



PRESS RELEASE

For the occasion of the

Day 3: African Higher Education Summit

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African Higher Education Summit
Revitalizing Higher Education For Africa's Future
Dakar, Senegal 10-12 March 2015

Africa Needs a Sharp Increase in Spending on Higher Education, Say Experts

Dakar –Participants at the African higher education conference took a hard look at issues related to investment in the sector, focusing on the funding requirement for the continent in the 21st century.

Research indicates that 25% of the world's workforce will live in Africa by 2050. Yet the percentage of national budgets allotted to higher education in Africa stands at 7% compared to 76% in the rest of the world, making funding of the sector a priority issue in the next 10 years, say experts speaking at the conference.

“Africa is spending a billion dollars on African higher education. We need to be spending \$50 billion to close the gap.” Said Dr. Patrick Awuah, Founder of Ashesi University of Ghana, who has personally helped raised more the \$12 million for African higher education.

According to participants present, Nigeria spends N160 billion in higher education while Senegal which has on average a 32% unemployment rate among its youth, invests approximately 3.7% of its consolidated national budget on higher education.

The World Bank stated that funding of the sector should be linked to relevance as the private sector aligns financing to key economic sectors such as mining. These economic sectors are also the primary employers of graduates from higher education institutions.

“We do not train people to stay at home. We train people to go to work and to be productive.” Said Honourable Amadou Ba, Minister of Economy and Finance in Senegal.

Financing is among the top five higher education priorities identified by the African Union which include: relevant curricula, increased PhD numbers; increased access to higher education, harmonization and financing.

“Revitalisation is not easy because it questions established and traditional practices but there is need for the fundamental issues to be addressed,” said Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission during the opening ceremony of the African higher education summit on Tuesday, 10 March 2015.

The summit, which was officially opened by His Excellency President Macky Sall, is the brainchild of TrustAfrica working with 11 organising partners. The theme of the summit is revitalizing higher education for Africa’s future.

According to Prof Amadou Diaw, Chairman of the ISM Group, a leading management training institute in Senegal, “In the 20 years that ISM has been operating we have not received a single cent from the private sector or a single

philanthropist. It is the parents of our students that are financing higher education by paying fees.”

Senegal’s’ Minister of Economy and Finance, addressing the conference through a representative, challenged the assumption that funding should come solely from the private sector stating that private sector funding comes with constraints of debt and other factors.

“We must not be totally dependent on government for funding, we need to be innovative. For instance, we need to look at getting patents for research products and generating funds that way. It is just a matter of thinking differently.”

Carnegie Corporation of New York, one of the 12 summit organizing partners, challenged African philanthropists to rise to the challenge and drive a continental agenda towards development similar to the role played by American’s wealthy in ensuring progress.

“We need to throw the challenge back to Africa’s philanthropists because when you look at the progress made in America, it has largely been on account of the contribution of philanthropy,” said Judge AnnClaire Williams a Carnegie Corporation board member.

Participants also reflected on the role of the diaspora in development. “The question is not whether the diaspora are willing to contribute, the question is what do Africa’s leaders want to do with their diaspora?” said Dr. Nkem Khumba, from the Centre of African Studies at Michigan University. “Is Africa ready to bring back its diaspora to lead industry and contribute to development?”

Prof Paul Zeleza, Vice President of Academic Affair at Quinnipiac University confirmed that in the USA alone, there are 25 000 African diaspora working in

American universities, many of whom are ready and willing to assist.

To deliver on the goal of excellence in the sector, participants deliberated extensively on issues of innovation.

“We need to find ways to fund higher education training programmes that will contribute to innovation and that way be relevant to the transformation of Africa,” said Honourable M. António Leão Correia E Silva, Cape Verde Minister of Higher Education, Sciences and Innovation.

University programmes that enable learning in practice at Stanford and MIT were used as comparative case studies of learning programmes radically different to programmes in African universities. Inspiration was drawn from the case of South Korea, which is now a leading case for innovation was in a sorry state 50 years ago.

However, said Khumba: “MIT and Stanford may be inspirational but must not be considered in isolation of their budgets. Having sufficient resources available makes the difference between giving faculties the ability to innovate or constrain them.”

The summit continued with sessions moderated by Carnegie Corporation of New York’s Vice President of International Programmes: Deana Arsenian, on Quality, Excellence and Relevance; Executive Director of TY Danjuma Foundation: Dr. Florence Etta-Akin Aina, on Higher Education and Gender; Dr. Jean Pierre Ezin, on Governance and Regulatory Regime of African Higher Education and; Dr. Gansen Pillay: Deputy CEO of the National Research Foundation of South Africa on The Role of Research and Postgraduate Studies in African Higher Education.

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Notes to Editors:

The summit is being organized by several key pan-African organizations: TrustAfrica, African Union Commission (AUC), Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), United Nations Africa Institute for Development and Economic Planning (IDEP), Association of African Universities (AAU), and the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa. The government of Senegal is the host of the summit which is being held in partnership with international development agencies and foundations that have been active in the field of higher education in Africa, namely: the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), MasterCard Foundation, and the World Bank.

For more information refer to the summit website: <http://summit.trustafrica.org>

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Media Enquiries Contact:

Patience Ukama

TrustAfrica Communications

Tel: +221 33 869 46 92

Email: africahesummit@trustafrica.org