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PRESENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE DAKAR SUMMIT
ON HIGHER EDUCATION
(Item proposed by the Republic of Senegal)

**PRESENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE DAKAR SUMMIT
ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

(Item proposed by the Republic of Senegal)

1. The African Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for the future of Africa was held in Dakar from 10 to 12 March 2015. The meeting, the first of its kind, and hosted by Senegal, was organized by several major Pan-African organizations including TrustAfrica, the African Union Commission (AUC), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), the Association of African Universities (AAU), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa which joined the Summit Consortium whose international partners were the Carnegie Corporation New York (CCNY), the MasterCard Foundation and the World Bank.

2. The main objective of the Summit was to create a multi-stakeholder continental platform to identify strategies for transforming the higher education sector in Africa. The meeting had, among others, the following underlying objectives:

- i) Create a broad network for transformation and for investment in higher education in Africa;
- ii) Define a common vision for the future of higher education in Africa;
- iii) Highlight and draw on best practices and initiatives implemented in the higher education sector in Africa;
- iv) Ensure complementarity in the efforts and actions undertaken in the higher education sector in Africa;
- v) Promote, share and support innovation in higher education in Africa;
- vi) Create a network for higher education in Africa within the framework of continental integration efforts;
- vii) Coordinate the various initiatives taken by both African stakeholders and international development organizations with a view to repositioning the sector.

3. Established to achieve the threefold objective of decolonization, development and democracy, universities and the higher education sector in Africa in general have grown rapidly since independence thanks to high population growth, the rapid expansion of African economies, the need for skilled labour and the emergence of a private higher education sector.

4. In spite of the expansion, the sector is facing serious challenges in the form of poor and inadequate infrastructure, out-dated teaching methods, inadequate funding, low productivity among researchers and lack of international competitiveness.

5. The higher education sector in Africa is basically characterized by gradual diversification and differentiation although in many countries the various components do not form an integrated system.

6. The sector currently comprises public and private institutions, non-profit and profit-making institutions, as well as general and specialized education institutions. During the 1990s, the number of private institutions surpassed that of public institutions yet public institutions still account for the bulk of student intake.

7. Almost all of the 2,000 higher institutions in Africa differ in terms of their missions, vision, values, mode of access, systems of registration and standards of equity, management systems, standards of governance and accountability, and models of financing and budgeting

8. They also differ in terms of the quality of teaching and learning methods, quality of infrastructure, the level of education of academic staff, productivity in the area of research, forms of collaboration and types of national, regional and international partnerships.

9. Lastly, they differ in terms of the nature of their relationship with the State, the practices related to the institutional autonomy and academic freedom, linkages with society and industry and the ability to produce graduates required by the economy of the continent.

10. At the end of the summit, the participants unanimously agreed that it was important to:

- Develop a high quality, broad, dynamic, diversified, innovative autonomous and socially responsible tertiary education sector which would be the driving force for the realization of the vision set out by the African Union in Agenda 2063; support "a shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development and a comprehensive strategy for ensuring optimum utilization of the resources of Africa for the benefit of all Africans";
- Produce the human capital required to bring about inclusive and sustainable development of the continent, foster democratic citizenship and reposition Africa as a major player on the international stage.

11. To attain its key objectives aimed at revitalizing higher education in Africa and ensure a bright future for the sector, the Dakar Summit identified priority areas of intervention under which the following actions would be taken:

- i) Recommend that the various stakeholders make a bold commitment **to expand the education sector**;
- ii) **Promote the diversification, differentiation, and the harmonization of higher education systems** at national, institutional and regional/continental level by African countries in order to facilitate consolidation and ensure the provision of quality education based on

benchmarks of excellence agreed upon at the local, regional and international levels;

- iii) **Increase investment in higher education** to facilitate development, promote stability, improve access and equity, train, recruit and retain highly qualified academic staff, pursue research and provide high quality education. Appropriate investments are necessary at the institutional, national, regional and international levels;
- iv) African institutions of higher education must engage in the **search for excellence** in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, public service and the proposal of solutions to the development challenges confronting African people across the continent as well as in the identification of opportunities available to them. Key measures must be taken by all the stakeholders at all levels to ensure the quality, relevance and excellence ;
- v) Commit to build capacity in the areas **of research, science, technology and innovation**;
- vi) Pursue national development through **business sector, higher education and the professional integration of graduates**. Despite the rapid increase in enrolment in higher education, there are serious concerns about the capacity of African universities to produce the type of graduates who could move the continent forward;
- vii) **Building and forging of democratic nation and citizenship**: As stated in the relevant sections of the African Charter on Human Rights of 1981 and in the Agenda 2063 of the AU, the African continent seeks to deepen the culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
- viii) **Mobilization of the Diaspora**: Develop a program known as 10/10 which would, over a 10 year period, annually sponsor 1,000 African Diaspora researchers in all disciplines to African universities and colleges for the purpose of collaboration in the areas of research, development of curricula and teaching and mentoring of graduate students.

12. The realization of this broad and ambitious project to revitalize higher education for the future of the continent is based on a plan of action, and backed by a Declaration adopted by the Summit whose implementation requires the effective involvement of all actors and stakeholders of higher education in Africa.

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Presentation of the outcomes of the Dakar Summit on higher education (Item proposed by The Republic Of Senegal)

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