

ACE I and II Implementation Support Workshop  
La Palm Beach Hotel, Accra  
November 7, 2017

Honorable Ministers,

The Association of African Universities (AAU),

The National Council on Tertiary Education (NCTE),

The Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA),

Organizing Committee for the Workshop,

University faculties representing 15 African countries,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the country director for the WB Ghana, I would like to **welcome all representatives and participants to the city of Accra**. We are thrilled that you are all here from 15 African countries and from over 40 universities. While I know you will be busy over the next few days, we do hope you can take some time to see Accra outside of this hotel before you depart.

The Ghana country office of the World Bank is **excited to host this workshop** which will support ACEs in delivering excellence in higher education in Africa through peer learning & knowledge sharing, practical discussion to clarify sometimes complicated

operational procedures, and motivating one another for accelerated implementation and outcomes.

The World Bank would like to **commend the governments and the representative ministers of the various countries for their demonstrated committed and ownership of the Africa Centers of Excellence program – including**, the National Council on Tertiary Education (NCTE), the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), as well as the Organizing Committee, the University Vice Chancellors, and the entire ACE faculty from across the region without whom this project would not be possible – let alone have a chance of the successes it is currently enjoying.

Of course, we can't forget to mention the hard working graduate students who are the foundation for tomorrow's skilled talent in Africa. We congratulate all the Centers of Excellence under the ACE Project.

In case you were not aware, the ACE project is quite unique in the World Bank portfolio. It is paving the way to re-thinking how the World Bank can support higher education and advanced research in Africa. It has gained high level international and local attention from key partners, industry players, and stakeholders on the African continent and beyond.

**There is a critical demand for skilled graduates broadly in the areas of science, technology, mathematics, and engineering and** covering themes in agriculture, health, water and sanitation,

construction, energy, and climate change. Building these skills in African countries will be critical to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. ACE is uniquely positioned to invest in such skilled graduates and research in these areas.

The World Bank team is encouraged that under **ACE I significant disbursements and results have been achieved on the project thus far and ACE II is not very far behind.**

**We commend the ACEs for the results achieved thus far,** including strong progress on student enrollment, excellence in education through international accreditation, excellent and relevant applied research, a strong push for university-industry linkages, and relevance through revenue generation.

The ACE project is financed based on results achieved by each ACE – that is, we assess it's success based on results and not spending and inputs. **And the set of results are impressive indeed:**

8,000 African students enrolled in new specialized short-term courses, and Masters and PhD programs

1,900 regional students enrolled in ACEs

Four (4) centers having established international accreditation in Engineering.

- 2iE Center for Water and Environmental Sciences in Burkina Faso
- MPhil and PhD in Cell Biology at the Center for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens at the University of Ghana
- Centre for Mathematics and ICT at the University of Gaston Berger, Senegal
- Centre for ICT at the University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon.

ACEs are leading ground breaking research to bring new solutions to problems in the region. For example, the Africa Center of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Diseases (ACEGID), Redeemer's University in Nigeria published world class research on the Ebola virus in Nature Science--where the first sample of Ebola was tested in Nigeria within a short time frame, and which strong scientific capacity was integral in battling the Ebola outbreak in Nigeria and the region.

The ACE project has strongly supported university-industry linkages through internships and at least 800 students have undergone internship since the inception of the ACE Project.

And the ACE project is making these high skilled research efforts sustainable by building capacity in revenue generation for the centers. For instance, University of Ghana's Africa Center for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens raised 5.1 million pounds for Wellcome Trust through a competitive fund grant, outbidding over 50 other proposals across Africa.

The amount of externally generated revenue by the ACEs is now a total of US\$ 18.3 million.

**But the ACE project teams can't rest on these results. There are however some challenges and so much more to achieve:**

Develop stronger Industry relations to enhance the transfer of knowledge and technology.

Increase the number of regional students and have an international marketing and specialization for African universities.

Enhance regionality and sustainability ACEs and a regional center of excellence program and scholarship program.

**The World Bank is proud to partner African countries and universities on this innovative project that seeks to bring about the change we so need.** Change is a long hard road and must be sustained to achieve sustainable outcomes. We recognize that all ACEs are working hard to resolve any existing challenges, and to make this project a success by building internationally recognized centers of excellence in Africa that can educate the next generation of **scientists, researchers, leaders and innovators**. We at the World Bank are very proud to be associated with these aspirations.

**Thank you for choosing Ghana as the venue of this workshop and on behalf of the Country Management Unit, I wish you all successful deliberations that will propel ACE I and II forward.**