

**TWIN EVENTS YOU
SHOULD NOT MISS**



UNESCO BAMAKO CLUSTER OFFICE

in collaboration with partners

Fourth International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa and Capacity Building (Training) Workshop.

(ICQAHEA-2010)

South Africa, October 5-7, 2010

Conference theme	Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa: Setting a Sustainable Agenda for a New Decade (5-7 October)
Workshop theme	Capacity Building (Training) Workshop on New Strategies for Institutional Accreditation and Development of Quality Assurance Policies for Higher Education in Africa (8-9 October)

Preamble

In February 2006, the first in the series of International Conferences on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ICQAHEA) was organised in Nairobi, Kenya, by UNESCO Harare Cluster Office in collaboration with the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI-Africa) and other partners. The conference was attended by 156 delegates from the higher education quality assurance community as well as other stakeholders in education. The major thrust of the series of ICQAHEA which began that year, is to serve as a forum for deliberating on all issues appertaining to quality in the delivery of higher education in Africa with a view to promoting international competitiveness of higher education systems in the region. In view of the need to go beyond talk, a decision was taken after the first conference to bundle a hands-on workshop into the programme and run as twin events. The second ICQAHEA which was held in 2007 in Dar es Salaam attracted 231 delegates from Africa and the rest of the world. One of its major outcomes was the stimulation of the establishment of quality assurance agencies in African countries. It also witnessed the launch of the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) by the Association of African Universities. The follow-up capacity building workshop in Zanzibar toolled participants with skills for managing quality at the institutional and national levels.

The 2008 ICQAHEA was organised by UNESCO Bamako Cluster Office with support from numerous partners. It was on the theme “Millennium Development Goals and the Challenge of Quality Assurance in Africa”. The venue moved to West Africa in the beautiful city of Dakar, Senegal. The workshop which was the twin-event of the conference was held in St. Louis, Senegal, on building capacity for the Licence-Master-Doctorate (LMD) reform.

The 2010 ICQAHEA now moves to Bamako, Mali, and promises to be exciting and professionally enriching. UNESCO Bamako Cluster Office extends a warm invitation to all stakeholders in African higher education to the twin events-conference and workshop. Mark your calendar now to attend. Registration is free!

The Conference

Theme

Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa: Setting a Sustainable Agenda for a New Decade

Dates

October 5-7 (arrival is Monday, October 3)

Venue

Bamako, Mali.

Background

The first decade of the 21st century witnessed several positive developments in higher education in Africa. Access was expanded, ICT use gained increased prominence, several national quality assurance agencies sprouted and the boosted engine of funding was ignited. Further, open and distance learning gained increased acceptability as a delivery system and the equity issue was more resolutely addressed. Yet, as the decade closed, the quality of input, process and output remains a major source of concern. The foregoing provides the broad picture. Some emerging details deserve mention.

With regard to expanded access, more institutions were established which opened their doors to over ten percent more students relative to the previous decade. In many African countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt and Tunisia exemplifying countries in the economic communities in the region, a minimum of 5% increase in student numbers was recorded. This barely scratched the surface of the huge demand for placement in higher education. The access challenge continues to loom large. Gains in access, albeit mismatching need, translated into some loss in quality. The quality of graduates produced during the last decade failed to meet labour market expectations and international competitiveness. It is estimated that less than 30% of products from the higher education systems across Africa are able to secure employment within two years of graduation as a consequence of inadequate preparation for the labour market and the low absorptive capacity of the market. While entrepreneurship education is fast gaining ground, the job creation potential of graduates did not blossom in the last decade.

Several complimentary events all aimed at improving higher education in Africa featured during the last two years of the first decade. One of these is the launch of the Second Decade of Education (2006-2015) by the African Union, the Action Plan of which gave visibility to higher education development in the region. The World Bank also launched its initiative on Accelerating Catchup-Improving the Competitiveness of Higher Education in Africa. The Association of African Universities (AAU) supported by partners including the World Bank launched the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN).

A significant event which took place at the close of the decade was the 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education. The UNESCO BRED A preparatory meeting for the conference brought together stakeholders in the higher education sub-sector. One of the major conclusions of this regional meeting was that although significant strides were recorded with regard to access, management, quality, funding and equity during the period 1999 to 2009, a yawning gap still exists between where Africa is and where it should be in all the areas especially in quality. The World Conference on Higher Education of 2009 noted this observation and in its closing statements, urged that urgent steps be taken to address the quality dimension of higher education in Africa in the coming decade. The 4th in the series of International Conferences on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ICQAHEA) is being organised within the framework of following up this recommendation of the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education.

Objectives

The 4th ICQAHEA aims to:

- review efforts at improving quality of delivery of higher education in Africa between 2000 and 2009;
- identify challenges to quality assurance during the first decade;
- propose an agenda for action for the new decade for meeting the challenges to quality assurance in higher education in Africa at the individual, institutional, national, sub-regional and regional levels;
- stimulate the setting up of projects and programmes at the national, sub-regional and regional levels that are aimed at rapidly improving quality assurance practices in the region; and
- seek partnerships in implementing the higher education quality assurance agenda

Sub-themes

1. Major developments in quality assurance in Africa, 2000-2009

2. National, sub-regional and regional networks in promoting quality assurance in Africa
3. Quality assurance of open and distance learning in the new decade: challenges and possibilities
4. ICT as tool for quality assurance in the new decade
5. Partnerships in enhancing quality assurance
6. Teacher issues in the agenda for quality assurance in the new decade
7. Student Issues in the agenda for quality assurance in the new decade
8. Funding quality assurance in the new decade
9. Setting up and managing quality assurance units in higher education and in national agencies

Participants

The conference will be of interest to all stakeholders in quality assurance in higher education in Africa as well as policy makers and practitioners in quality assurance from other regions of the world. Participation is open but not limited to:

- Ministers in charge of Education/Higher education
- Permanent Secretaries/Directors-General of Education
- Officers with responsibility for quality assurance in UNESCO, AU, AAU,.....
- Heads and management teams of national and regional quality assurance agencies
- Vice-Chancellors, Rectors and Provosts of higher education institutions
- Quality assurance practitioners
- Teaching and non-teaching staff in higher educational institutions
- Civil society
- Staff Unions
- Student Associations
- Development Partners
- All stakeholders in education

Conference Fee

No registration fee is charged to participants. As a general rule, ICQAHEA does not pay for participants' travel and living expenses. However, limited funds are available to help meet the cost of attendance of selected specialists.

Exhibition

A limited amount of space will be available for commercial vendors' displays/exhibits during the conference.

Working Languages

The working languages of the meeting will be English and French.

Sponsors

Sponsors of the conference are:

- Government of Mali;
- Commission of the African Union;
- Association of African Universities;
- GUNI-Africa;
- UNESCO-BREDA;
- UNESCO Division for Higher Education;
- ADEA Working Group on Higher Education;
- African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES)
- West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)
- National Universities Commission (NUC) of Nigeria

Note: Additional sponsors are welcome. Please contact Professor Juma Shabani (j.shabani@unesco.org) conveying expression of interest and for further details.

Call for Papers

Papers or posters on issues falling within the sub-themes outlined above may be submitted as contributions to the conference. Persons who wish to present a paper or poster at the conference should submit an **extended synopsis** (in English or French) of 800 words (i.e. two A4 format pages of single spaced typing or the equivalent, including any tables or diagrams and a few pertinent references) together with completed Form A for Submission of a Paper (attached) and the Participation Form B (attached) on or before 10 July, **2010**. In addition, the synopsis should be sent electronically to the Conference Secretariat, email: **j.shabani@unesco.org**

Authors will be informed end **-July** whether their paper/poster has been accepted for presentation by the Programme Committee. A subset of papers presented at the conference will be published subject to peer review. Further details will be provided after the extended synopses have been reviewed.

The Workshop

Theme

Capacity Building (Training) Workshop on New Strategies for Institutional Accreditation and Development of Quality Assurance Policies for Higher Education in Africa

Dates

October 8-9 (immediately after the conference). Departure for the twin events of conference and workshop is October 10.

Venue

Bamako, Mali.

Background

Increasing attention is being paid to quality assurance in higher education systems in Africa. In the last five years, not less than ten countries have established the framework for quality assurance. To maintain the momentum and ensure effectiveness of the efforts, there is need to continually build capacity of persons (old and new) who are involved in the quality assurance enterprise in the region.

Institutional self assessment and accreditation is becoming a favoured mode of quality assurance alongside programme accreditation. Institutional self assessment is a process where an institution is reviewed for the purpose of establishing whether or not the institution meets a particular set of standards. Institutional accreditation considers the characteristics of the institution as a whole. It evaluates the organizational capacity to deliver quality educational programmes. It does not seek to deal with any particular programme in detail although programmes are reviewed as a part of the consideration of the entire institution. It examines such institutional characteristics as governance, administrative strength, academic policies and procedures, quality of faculty, physical facilities and financial stability. It is an evidence-based process carried out through peer review. The workshop is aimed at building capacities of participants to effectively conduct institutional self assessment and accreditation. It is a follow-up the NUC-AAU regional workshop held in Abuja in April 2010 by reaching out to a wider spectrum of participants.

The workshop will also address the development of quality assurance policies which studies have shown have inadequacies at the institutional and national levels, The quality assurance policy is a key ingredient for successfully prosecuting the quality assurance agenda.

Objectives

- To provide quality assurance personnel at the institutional and national levels, and other interested stakeholders with knowledge and skills for effective conduct of institutional self assessment and accreditation.
- To build capacity of higher education institutional managers, policy makers, quality assurance personnel and other interested stakeholders in the development and implementation of quality assurance policies.

Participants

The workshop is for all those who desire to deepen their understanding of, and acquire practical skills in the conduct of institutional self assessment and accreditation and development of quality assurance policies. The workshop specifically targets:

- Officials of the Ministry of Education/Higher Education
- Heads of tertiary institutions- Vice-Chancellor/Rector/Provosts or their representatives
- Heads and management teams of national and regional quality assurance agencies
- Quality assurance practitioners
- Other interested stakeholders

Expected Outcomes

The following are the expected outcomes of the workshop:

- Participants with deeper understanding of, and practical skills in the conduct of institutional self assessment and accreditation
- Participants with deeper understanding of, and practical skills in the development of quality assurance policies
- Templates for setting minimum standards for institutional self assessment and accreditation
- Templates for developing quality assurance policies

Registration Fee

No registration fee is charged to participants.

Working Languages

The working languages of the workshop will be English and French

Registration

Since limited spaces are available, interested persons are urged to register early. To register, please visit the workshop web site at:

<http://www.unesco-bamako.org/conferences>

Conference and Workshop Web Site

The conference and workshop web site where information updates can be received is located at <http://www.unesco-bamako.org/conferences>

For further information, please contact:

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