

Media Monitoring: Extract of Press News on Higher Education in Africa

1. Nyasa Times

Mutharika pledges support to Regional Universities Forum (Malawi)

Speaking on Thursday when he hosted a RUFORUM delegation at Kamuzu Palace in Lilongwe, President Mutharika said he is committed to the enhancement of higher learning in Malawi and across Africa through promotion of investment at this level of education. "No country can develop without proper investment in higher education and that is why my Government has invested substantial financial resources in this area and vocational skills development through construction of community technical colleges" Mutharika said. The president further said that there was need to increase the number of qualifies staff to Doctor of Philosphy (PhD) level in institutions of higher learning in Malawi and across Africa in order to find solutions to challenges haunting the African Continent. Executive Secretary for RUFORUM, Professor Adipala Ekwamu, lauded President Mutharika for his commitment to higher education evidenced by Malawi Government substantial benefit towards this level of Education. "Malawi is the first country in Africa to allocate one percent of her gross Domestic Product to higher education in Africa." As a world Champion for higher education, the president is always at the fore front in global mobilization of support for investement in higher education for the benefit of African Nations"- Ekwamu said. The Board Chair for RUFROUM, Professor Mabel Imbuga, said investment in higher education, in particular science and Technology, is crucial in enhancing a prosperous and peaceful Africa through home grown solutions to African problems. RUFORUM is a consortium that currently has representation form 85 African Universities from atleast 35 countries. Click this [Link](#) for more details

2. Malawi 24

More PhD holders needed in Malawian universities – Mutharika (Malawi)

President Peter Mutharika says there is a need for more PhD holders in Malawian universities in order to find solutions to challenges the country is facing. Mutharika made the remarks during a meeting with a delegation of Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) yesterday at Kamuzu Palace in Malawi's capital, Lilongwe. The Malawi leader said no country can develop without investing in higher education and that is why he introduced the community technical colleges. "No country can develop without proper investment in higher education and that is why my government has invested substantial financial resources in this and vocational skills development through construction of community technical colleges," he said. President Mutharika who is also the Champion of Higher Education in Africa added that he is committed to promoting higher education in Africa through promotion of investment in the area. Speaking at the same function, Executive Secretary of REFORUM Adapala Ekwamu hailed Mutharika's led government for its effort to develop higher education. "As a world champion for higher education, the president is always at the forefront in global mobilization of support for investment in higher education for the benefit of African nations," he said. According to the Executive Secretary, Malawi is the first country in Africa to allocate one percent of its Gross Domestic Product to higher education in Africa. RUFORUM is a consortium that currently has representation from 85 African Universities from at least 35 countries. Click this [Link](#) for more details

3. PML Daily

Makerere, foreign partners collaborate to boost youth agribusiness innovations (Uganda)

Makerere University's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES) together with partners under the ACCELERATE initiative have held discussions to boost youth, education and innovation in the development of sustainable Agribusiness. ACCELERATE is a multi-stakeholder partnership for innovation, co-creation and enabling youth to build sustainable agribusiness informed by evidence-based research and with a global presence. The dialogue aimed at initiating Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for blended learning, which should identify the causes, consequences and expected responses for improving the capacity and competitiveness of the youth in Agri-food value chains and solving the challenges of unemployment in Uganda with a global perspective. Dr John James Okiror the acting principal CAES, said the university prides in such collaborative efforts in solving modern challenges including finding solutions to issues affecting the youth. Dr Fred Kabi the program coordinator at the University said innovation and entrepreneurship can be one of the solutions to the hard questions of how the university gets involved in solving the current challenge of unemployment in Uganda. Kabi explained that the major question put to Government under this initiative is whether it can deliberately establish regional incubation centres to engage the youth so that they are able to produce products for the local and international markets. The workshop was attended by members from Makerere University, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, the Uganda Agribusiness Alliance, the Agripreneurship Alliance (Switzerland), Gulu University and RUFORUM.

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4. University World News

Making work-integrated learning actually work (South Africa)

Work-integrated learning (WIL) in the higher education space may be considered a 'silver bullet' when it comes to effectively combating societal inequality by enhancing graduate employability, but when it comes to its implementation, the concept continues to be the subject of some wrangling among stakeholders. Addressing the recent third annual WIL Africa Conference in Umhlanga, South Africa, during a high-level panel discussion, Fazal Safla, general manager of the Provincial Public Service Academy based in the premier's office, tackled head-on concerns expressed by conference organisers that WIL was quietly being dropped from, or at the very least reduced, at many of the country's universities of technology – those institutions essentially mandated to focus on practical skills and produce work-ready graduates. “We shouldn't even be discussing this possibility,” Safla said, before adding: “We recently conducted a policy trend analysis and in terms of the National Development Plan, the White Paper for post-school education and training, the National Skills Development Plan [and others], the silver bullet in all of those documents to deal with inequality is WIL: linking industry to education and strong partnerships. It is in policy, it is clearly articulated and what we should be talking about is how we can be more effective in integrating it.” Safla said the premier's office – which held the role of facilitator, integrator and enabler – could play a part in facilitating “better integration between supply and demand sides within the province”, and he undertook to raise the issue in the KZN Economic Council. While his offer was welcomed by the meeting, it was clear that the factors preventing the seamless integration of work experience in the higher education space are many, varied and, inevitably in South Africa, rather complex. Many of these issues boil down to capacity –

both financial and human. Safla himself conceded that government departments taking on WIL students found it brought “added responsibilities” for the employer which were difficult in the face of austerity measures and budget cuts recently announced by Treasury. He said it was therefore important that the sector training authorities, commonly known as SETAs, provide more financial support for the programme, as well as the institutions themselves.

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5. The VOICE

[Think-Tank on Africa opens at Queen Mary University \(Africa\)](#)

A Think-tank research centre dedicated to research and development on Africa has earned a prestigious place at the heart of one of the UK’s leading universities - Queen Mary University of London. The centre which focuses on exploring and developing African led solutions to challenges facing the continent, aims to develop and galvanise African based and led solutions to most of the challenges that the continent, by connecting the best talents in all walks of life and in every nation of the world including those on the continent. Speaking at the Centre’s inaugural programme where leading academics and researchers in and outside the UK gathered to review the potentials and challenges of Africa as a continent, the Director of the Centre and Senior Lecturer at Queen Mary University of London, Dr Owolabi Bakre, stated that it was time the world including the big and powerful economic nations came to recognise the contributions of African resources, its economy and people to global advancement. Speaking further he said: “the Centre for African Research at the Queen Mary University of London will advance African solutions to African challenges. It will explore ways the full potentials of Africa and its people can be utilised for the growth and development of Africa through African led research programmes that will bring the best of the continent, its leaders and researchers into one room for solutions to the many problems that have befallen this important continent.” He noted that many of the challenges facing Africa today are caused by external interference and poor judgment by people entrusted with leadership responsibilities in Africa. He further noted that Africa may remain subservient to the rest of the advanced economies of the world in this era of neo-liberalism and globalisation if the continent fails to explore and develop its own economic, technological and political solutions using its best brains around the world. It was agreed that Africa has superlative economic and human potentials with abundant natural resources. In their different submissions, they concluded that Africa has been crippled by a series of challenges including interference in the continent’s natural and economic resources through colonisation, neo-colonisation, neoliberalism and globalisation by Western powers who are often disguised as foreign direct investors. They also noted that corruption and mismanagement including abuse of political powers are the other serious factors that have affected the continent and its development.

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6. FORBES

[Technology Could Soon Revolutionize Agriculture in Africa \(Africa\)](#)

The stakes are high. Africa currently holds the highest prevalence of the world’s undernourished people and has among the lowest agricultural yields in the world. The continent will double in population to hold an estimated 2.5 billion of the world’s nearly 10 billion people by 2050. Yet there is enormous potential for innovation to transform African agriculture, bringing jobs and strengthening

food security. One leader driving this agenda is Debisi Araba, the dynamic regional director for Africa at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). In the interview below he explores technologies influencing agriculture on the continent, emphasizes disruption opportunities, and highlights that platforms can release the best of human ingenuity. The biggest question is why we haven't yet had a green revolution in Africa. Part of the explanation is inadequate funding, but it's also about adopting an "agriculture as a business" approach. Agriculture is not about sustaining people just above the poverty line; it's about turning them into entrepreneurs who can thrive, recognizing the potential for this sector to lift millions out of poverty. Agriculture is poised for a mushrooming of investment across the continent. Let's start with production. We need to shift the focus away from calories and toward improved nutrition and health. That means introducing the right practices and varieties, using conventional breeding as well as breeding for micronutrients. It's also critical to understand soil health. We look for technologies that improve on-farm decision-making, interfacing with databases like the African Soil Information Service. On the consumption side, Africa is facing the triple burden of malnutrition – chronic hunger, malnutrition and obesity. Many talk about biofortification as a solution; that is just one of the pathways. We should be focused on technologies that can make the entire value chain nutrition sensitive, from smallholder farmers to big retailers. Click this [Link](#) for more details

7. University World News

[SADC approves new university to boost industrialisation \(South Africa\)](#)

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region has approved the establishment of the SADC University of Transformation to train citizens in innovation to facilitate industrialisation in the region. The virtual university originates from a proposal in 2016 by King Mswati III of Swaziland when he was the regional bloc's chairperson as part of measures to improve industrial productivity. The proposal was approved at a recent SADC meeting in Windhoek, Namibia last weekend. "Summit approved the operationalisation of the SADC University of Transformation, in the form of a virtual university, to focus on entrepreneurship, innovation, commercialisation, technology transfer, enterprise development, digital and knowledge economy, to support the SADC industrialisation agenda," reads part of a communiqué released after the summit. The university is expected to be established taking into account the regional skills needs and is poised to complement the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063 covering the three main pillars of industrialisation, competitiveness and regional integration. The agenda to be implemented in three phases has a number of interventions that include measures to upgrade science, technology, engineering and research capabilities of member states; skills development; institutional reforms; and the adoption of macroeconomic policies conducive for industrial development. It also involves the introduction of advanced technology in agro-food processing projects, increased investment in knowledge, development of unique skills, nurturing innovation as well as promoting competitiveness and deepening an entrepreneurial culture. King Mswati offered to host the proposed university and said his government would offer scholarships for 300 students for the initial intake to be drawn from all 15 community members – which is 20 students per member country.

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8. University World News

Universities feel the brunt of a market-driven agenda (Kenya)

A quarter of a century ago, Uganda's Makerere University embarked on an academic journey hitherto undreamt of in Sub-Saharan Africa: intensive marketisation of higher education. After years of neglect dating from the 1970s during the era of Idi Amin dictatorship and the civil strife that followed, in 1994 Makerere seemed to have found the missing link for revitalising its academic programmes without relying so heavily on state treasury. Dubbed by the World Bank as a quiet revolution, the Makerere model of financing university education was hailed as a surefire way of saving African universities from the brink of collapse. "Makerere represents an impressive example of institutional reform that takes advantage of different expressions of market demand," said Dr David Court, then a World Bank consultant on higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, in his 1999 study Financing Higher Education in Africa: Makerere, the quiet revolution. The initiative gave a new lease of life to Makerere: in a period of five years the Harvard of Africa moved from a situation in which none of its students paid fees, to a scenario where over 70% paid fees and stopped depending heavily on government subsidies. It is against this backdrop that public universities in East Africa, almost in their entirety, adopted this model – not just for the sake of meeting the initial objective of increasing the number of self-sponsored students, but for creating new undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses. Most of those new courses were regarded as market-driven and were intended to provide knowledge and skills that were thought to be in great demand in the job market or simply attractive to students. Subsequently, single-subject studies such as tourism, events management, leisure and hospitality, public relations, project management, conflict resolution studies and small business management courses attained degree status and were offered to full-cost tuition-paying students. According to Ishmael Munene, a professor of educational research, higher education and education leadership at Northern Arizona University in the United States, the idea of the entrepreneurial university was stretched to extremes in Kenya with the establishment of many constituent colleges, satellite campuses and learning sites. However, while funds from privately-sponsored students were expected to increase faculty salaries and improve learning facilities and staff development, universities pursued commercial ventures that were only remotely related to academia's core values. "In total disregard of stated academic missions, public university central management veered towards raw commercial interests that included the establishment of business incubation centres, real estate development, funeral homes, hotels and conference centres," said Munene. Unfortunately, as academia in Kenya was pushed into the marketplace, ethnic considerations became a plumb line for the clamour for new constituent colleges and branch campuses to be awarded charters and become fully-fledged universities. Taking into account that universities were being perceived as engines of job creation and other socio-economic benefits, this aspect increased pressure on the government to establish new universities, irrespective of their quality.

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9. University World News

Government launches national qualifications framework (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe has started implementing a new national qualifications framework which the government says will increase the accessibility, efficiency and relevance of its higher education sector within and outside the country. Authorities say the implementation of the Zimbabwe National Qualifications Framework (ZNQF) ensures quality in education and training, enhances national and international mobility of graduates and workers through increased recognition of the value and comparability of Zimbabwean qualifications, provides a model for transparency in comparison of qualifications, and increases coherence between education output and the needs of the labour market. The framework is cognisant of the fact that Zimbabwe is part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Qualifications Verification Network launched in 2017 and the SADC Qualifications Framework. The Zimbabwean framework is coordinated through the National Alignment Committee and provides guidelines by which records of learners' achievements are registered to enable national recognition of acquired knowledge, skills and competence, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages lifelong learning and facilitates prior recognition of learning. It gives 10 levels of qualifications ranging from basic to tertiary and higher education, providing relevant levels of descriptors – knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes for each respective ZNQF level. It also creates a harmonised credit accumulation and transfer system. "The Zimbabwe National Qualifications Framework enables the development of standardised qualifications through the establishment of minimum bodies of knowledge thus enhancing transparency to institutions, learners and employers. Through this framework, labour market needs will be better matched with the output of the education system," reads part of the framework document. The framework allows for the development, review, standardisation and assessment of existing and new qualifications to link and synchronise the various educational levels to allow for the transfer of credits and free movement of learners between various institutions inside and outside the country.

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10. University World News

Lecturers look forward to 'decent' pensions (Senegal)

After a long campaign, higher education and research unions have concluded an agreement with the government of Senegal to secure a 'decent' retirement pension for their members which will entail academics working an extra hour a week. Provision for retirement was a leading claim of the unions, especially the Syndicat Autonome de l'Enseignement Supérieur (SAES), during long years of negotiations interspersed with stoppages and strikes, reported Sud Quotidien of Dakar. In June 2017 higher education teachers responded to the SAES call to take to the streets to demonstrate their determination to the government on the retirement issue. The previous April the union had rejected conclusions from a conference on the viability of the civil service national retirement fund. Demands for a 'decent retirement' gained momentum at meetings on university campuses. Although teachers' and researchers' incomes rose through increased allowances and bonuses, their pensions were calculated on their basic pay which was 'derisory', reported Sud Quotidien. Finally, after long discussions, the SAES and the government agreed a draft accord in March, which stated that teachers and researchers would work an extra hour weekly, entitling them to a pension of 70% of their final salary for 2018 and 2019, 80% for 2020 and 2021, and 85% from 2022. A national social solidarity fund

would be set up to oversee the system. After a delay, the interministerial order creating the fund and fixing its operating rules was signed on 7 August by Mary Teuw Niane, higher education and research minister, and Amadou Ba, minister of economy and finance, with effect from 1 July.

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11. Africa.com

[What's Stopping Young African Scientists from Achieving Their Potential \(Africa\)](#)

Young African scientists face persistent barriers which cause them to leave their own countries, and even academia. This means the continent's work force loses highly trained people who are crucial for scientific and technological advancement, and for economic development. It's estimated that 20,000 highly educated professionals leave the continent annually, with up to 30% of Africa's scientists among them. A number of factors contribute to this trend. The extreme factors include war and political instability. But the more common "pushes" are a desire for higher pay, better opportunities, and the search for a conducive research environment – one where infrastructure and management help drive careers and research potential. Movement of survey respondents within and out of Africa over the last 10 years. *[Generated by Hsin-Chou Yang and Chia-Wei. Not publicly available]*. To identify all the barriers and develop strategies to address them, the Global Young Academy – an organisation of 200 talented young scientists and over 200 alumni from 83 countries – established the Global State of Young Scientists (GloSYS) Africa project. Working with local research partners and international higher education experts, the project aims to identify the challenges and motivations that shape young scientists' career trajectories. Our initial findings point to a lack of mentoring, resources and funding as key issues young scientists face across the continent. Using this data, we will be able to identify critical areas in which young scientists need support and develop innovative strategies to alleviate these challenges. The project comes at an important time as, over the past few years, African countries have initiated programmes to increase the number of PhD graduates. But if governments don't simultaneously develop support structures for graduates, and increase access to critical teaching and research infrastructure, these young scientists are set up to fail.

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