AFRICA
Introductory Statements

Regional cooperation in H E in Africa is set within the African Union's <u>continental</u> vision of a peaceful prosperous and <u>integrated</u> Africa which currently has 54 member states

- The 2nd Decade of Education for Africa Plan of Action (PoA) which the Conference of Ministers of Education (COMEDAF) adopted in 2006 with higher education 1 of 7 priority areas of Focus
- With 4 thematic areas:

– Research and knowledge production

- Quality Assurance

- Role and contribution of H E to improving education quality at other levels

- Financing
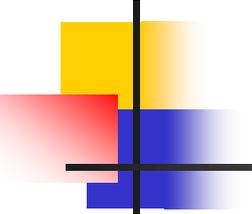
RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

- Africa, once was the cradle of civilization (1st Century Al Ahzar Univ. in Cairo; 13th Century Univ. of Timbuktu and later Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone.
- Following colonization, the African H E space now comprises a disparate system of Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Arab systems inclined towards European systems
- Mostly university-based
- Mostly state-funded
- Mushrooming private H E sector
- Mushrooming off-shore providers
- Massive increase in access
- Expanding non-university sub-sector
- Low focus on STIs / STEM
- Low research output
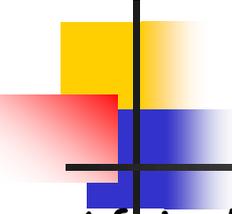
ARUSHA CONVENTION
(Regional Cooperation in Higher Education)

- Africa's Regional Convention for comparability and recognition of qualifications in Higher Education Africa is the A C

- Also designed to facilitate mobility of students and academic staff; reinforce continental integration and contribute to UNESCO's efforts to promote international academic mobility.

- Africa is yet to realize full actualisation of Arusha Convention

- As regards QA, under various sponsorships, East, Central Africa and North Africa have achieved some progress in cooperation and integration of quality assurance systems

- CAMES and PALOPS achieved longer history of such cooperation in Francophone and Portuguese regions respectively with LMD reforms

- Same cannot be said for West Africa sub-region where linguistic and other rivalries have prevented significant cooperation even in QA

- Admirably Southern Africa has steadily developed strong sub-regional cooperation in H E with several best pratices
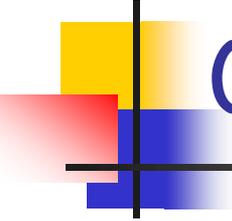
ARUSHA CONVENTION
(Regional Cooperation in Higher Education)

Introduced in 1981 long before Bologna
Only 21 Countries out of 54 have ratified:

Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso,
Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial
Guinea, Egypt, Gabon, Guinea
Conakry, Lesotho, Niger, Nigeria,
Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles,
Sudan, Tanzania, The Holy See,
Togo, Zambia
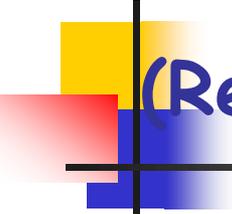
Impact of Bologna Process
(Regional Cooperation In Higher Education)

- Foremost is the LMD reforms aimed at harmonising degree structures

- Also recently the "TUNING Africa" project is contributing to curriculum reform (Medicine, Teacher Education, Agriculture, Mechanical and Civil Engineering) to harmonize content, required credits, and promote recognition of qualifications.

- Make for ease of mobility of staff and students across the region and facilitate transfer of credits.

- Shift from structures to content is slowly and partially being achieved with the development of course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

- More in-depth work is required to achieve alignment as Bologna gains ground for global recognition, mobility and credit transfer and under the Africa–EU strategic partnership slogan of 2 Unions 1 Vision

- Africa's regional cooperation efforts should focus more on developing common frameworks compatible with Bologna and other international frameworks to ensure mutual recognition of degrees and enhance quality
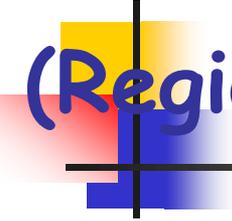
Impact of Bologna Process (Regional Cooperation In Higher Education)

- Towards removal of barriers to mobility and portability of credits and degrees
- AU's <u>Strategy for Harmonisation of H E</u> is viewed widely as step in right direction with Arusha Convention as pillar for an African Accreditation Agency

Two key thrusts in implementation:

Development of a Continental Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework and Strengthening of the African Higher Education and Research Space (AHERS)

- Specific to QA moved from 6 QA agencies in 2004 to 23 in 2014
- Capacity-building drivers are the annual ICQAHEA and AfriQAN
- Let's not forget: Africa and EU are interconnected by geographical, historical, political, linguistic, educational, social and cultural links
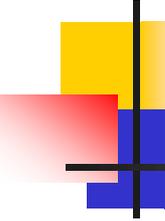
WHO SETS THE STANDARDS?

- Governments
- Universities / H E Institutions
- Association of African Universities (AAU) plays a major advocacy role
- Professional bodies
- Local and international accreditors and QA Agencies
- Regional Associations (SADC, IUCEA, CAMES, PALOPS, AArU, etc)
- Countries gradually taking into account African Union's African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) in response to improving continents global ranking (Peter Okebukola a pioneer and architect of AQRM)
- Multi stakeholders standard setting ensures ownership and end user acceptance
- African Higher Education Harmonization Strategy
- Developing standards is an ongoing and continuous process through which you implement, assess and take corrective actions to improve

ARE STANDARDS THE RIGHT ONES?

- Depends on who is setting and who is assessing and for what purpose
- There's growing distinction between 'standard' and 'purpose'
- Standard defined broadly as "fit for purpose"
- Purpose defined generally as "the mandate" of the institution. Mandate normally set by an Act of Government establishing the institution (e.g. University for Development Studies (UDS in Tamale, Ghana
- Institutions then set 'standards' based on mission, vision, inputs, process outputs, clientele, internationalization, MDGs, funding criteria etc
- Institutions mitigate standards with expectations of different levels:

- National Councils for Tertiary Education (NCTE, CHET, etc)

- Sub-regional standards (IUCEA, CAMES, ECOWAS, SADC, etc) and AAU

- Dilemma is how to maintain a careful balance between the need to be locally relevant while striving for international or global competitiveness
- Standards should be appropriate, relevant, sensitive, reliable, valid
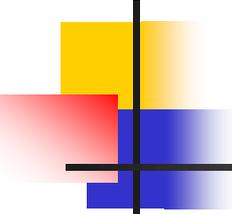
Potential impact of
Tuning learning outcomes

- The move towards competence based learning outcomes expected to lead to quality enhancement and employability
- Gradually influencing standard setting at institutional levels
- Key challenge is with national and sometimes institutional regulatory regimes
- There's fear of loss of national / local identity and control
- Heavy demand for funding where mobility is required
- Arduous process and management taking away from academic and research time
- Multiplicity and interpretation of credit hours and systems
- A sound understanding of challenges is crucial for success
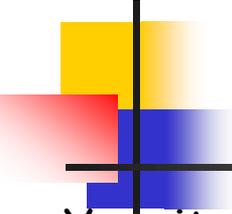
FOREIGN ACCREDITORS

- Yes, it should be possible and its becoming commonfor institutions to call in a foreign accreditor especially for program accreditation
- Some already doing so since quality should be owned by the institution
- This can engender transfer of knowledge, skills and technology for international comparability.
- Teaching and learning processes will benefit from international perspectives
- Institution will have the benefit of a double check/confirmation to determine which aspects of its systems are working best for consolidation and which need attention and improvement.
- Institution is able to determine/justify its critical needs for attention of government and international partners
- Parents and students look mostly for institutions in good standing and of international standards and foreign exposure / accreditation
- Most common is accreditation by professional programs and disciplines (medicine, engineering, architecture, law, ICT, business, accounting etc)
- Joint degrees also becoming very common
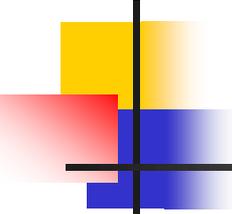
FOREIGN ACCREDITORS

- Sending country/institutions will often require local accreditation
- New policies required to allow franchised campuses and off shore providers to be accredited by internationally recognized bodies
- International Baccalaureate (common but not really an accrediting agency)
- International Education Accreditation Authority (IEAA) for .edu eligibility
- International Accreditors could gain space albeit slowly and more likely with professional programs
- Should familiarize and comply with accreditation and QA systems of inviting country and not only engage with institutions
- Caution not to assume superiority/override national policies and regulations of national accreditation / QA agencies
- Report objectively while providing standards institutions aspire to
- Offer capacity building cooperation/collaboration