

Press Release



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African Heads of State and Government and Development Partners to meet to discuss the role of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

25th September, 2015
United Nations, New York



Global leaders are meeting at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to adopt the sustainable development goals for the next 15 years to 2030. One of the goals is on inclusive quality education and continuous professional development for all. African leaders recognize that higher education is a key for the attainment of the sustainable development goals.

The successes of most OECD and emerging economies have demonstrated that economic growth such as the 5% realized by African countries has been attained due to the increasing number of scientists who graduate from various universities. Recent World Bank studies have shown that Sub-Saharan Africa could have a return of 20% on higher education investments.

On the margins of the 70th UNGA on Saturday September 26th, 2015, His Excellency Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi in his capacity as Champion for higher education in Africa will preside over a side event on “**A strategy for strengthening higher education for achieving the sustainable development goals in Africa**”. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the strategies to strengthen the quality of higher education, science technology and innovation in Africa for the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

The success of the strategies will rely on Africa’s own ability to mobilize its higher education institutions. Higher Education must train and release quality and skilled graduates, who are linked to Africa’s realities and are able to support economic growth and development, wealth creation and sustainable poverty reduction.

Notes to Editors:

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a network of 55 African Universities with mission to ‘strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to demands of small-holder farmers through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact oriented research and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions’. RUFORUM was established in 2004, with Secretariat hosted by Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. RUFORUM signed an MoU with the African Union and has mandate to support capacity building for science, research and technology development in Africa. RUFORUM has supported the training of over 1500 postgraduate students, the generation of over 300 agricultural technologies and mobilized over US\$70 million for strengthening postgraduate education in Africa. Please visit www.ruforum.org for more information.

His Excellency, Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, The President of Malawi was selected by the 55 Vice Chancellors of RUFORUM to **Champion cause of higher education in Africa** due to his background and experience in the higher education sector, coupled with his commitment to higher education, science and technology in Malawi. <http://blog.ruforum.org/>

The Common market for Eastern and Southern Africa as formed in 1994 to replace the former Preferential Trade Area (PTA) which had existed from the earlier days of 1981. COMESA (as defined by its Treaty) was established 'as an organization of free independent sovereign states which have agreed to co-operate in developing their natural and human resources for the good of all their people' and as such it has a wide-ranging series of objectives which necessarily include in its priorities the promotion of peace and security in the region. COMESA's current strategy is focused on 'economic prosperity through regional integration'. With its 19 member states, population of over 389 million and annual import bill of around US\$32 billion and an export bill of US\$82 billion COMESA forms a major market place for both internal and external trading. Its area is impressive on the map of the African Continent covering a geographical area of 12 Million (sq km). On 31st October, 2000 when nine of the member States namely Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe eliminated their tariffs on COMESA originating products, in accordance with the

tariff reduction schedule adopted in 1992. For more information, please visit <http://about.comesa.int/>

The East African Community (EAC) is the regional intergovernmental organization of the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Uganda, with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. More information can be accessed at www.eac.int/

The African Development Bank Group is a multilateral development finance institution established to contribute to the economic development and social progress of African countries. The overarching objective of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group is to spur sustainable economic development and social progress in its regional member countries (RMCs), thus contributing to poverty reduction. The Bank Group achieves this objective by a) mobilizing and allocating resources for investment in RMCs; and b) providing policy advice and technical assistance to support development efforts. More information can be accessed at www.afdb.org

For additional information, photos and interviews with key delegates, contact Mr. Living Silk Kalimanjira and Miss. Joan Apio, below.

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