



East African Higher Education Forum 2012

Jointly organized by

Inter-University Council for East Africa and East African Business Council

Introduction

East Africa's sustainable socio-economic development is in hands of East African Community (EAC) and its organs and institutions playing an effective role in promoting and enhancing partnerships with the private sector. In pursuant to enhancing partnership between education providers and users, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) and the East African Business Council (EABC) have agreed to jointly work together to provide a point of connection between knowledge generation and dissemination by higher education institutions to the business community, and the latter's integration of the knowledge and human resource produced by universities into the productive, social and service sectors in the Community. The partnership will focus on three key strategic areas, namely:

- (a) Consultative engagement in curriculum and research development;
- (b) Jointly organizing East African Higher Educational Forums on an annual basis; and
- (c) Operationalization of strategic interventions proposed during the Annual Forums.

The Need for University/Industry Partnerships in East Africa

Globally, Universities and Industry (constituting the productive, social and service sectors of the economy) partnerships have long been recognized as critical interventions in fostering socio-economic development. Unfortunately, in East Africa such partnerships are rather fluid or are completely non-existent. It is for this reason that IUCEA and EABC have taken the first step to support the mainstreaming of partnership between the two spheres, the academic and training world, and the workplace.

Thus, while EABC acts as the voice of the Private Sector in East Africa, and hence being at the forefront of facilitating the participation of the Private Sector in driving the region's socio-economic development, IUCEA is a strategic institution of EAC responsible for human resources development and research.

Both IUCEA and EABC are aware of the need to promote collaboration between universities and the business community in East Africa as a way of contributing towards human resources development and research in order to contribute to the region's socio-economic development. Therefore, IUCEA and EABC have agreed to jointly address issues pertinent to sustainable socio-economic development and regional integration by exploiting the following areas, among others:

- Enhancing linkage between the private sector and universities;
- Encouraging the private sector to support research and innovations in universities in the Community;
- Promoting the utilization of research output and innovations from universities by the Business Community;

- Identifying areas in Higher Education curricula and relevant research for the region's sustainable development; and
- Jointly hosting meetings, forums, exhibitions and other events, starting with the 2012 Higher Education Forum
- Identifying possible options in narrowing gaps between basic/applied research and industry research needs
- Working out alternatives to facilitate accessing to new ideas and know how
- To work together in disseminating -benefits of intellectual property and commercialization

Working out strategies to facilitate -early access to steady supply of skilled graduates - **The East African Higher Education Forum 2012**

The East African Higher Education Forum 2012 will be one of the immediate joint activities between IUCEA and EABC, to be held on 24th – 26th October 2012 and will be held in Arusha, Tanzania, which is the seat of EAC Headquarters. The theme of the forum will be ***“Linking Universities to Industry for Building Knowledge-based Economies and Regional Integration in East Africa”***. Thereafter the Forum will be jointly organized by IUCEA and EABC on an annual basis, bringing together higher education managers, researchers, the business community and policy makers in the region to deliberate on the role of universities in fostering regional integration and the development of knowledge-based economies in EAC Partner States through University/Industry partnerships.

Main Objective

To provide a platform for Higher Education stakeholders and different levels of target groups in Higher Education so as to exchange information, and to discuss and strategize on how to develop effective Higher Education systems in East Africa effectively responding to Industry needs for the promotion of sustainable socio-economic development and regional integration for the Community.

Specific Objectives

- Establish collaboration between University and Industry for the region's sustainable socio-economic development through enhanced industrial performance and investments in higher education, and the development of skills and competence-based curricula;
- Build consensus on developing a common Higher Education system for East Africa;
- Mainstream the relevance of University-generated knowledge and human resources for the general needs of society as well as industries; and
- Strengthen excellence of Universities by developing industry focused curriculum and research.

Structure of the Forum

The Forum will address various strategic issues based on the following sub-themes:

- Sub-Theme A:** Creation of University/Industry linkages
- Sub-Theme B:** Research and innovation as vehicles for promoting the region's sustainable socio-economic development by creating knowledge-based economies in the Community.
- Sub-Theme C:** Responsiveness of Higher Education systems to global and regional dynamics
- Sub-Theme D:** Harmonization of Higher Education and training systems through the development of regional quality assurance and accreditation systems, and a regional qualifications framework leading to East Africa becoming a common Higher Education Area;

Exhibitions: Higher Education Institutions, the Business Community, and other stakeholders will be invited to display exhibitions on practical aspects of their research and technologies developed and achievements as a way of promoting and enhancing University/Industry partnerships. The exhibition will also include international companies/universities.

IUCEA and its Mission, Vision, Roles and Functions

As an EAC institution, IUCEA's mission is to promote strategic and sustainable development of higher education systems and research for supporting East Africa's socio-economic development and regional integration. Its vision is to become an EAC strategic institution responsible for promoting, developing and coordinating human resources development and research in the region. IUCEA operates under the East African Legislative Assembly enacted IUCEA Act, 2009. It is a membership institution for both public and private universities, university colleges or other degree-granting institution in the EAC Partner States (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda). Currently there are 87 IUCEA member university institutions from all the Partner States. The objectives of IUCEA are to facilitate networking among universities in East Africa, and with universities outside the region; provide a forum for discussion on a wide range of academic and other matters relating to higher education in East Africa; and to facilitate maintenance of internationally comparable higher education standards in East Africa so as to promote the region's competitiveness. The functions of IUCEA as specified in the Act of 2009 can be summarized as to advise the EAC Partner States on higher education matters, so as to contribute to meeting national and regional developmental needs; coordinate inter-university cooperation in East Africa; facilitate the strategic development of member universities; and to promote internationally comparable higher education standards and systems for sustainable regional development.

East African Business Council (EABC)

It is the umbrella organization of the Private Sector in East Africa and is at the forefront in facilitating Private Sector participation in the EAC integration process. EABC members are drawn from the Private Sector in the EAC Partner States, constituting of companies, business associations, and government agencies involved in facilitating trade. EABC projects and programmes are designed to bring together potential business partners by developing critical contacts and business relationships; provide a forum for exchange of information and ideas; raise East Africa's investment profile both regionally and globally; and address issues that limit private sector competitiveness in trade and investment. The strategic focus of EABC is to bring all private sector associations under EABC fold in order to give the EAC private sector a stronger voice; enhance private-public sector dialogue with a view to ensuring that the private sector plays its rightful role in driving the EAC integration agenda; work towards a business environment that is conducive to trade and investment; enhance the capacity of EABC national focal points and other trade support institutions to be competent advocates for the private sector; and improve private sector competitiveness through provision of regular business and trade information.

Financing of the Higher Education Forum

Both IUCEA and EABC observe the need to jointly raise the required funds from the various stakeholders to facilitate the Forum. Therefore, the two institutions wish to appeal to the Business Community, the EAC Partner States, the EAC Secretariat, Higher Education Institutions, and all other stakeholders to come forward and support the joint initiative, the first of its kind in East Africa, through making generous financial contributions and providing other logistical support. Organization, institutions and individuals wishing to make financial contributions towards organizing the East African Higher Education Forum 2012 are requested to contact any one of the undersigned for details.

We remain, expectant of the support to make this Forum of academia and industry, ever in East Africa, a success.

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