

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

### 1. Daily Monitor

#### Why academic mobility within Africa is vital (Uganda)

The African Union Agenda 2063 aspires for Africa to become a major knowledge and innovation force in the global economy. The Agenda's action plan provides a more integrated and inclusive Africa that uses its natural resources, human capital and institutions to drive technological, social and business innovation for development. It proposes to leapfrog the conventional approaches in ways that ensure rapid, sustainable growth, reduce out-migration and improve quality of life. Highly-skilled human resources are essential to develop and deploy new technologies to meet the Agenda's goals and aspirations. This is also envisioned in the United Nations 2030 Agenda on sustainable development, notably Goal 4 on "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all" and Goal 10 on "Reduce inequality within and among countries". Africa is lagging in high-level skills, technologies and innovations, and more needs to be done, in a different way, to ensure that its young population and institutions are empowered to develop new knowledge and innovations for societal and economic transformation. This is most important in agriculture and other primary sectors, which are providing food, employing larger proportion of the population. Africa is confronted with a number of development challenges, but a critical gap is the limited human capital to respond to those challenges and to support the development agenda. As a continent, our future is dependent on our youth, the new generation of academic leaders and researchers, and we therefore need to develop a new generation of African scholars that are able to work across the continent. As such, we must not only invest in science and institutional capacity, but also in building the human base. It is true that many universities in Africa have so long been seen as de-linked from communities and this has called for redirecting the way universities do their research to closely link with the communities. One of the best ways this was done was by harnessing the resident capacity that exist in universities to foster collaboration rather than competition, because no university world over, can have expertise in everything; there are areas where some universities are stronger and those where they are weak. African governments can help provide a mechanism for African universities to support their human capital development through innovative academic mobility programmes, which are critical for generating new technologies and discoveries that transform delivery of services and improving livelihoods. They must also work towards removing the barriers such as high intra-Africa visa costs, which affect mobility, high costs of resident and work permits for initiatives which go a long way in helping Africans achieve the Africa we want. Under the auspice of an initiative "Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA)," which in design is owned by 114 universities in 38 counties in Africa, but managed and coordinated by the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Graduate students and staff seeking to study PhD are trained. The arrangement involves a host University waiving tuition for a student, who in turn teaches while he/she studies. Read more [here](#)

## 2. University World News

### Free trade agreement offers a wealth of Higher Education benefits – Report (Africa)

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is likely to yield significant benefits for higher education and professional labour mobility on the continent once it takes effect, according to a new Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA IX) report. A mismatch between available skills and the needs of Africa’s labour markets has slowed the continent’s economic integration and overall development, according to the report. But a deepening of regional cooperation in education, including the implementation of Africa’s higher education harmonisation strategy – a recommendation under AfCFTA – can help. The report, titled Next Steps for the African Continental Free Trade Area, was released in Niamey, Niger on 7 July during the launch of the “operational phase” of AfCFTA at an African Union summit attended by heads of state and representatives of the African Union (AU). The ARIA IX report was jointly published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the African Union and the African Development Bank. It indicates that non-recognition, non-compatibility and non-comparability of skills, educational qualifications and experiences in Africa have impeded labour mobility. The AfCFTA is a trade agreement between the AU member states, aimed at creating a single continental market for goods and services as well as a customs union with free movement of capital and persons. The agreement was signed in Kigali, Rwanda in March and entered into force on 30 May 2019. It became operational this month (July). Only Benin and Eritrea are yet to sign. Samuel Nyandemo, economics lecturer at the University of Nairobi in Kenya, told University World News that AfCFTA will lead to greater professional and educational mobility, and upskilling of Africa’s workforce. “If AfCFTA is well implemented, it will be easy to transfer credits of students from one university to another,” said Nyandemo. “Once African countries open up their borders, it will help to ensure Africa’s youth with professional qualifications are given the opportunities they deserve to work anywhere on the continent.” However, Nyandemo said that this might take time and might also not be possible if governments fail to implement the agreement, as in the case of other economic bloc agreements. “It will require governments to harmonise training programmes, exercise political will, and improve the physical infrastructure in universities and interlinkages between programmes,” he said.

Read more [here](#)

## 3. University World News

### New approach needed to tackle employability problem (Egypt)

Career counselling in higher education aims to provide students with experiential learning opportunities during and after their coursework. This includes internships, seminars, workshops, professional development programmes and fellowships. Today, more than ever, universities view career counselling as a valuable service that promotes lifelong learning and provides career and employment guidance for their students, helping them to stay current with emerging occupational patterns and enhancing their future career prospects. In the higher education arena, the relationship between career counselling and employment is an inseparable one in that it provides students with practical learning opportunities and connects them with potential employers who could significantly impact their career trajectories after graduation. Providing students with hands-on experiences and experiential learning opportunities not only enhances their understanding of

what they are studying, but also develops their skills and prepares them to be successful employees in various work environments. Employment, income and status have traditionally been viewed as the product of higher education. Unfortunately, in Egypt, the reality is that this has not always been the case because higher education is not geared towards equipping students with 21st century employability skills. Although higher education is considered a means for social mobility, students in Egypt face major difficulties that prevent them from attaining its benefits, such as low employment opportunities, highly competitive job markets and workplace skill gaps. This is due in part to the fact that public universities in Egypt do not offer students the skills they need to be successful workers in the global 21st century marketplace. Today, the importance of English literacy and information and communications technology (ICT) skills remain underestimated in Egypt's higher education institutions, with curricula emphasising rote memorisation instead of the practical application of knowledge. This is problematic in the sense that it creates a large workforce that lacks the knowledge and technical expertise that the market demands.

Read more [here](#)

#### University World News

##### [Towards a philanthropic model for African universities \(Africa\)](#)

University fundraising in a highly competitive and global marketplace is challenging, regardless of geography. University fundraising in Africa may feel like an even greater challenge. Access to deep philanthropic pockets – often located in North America or Europe – can seem remote and impenetrable. Equally, the financially straitened circumstances that many universities are in make it very difficult to argue the case for resourcing fundraising efforts. No vice-chancellor reasonably wants to divert funding from teaching, research, welfare and infrastructure to marketing. However, the brutal truth is that you have to invest to grow – and this is particularly the case when it comes to accessing international philanthropic giving and disbursements. The model that some South African universities have adopted provides a possible template for the rest of the continent. And when it comes to seeking out and securing international charitable funding, the United Kingdom appears to be a focal point for those fundraising efforts – especially since there are historical ties between the UK and many African countries which can be leveraged. According to the UK Association of Charitable Foundations – the association that represents charities that give grants – according to the latest figures available, £20.7 billion (US\$26 billion) was donated in charitable giving in 2016-17. Charitable giving is deeply established in the UK, with the majority of donations comprising low level individual donations. However, £3.3 billion is given by charitable foundations and trusts and, of that funding, it is estimated that education receives the largest proportion. According to a UBS Harvard University global study of philanthropy, education is the top priority for foundations around the world, with 35% of nearly 30,000 foundations giving to education initiatives.

Read more [here](#)

#### 4. University World News

##### [Unskilled graduates struggle to find decent jobs – Report \(Africa\)](#)

African universities have been producing too many graduates with costly degrees and diplomas that lack mastery of skills that are necessary in the 21st century labour market, according to researchers at the African Development Bank. In a new policy research report released last month entitled

Creating Decent Jobs: Strategies, policies, and instruments, the African Development Bank says most of the degrees awarded by African universities lack the academic rigour, relevance and career-focused skills to enable graduates to get decent jobs. “Higher education ... is becoming less affordable, and its outcomes are often viewed as substandard. And many colleges and universities fail to help students graduate with the skills necessary to compete for high paying jobs in today’s workforce. Far too many graduates today (among the few who complete higher education) find themselves with costly diplomas and degrees and no direct connection to jobs. They often lack the most relevant academic skills and the career skills to get a good job,” the report states. “This translates into lost productivity and investment,” said lead researcher Dr Célestin Monga, vice-president for economic governance and knowledge management at the African Development Bank. The report highlights how many taxi drivers in the Algerian capital of Algiers hold graduate and even postgraduate degrees in the humanities and social sciences. In Douala in Cameroon, many commuter motorcycle riders, aptly known as ‘bensikineurs’, hold advanced degrees in engineering, mathematics and physical sciences. Such situations are also common in other major African cities. “Yet, after their training, their skill sets do not appear to be in great demand in the labour market,” said Monga and his associates – Dr Abebe Shimeles and Dr Andinet Woldemichael, both lead economists at the African Development Bank. In other circumstances, African graduates, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, are victims of frequent ethnic conflicts, corruption, nepotism and industries dependent on outdated technology with low returns and low productivity. “Such is the Nigerian experience where the rate of youth unemployment stands at 37%, which is among Africa’s highest,” says the report. Graduates in Nigeria, for example, are often victims of hiring inefficiency and corruption. “Corruption goes beyond the ministers and high government officials to industry managers and hiring personnel, with nepotism and other corrupt hiring practices making job searches inefficient and unequal,” notes the report. Whereas the failure by African universities to equip graduates for decent jobs is not a new issue, the new report goes beyond traditionally-cited factors such as outdated curricula, overcrowding, an ageing professoriate, limited funding, brain drain, poorly motivated staff and a large number of mediocre students; over the decades, it argues, African universities have failed to move beyond their early post-colonial strategic role focused on national pride and the training of civil servants and teachers.

Read more [here](#)

## 5. The Conversation

### [A Review of Kenya's Universities - What Formed Them, What's Wrong With Them \(Kenya\)](#)

In many African countries, the demand for higher education has increased tremendously in recent years. In Kenya for instance, universities have expanded more than six-fold in the past 20 years.

This massive expansion has created a crisis with university facilities. As a result lecture halls, laboratories and workshops have become stretched beyond their limits. In addition, expanding without adequate financing has led to universities neglecting programmes that require substantial capital investment. These include the health sciences, science and technology as well as engineering. In addition, little attention has been paid to critical curriculum reforms that would make education relevant to a changing and competitive labour market. My book, "The State and the University Experience in East Africa: Colonial Foundations and Postcolonial Transformations in Kenya", explores the dynamics that have influenced higher education in Kenya and the East African region during the

colonial and post-colonial period. Broadly, the book notes how the expansion of private and public universities in the last few decades has helped to increase access. Yet, less than 15% of students who complete high schools in Kenya can join universities. Last year only, 90,755 out of 660,204 students who completed high school qualified to join universities. In addition, the politically driven expansion of public universities has undermined vocational and technical colleges. Many were converted to universities. This had a detrimental affect on poorer Kenyans who were less likely to gain university admission. Also, the sector expanded without adequate support for research. Without knowledge production through research, universities have failed to provide solutions to the country's myriad challenges. I show that university policies were a product of political, economic and social forces in Kenya and the region. And I look at what needs to be done to improve the sector. I identified three major policy trends that have shaped university education since its inception in Kenya and East Africa. First was the elitist inter-territorial concept that characterised university policy between 1949 and 1970. During this period Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania shared a single university. As a result, only a tiny elite of East Africans could access university. Second was the transitional period of 1970 to 1978. This followed the breakup of the regional university arrangement. During this period there were fierce debates in Kenya that centred around access. On the one hand, there was increased demand for university access by people from within the University of Nairobi (mainly administrators), and some politicians. On the other, elitist and conservative bureaucrats preferred limiting access. Lastly, from 1978 to 2002, the foundation was laid for university liberalisation. This included the establishment of new public universities and the emergence of private universities. Rapid expansion followed. Throughout this period, universities were also affected by various social and political changes. These included the rise of African nationalism, independence and East African regional integration.

Read more [here](#)

## 6. The Wall Street Journal

### [U.S. Investment in African University Fails as China Advances \(Ghana\)](#)

When the U.S. government's private-investment arm teamed with New York-based real-estate investor W.P. Carey Inc. WPC -0.17% to finance the expansion of a prestigious university in Ghana, it was meant to demonstrate a novel for-profit funding model for development projects in Africa. Instead, it left a wasteland of unfinished lecture halls, dormitories and a pile of litigation. And it marked a high-profile setback for U.S. government efforts to counter China's growing investment influence on the continent. The project at the University of Ghana was a public-private partnership including the U.S. government's Overseas Private Investment Corp., known as OPIC, and W.P. Carey, owner of the New York Times headquarters. Launched in 2015, it was meant to provide accommodation for 984 students and facilities to teach science, technology, education and humanities. OPIC provides loans and insurance for projects in developing countries. It usually partners with American companies. But some of the biggest American investors, including private-equity firms KKR & Co. and Blackstone Group Inc., are stepping back from Africa, a priority region for OPIC and China. OPIC's partners in the Ghana project don't have a record of completing African projects. President Trump and Congress last year doubled OPIC's funding capacity to \$60 billion. The goal: to help OPIC compete with China's \$1 trillion Belt and Road program to build infrastructure including universities, railroads and power plants world-wide. OPIC wants to build "the greatest

development force in the history of the world,” Chief Executive David Bohigian said in a March interview. The agency provides alternatives to Chinese funding for Indonesian banks, Pakistani wind farms, Indian hospitals, Nigerian power plants, Middle Eastern private-equity funds and Vietnamese fish farmers. It has earned annual profits since 1974. But OPIC’s reliance on private companies as partners means its foreign-policy objectives must usually align with their profit targets. By contrast, Chinese President Xi Jinping has state-controlled companies and banks that are able to help enact foreign policy. Chinese investment in Africa is rising, more than doubling to \$43.3 billion between 2011 and 2017. U.S. investment in Africa fell 12% to \$57 billion over that period. In African higher education, China is racing ahead. It committed \$671 million between 2000 and 2014, more than double the U.S., according to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and AidData, a research group at the College of William & Mary. In November, China completed a multimillion-dollar university library in Tanzania. Confucius Institutes teach Chinese across Africa. More Africans study in China than in the U.S.

Read more [here](#)

## 7. University World News

### **Universities urge African Union to get behind Africa strategy (Africa)**

The Association of African Universities (AAU) has asked the African Union (AU) to show the necessary support for the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) in order to make it work, arguing that, three years into the launch of the strategy, the AU is yet to back it with the “appropriate level of funding”. CESA is a 10-year strategy developed by the African Union Commission covering the period 2016-25 with the aim of setting up a qualitative system of education and training to provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the union. In a communiqué issued at the close of the Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities, hosted by the AAU in Cairo from 8-11 July, it was stated that conference participants “observe that, from the reports by the sub-clusters, the AU needs to double its efforts if the objectives of CESA are to be achieved by 2025; and that areas not covered by the existing sub-clusters should be taken as cross-cutting issues for all the sub-clusters to address”. The AAU also asked the AU to “resolve to accelerate activities at the higher education institutional level that can promote CESA’s contributions to the African Union’s vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”. It welcomed the continued support of sponsors and development partners, including the European Union, TVET Egypt, National Bank of Egypt, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, for AAU conferences. The communiqué urged higher education institutions to take “critical” steps in the thematic areas discussed at the conference, which include raising the number and proficiency of teachers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, reforming curricula to remove misalignment and inconsistencies with neighbouring or user disciplines, innovating delivery mechanisms, improving student engagement and promoting industry relevance. It also called for the reform of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system to enhance an integrated competency-based model, which promotes good governance and management, effective professional development and quality assurance, which the AAU said, will

transition to employment, aimed at enhancing relevant skills and addressing skills gaps in various areas of the economy.

Read more [here](#)

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