmonization goals which are meant to provide an integration platform for dialogue and action and facilitate the recognition of academic qualifications and students and staff mobility. Giving the importance of QA in accreditation in Africa HE harmonization process, he said that AAU is in the process of establishing an African Quality Assurance network. The objectives of the Network includes sharing experiences and resources with members, promoting establishment of external quality assurance agencies in Africa, facilitating research into the practice of quality management in HE and synchronizing and coordinating HE provision in Africa.

He requested for views from AAU members on the structure of the Network, roles and functions of the network and financing mechanism.

In the second paper, the presenter justified the harmonisation of higher education in Africa. In the presentation, she mentioned that the harmonisation will be done at three levels viz : national, regional and continental. In the development of continental HE framework, the paper suggested the need for the provision of support in the setting up and maintenance of accreditation and quality assurance system and the need to establish and maintain regional HE harmonisation process aligned with each other and integrated into the Continental framework. She concluded by suggesting the need to move from the AU vision to action.

The presenter of the third paper gave a situational report on AAU, its establishment, function and finances. She indicated that the activities of AAU are based on core programmes approved by the Board. She mentioned the issues that are particularly relevant to Africa as MDGs, HIV/AIDS pandemic, digital divide, effects of Bretton Woods Institutions recommendations. She added that QA is one of the projects of AAU with funding support from the World Bank and UNESCO. Current activities on QA include inauguration of African Quality Assurance Network, Online discussion of

harmonisation in Africa, learning events on institutional self assessment, learning events for national quality assurance bodies and liaison with other quality assurance bodies. She concluded by indicating some of the challenges that need to be gapped with and these include more engagement with operational and academic bodies than political bodies and increased fund raising.

6.2.4.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the comments and discussion on the AAU Programme on Quality Assurance, the following points were raised:

- The need to ensure quality assurance recommendations is implemented.
- In ensuring quality in HEIs, emphasis should be place on quality maintenance and quality sustenance.
- Effective programme harmonisation that goes beyond the barriers of language.

6.2.5 Regional Centres on Expertise on ESD

Three papers were presented in this session. The three papers addressed RCEs. The first paper was presented by the representative from United Nations University (UNU) to provide the context for discussing the two other papers which were case studies on RCE. The Author explained that RCE programmes were proposed in 2004 by UNU as its contribution to the decade on ESD. The RCE translates the global initiatives into local programmes recognized by the Ubuntu Alliance. They are regional centres of ESD and link the RCE community to global development. Activities amongst RCEs are thematic and continental. They include youth, health, teacher training and e-learning. RCEs are a learning space and the UNU is committed to promote them and their networking through DESD and all RCEs in Africa are linked. The UNU does not support individual operation but collaborations. The Author outlined the procedure for registration and acknowledgement by UNU.

The Parana and BUK RCE as case studies are different. The objective of the Parana RCE is to create transformative education and it has resulted into quality education, employability and a very beautiful environment on campus.

The BUK RCE plays the role of an initiator and was acknowledged in 2007 with a secretariat in BUK. It has 21 participating institutions all in Kano State, including all the Colleges of Education and farmer's associations among others. They have been involved in capacity building and teaching basic knowledge in ESD and promoting communication in sustainability. The current issues and project include poverty eradication, environmental degradation, teacher training and curriculum development. The collaborative projects are many and inclusive. The presenter concluded that RCE is of local relevance and space must be created to accommodate it.

6.2.5.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the comments and discussion on the session on Regional Centre of Excellence, the following points were raised:

- Concern about absence French – speaking African countries in RCE/ESD.
- Need for interface with the private sector, especially in the area of Community Programmes.
- Need to identify sources of funding for REC/ESD programmes.

6.2.6 Masters in Development Practice Initiatives

Lucia Rodriguez and Katie Murthy jointly presented the paper in this parallel session. The presenter of the first part of the paper indicated that the catalyst for the creation of the 2 year Masters in Development Practice (MDP) programme included the need for cross disciplinary “generalist” practitioners, challenge of poverty alleviation, climate change, hunger elimination among others. The objectives of the programme are to assess the effectiveness of existing training in education programmes, identify the core skills and competencies required of development practitioners, support the establishment of a new discipline – Sustainable Development Practice, support an interconnected global community of SD practice and recommend cross disciplinary education programme at all career stages.

The programme is available for policy administrators and other decision makers, educators and private sector professionals who learn many Development Skill including cross disciplinary knowledge.

The second part of the presentation on the same initiative but titled “Global Classroom” was presented by Katie Murthy. The objects of the Global classroom is to build practical demonstration of the cross disciplinary MDP curriculum, connect students, faculty and practitioners and create opportunity for global collaboration. The key challenges are designing the curriculum, choosing an appropriate delivery model and mobilizing partner institutions.

It is hoped that the course which was launched in January, 2008 will be expanded to include additional cross disciplinary courses, increase emphasis on asynchronous collaboration, inclusion of seminars, colloquiums and informal discussions. She then talked about MDP field training which is a 6 month hands-on learning experience involving collaborative work with MDP peers to address the challenge identified by partner organizations. She mentioned some of the challenges to include funding, identifying implementation partners and fostering experience sharing in learning.

6.2.6.1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the comments and discussion on the session on Global Master's in Development Studies for Development Practitioners by the Earth Institute, Colombia University, the following points were raised:

- The issuing authority for the MDP Degree.
- Accreditation process for the MDP Degree.
- Training of local faculty champions.
- Financial implication for African students participating in the MDP Degree.

7.0 DAY 5 (Friday May 8, 2009)

7.1 AAU BUSINESS SESSION II

The second AAU Business session was held and the meeting:

- ❖ Approved the Amendments to the Constitution of the AAU;
- ❖ Approved Amendments to the By-Laws of the AAU- subject to the following:
 - Roles and mandate of Governing Board and Executive Committee to be clarified/specified;
 - Bye-Law 1 (2) c: to use term “simple majority” throughout to avoid confusion;
- ❖ Approved the Report of the Executive Board to the General Conference –
 - concerns raised on keeping membership of defaulting members
 - Annual regional meetings of AAU members suggested to discuss issues pertaining to AAU membership. Meetings could be sponsored by members themselves.
 - Approved the Core Programme 2009-2013

7.2 AAU BUSINESS SESSION III

Reports of the Working groups were presented and discussed. Highlights of the reports are as follows:

- Proposed to set up Endowment Fund with funding from the AU, African governments and donors to ensure sustainability of AAU;
 - considered hiring professional fundraisers to advice;
 - to learn from good examples from universities with experience in fundraising;
- Suggested Delegates encouraged their respective countries to support AAU as does the Government of Ghana;
- Suggested to set up a Committee comprising members of Governing Board, institutional heads and AAU Secretariat to explore investment possibilities to ensure guaranteed income for AAU business;
- AAU to liaise with National Universities’ Commissions to market itself and attract more members;
- Recommended the involvement of the African Union in AAU activities to increase the latter’s commitment to the Association. Also to liaise with African governments. The commitment of governments and the AU will contribute to the sustainability of AAU.

- Recommended the provision of the evaluation reports on AAU programmes from 2005 – 2009 to facilitate assessment of the new Core Programme 2009 – 2013; and
- Recommended to run Student Exchange Programme at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels to contribute to social cohesion and peace on the continent.