EAST AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK
ANNUAL FORUM OF THE 10TH EAST AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK, 4TH – 8TH MAY 2020, NAIROBI, KENYA

1. PREAMBLE

The East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) is a network of quality assurance practitioners in the region. The Network was formally established in 2012 and organized its first forum in May 2012 which was held in Entebbe Uganda. Since then, and following the agreement during the EAQAN General Assembly, EAQAN in collaboration with the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) has been organizing an annual QA Forum around May every year. The subsequent forums have been held in Kigali 2013, Arusha in 2014, Nairobi in 2015, Entebbe 2016, Dar es Salaam 2017, Kigali 2018, and Entebbe 2019. These gatherings provide opportunity for EAQAN members to present papers and share best practices and experiences on key issues of quality assurance, receive further training and network with other QA practitioners in the region and beyond.

Both EAQAN and the IUCEA, as close partners share, the same remit to improve quality of the higher education sector in the region. For this the IUCEA has been committing resources to EAQAN to build capacity for enhanced quality improvements in higher education in the region. To accomplish the objectives of the Forum, EAQAN has been receiving support from DAAD, HRK, DIES and National Commissions and Councils for Higher Education in the region.

In 2012, the Network was formally established in Entebbe primarily to provide a platform for the discussion and exchange of experiences among QA coordinators and other stakeholders in quality assurance, teaching and learning as well as related issues in the management of higher education. EAQAN shall celebrate its existence for the last ten years and boast for her success and milestone since its establishment as an independent network to speared quality assurance in higher education in East Africa region with the support of the IUCEA, DAAD and National Commissions Councils. The network is proud for her great milestones which include: establishment of a regional network of QA practitioners; establishment of regional QA forums that facilitate continuous sharing, training and networking among the QA coordinators from the region. Development of critical mass of experts in quality assurance in the region and successful implementation of her strategic plan 2015-2020.

The 2020 EAQAN Conference shall build on lessons from themes of previous conferences as well as from suggestions given by participants during evaluation of the 2019 Forum held in Entebbe. This forum will emphasize on issues of Governance and leadership in higher education, examination process challenges and problem that affect education output and outcome. In addition the Conference will address issues related to impact of quality assurance in higher education and strengthening universities' position in society.

2. FORUM THEME:

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION: FOR ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY DELIVERY

Sub-Theme 1: Impact of Quality Assurance Practices in Higher Education

Sub-Theme 2: Assessment Processes

Sub-Theme 3: Strengthening Universities' position in society.

FORUM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The main Goal of the Forum is to foster dialogue through sharing of ideas on higher education policies, Quality assurance practices, challenges and prospects for promoting quality and relevance of higher education in the region.

The main objectives of the forums are to offer academics and practitioners in quality assurance the opportunity to:

a) Strengthen collaborations, networking and capacity building among stakeholders involved in Quality Assurance work in the region. Specific emphasis of capacity building through keynotes and training workshops offered will include Strengthening universities' position in society and the impact of quality assurance in higher education.

b) Discuss policies concerning Examination process in the East African Higher Education system and Societal Impact.

c) Learn lessons from other regions on the Involvement of Private Sector on Quality Enhancement and Institutional Sustainability and strengthening universities role in the society

d) Share lessons learnt during the period of Quality Enhancement of the Higher Education sector in East Africa.

3. FORUM ACTIVITIES

a) Paper Presentations on various topics

b) Key Note addresses by experts and discussions

c) Networking and Cultural events

d) Training Workshops to build capacity on enhancing quality practices in teaching and learning

e) Roundtable dialogue involving VCs and DVCs to discuss pertinent issues on quality in Higher Education in East Africa

4. PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Those wishing to present papers on any of the topics identified below should submit their complete papers for evaluation. Papers chosen for presentation will be classified in appropriate paper sessions as defined by the organizing committee. Conference papers must be prepared according to the guidelines issued to authors. Quality papers will be published in reputable peer reviewed Journal.

Key Topics:

a) a) Governance And Leadership In Higher Education: For Enhancement Of Quality Delivery

Higher education is now, more than ever, positioned to make significant contributions to the industry and society. The leadership and governance in these institutions have a significant impact on how they address matters that characterise the world of work. Recent research suggests that developmental leadership may have a role in enhancing good governance, meant as a tangible, policy-driven improvement in citizen voice and accountability; the rule of law; regulatory quality; political stability and the absence of violence; government effectiveness; and control of corruption. The forum will target to share experience on how governance and leadership in higher education plays critical role in attainment of the regional and national goals of education.

b) Impact of Quality Assurance Practices in Higher Education

For the past two decades, the higher education landscape in most African countries has experienced rapid changes due to political, economic and socio-cultural forces. These changes include, among others, the massification of education, greater diversity in terms of programs offered and types of students, matching programs to labor market needs, shrinking resources, increasing accountability, and indirect steering of higher education. All these changes have impacted negatively on the quality of services and output offered by higher education institutions. As a result, there is an increasingdemandfor establishment of QA systems in the landscape of institutions of higher education. Papers related to the journey of higher education towards the institutionalization of QA including challenges and opportunities in addition will also focus on the impact of quality assurance mechanism in higher education especially for the institutions that have we established frameworks for the last five years.

c) Assessment Processes

Academic component is a core mandate of any higher learning institution. Examinations are very important component of a student academic life. At all levels of study students partake Assessment as tests, End of Semester Regular Examinations, Special Examinations, Supplementary Examinations, Thesis/Dissertation Examination, Oral and Comprehensive Examinations. The integrity of the assessment process is paramount. One of the indicators of integrity in a higher learning institution is how the institution handles the examination process. Therefore, keeping higher levels of quality standards in the entire assessment process is very important.

To further acknowledge that higher learning institutions are autonomous, while some have Examinations Office or Directorate as a standalone others have the Examination section directly attached to the Office of the Registrar. This theme is an opportunity for higher learning institutions to share their assessment process with an aim to enhance learning from the best practices across the region while at the same time helping institutions improve on their practices.

d) Strengthening Universities' position in Society

Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions (OTIs) are established to execute a number of roles that include but are not limited to teaching, research& innovation and community engagement/outreach. Furthermore, Universities are tasked with the communal responsibility of fostering intellectual and social development within the societies these function. Part of this mandate can be met through trainings that offer a wide range of services including technical skilling, leadership training, soft skills training which are based on robust benchmarks and empirical research undertaken in these institutions. However, communities around these Universities remain distant which impeded the society's ability to fully benefit in terms of knowledge and innovations application despite the numerous challenges that the community grapples with.

It has been suggested that maybe to a larger extent academic research is heavily skewed towards citations rather than transforming societies. Research findings are shared with only the scientific community, other than the direct society actors that include the policy makers, business community to mention a few as such disengaging research contributions to practice. There is therefore an ardent need for immediate intervention by suggesting feasible solutions/ ideas to address the current status quo.

5. HIGH LEVEL QUALITY ASSURANCE DIALOGUE:

A one-day high level dialogue meeting involving Vice Chancellors (VCs) and Deputy Vice Chancellors (DVCs) is scheduled on the last day of the Forum(Thursday 7th May 2020). It will also draw senior executives from the Government, Commissions and Councils for Higher Education and Professors from academic institutions. Discussion will be centered on harmonising standards on governance, quality assurance and examination process subject's specific benchmarks.

6. NETWORKING AND CULTURAL EVENTS

The Conference participants shall be treated to a variety of networking events including cultural events that will not only exhibit the rich diversity of the East African cultural heritages, but will also provide opportunities for the participants to be entertained and to build partnerships for the enhancement of quality assurance in their respective institutions. In addition, attempts will be made for parallel site visits to learn from IQA initiatives in various Higher Education settings in Kenya.

7. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Training Workshops will be facilitated by the regional and international experts in the broad thematic areas shown below:

Governance and Leadership in Higher Education
- Impact of QA in Higher Education
- Assessments Processes
- Strengthening Universities' position in society.

8. CONFERENCE DATE AND VENUE

The 10th Annual Forum of the East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network is scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya from 4th to 8th May 2020. The specific venue/hotel will be communicated later.

9. TARGET PARTICIPANTS

The target participants for this Conference are all EAQAN members, Country Chapter members, Quality Assurance Coordinators/Directors/Officers from Universities; Quality Enthusiasts and Practitioners; University Academic, Research and Administrative Staff; Senior University Managers, Chief Executive Officers of National Commissions and Councils for Higher Education, Higher Education Policy and Decision Makers and Experts, Trade Unionists, professional bodies, students and student unions and other higher education stakeholders.

10. CONCLUSION

This Concept Note is intended to invite you all to start preparations for the EAQAN 2020 Forum by (1) Preparing a paper or a poster on one of the Conference's themes and submitting on time (see call for papers); 2) Clearing your Institutional and individual EAQAN annual subscription fees; 3) Mobilizing resources since participation to the Forum is on cost sharing arrangement and 3) Setting aside time for the event.

11. COMMUNICATION

All communications should be sent to eaqan2020@gmail.com and copied to the EAQAN President, on Email: barymaks@yahoo.co.uk. and to the EAQAN General Secretary, Prof. Julius K. Maiyo: maiyojulius@kibu.ac.ke

Please visit EAQAN web page hosted in IUCEA Website: www.iucea.org/EAQAN for this and other information.

IMPORATNT DATES

Submission of Abstracts: **26th January 2020**

Communication on acceptance of abstract and posters: **19th February 2020**

Submission of full papers: **31st March 2020**

Dr. Rita Makumbi Oola
President, EAQAN
Emails: barymaks@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: +256776444988