

Al-Azhar University

Vice President Office



جامعة الأزهر

مكتب نائب رئيس الجامعة

Speech of Al-Azhar University delivered in participation to the opening ceremony of the Eastern Africa Regional Office of the Association of African Universities, University of Khartoum, Sudan

Dear Attendees,

May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon you!

First, it is an honor to extend to you all the greetings of His Eminence, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Professor Ahmad At-Tayyeb, and also the greetings of Professor Muhammad Hussayn Al-Mahrasawi, President of Al-Azhar University, who both invoke Almighty Allah to grant you all success in doing that which is good for humanity at large.

At the outset, we would like to extend our warm thanks to Prof. Orlando Antonio, the President of the Association of African Universities (AAU), and Prof. Etienne Ehouan Ehile, the Secretary General of AAU, for inviting us to attend the opening ceremony of the Regional Office for East Africa .

In addition, we would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to Prof. Ahmed Ali Solayman, President of the University of Khartoum, for graceful reception, hospitality and organization of the event. We would like to congratulate our fellow Sudanese people and the University of Khartoum for its being selected to encompass the headquarters of the Regional Office for East Africa of the AAU. We value this selection. The University of Khartoum is already competent, both in form and substance, to this mission. We are confident that it will perfectly do its duties and play an influential role in the development of education, community service and environment development in Africa.

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Indeed, the AAU exerts clear and significant efforts to develop higher education in Africa. It also works on bridging the gap between Africa and Europe in the different fields of culture, science and knowledge. Besides, it is concerned with upgrading the graduate's efficiency and improving their skills and capabilities.

As you know, Al-Azhar University is a thousand and forty-eight years old institution. It provides (359) academic programs in various religious, human, scientific and medical sciences and knowledge. The University has three main branches in Cairo, south, and north Egypt, respectively. It has eighty-seven faculties with a total number of students enrolled this year (2017/2018), estimated at around 650,000. In addition, there are about 650,000 postgraduate students (Master's and Doctorate degrees). The University hosts 33,000 international students, representing 107 countries, including 35 countries from the north, south, east, west and center of Africa. The number of the African students enrolled in the university amounts to 4,872.

Throughout its long history, Al-Azhar Al-Sharif has had the honor to present various activities at almost all the African countries, such as dispatching educational missions specialized in various sciences, knowledge and cultures, and medical convoys and humanitarian aids to afflicted areas. From 2011 to February, 2018, the number of medical conveys added up to 13, to seven African countries (Sudan, Niger, Somalia, Chad, Central Africa, Nigeria and Burkina Faso), with the participation of 124 physicians, who treated around 61385 patients. Besides, the number of conducted operations amounted to 1430, while the weight of medicines provided added up to 17 tons. As for humanitarian aid and relief, the last two years witnessed the

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dispatching of four relief convoys with 17 tons of aid to Chad, Central Africa, Nigeria and Somalia.

Al-Azhar University has always been keen to scientific and cultural conclude agreements with different universities in various African countries.

Al-Azhar also holds training and informative courses for Imams of mosques and sheikhs in some African countries, in cooperation with the British, Tony Blair Center.

Al-Azhar has various sectors, including Al-Azhar University, Al-Azhar Institutes Sector and Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy. As a result of the recent developments in the world, three years ago Al-Azhar established Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism that is concerned with spreading the true religion and monitoring all the practices harmful to the human beings, environment and other creatures. It corrects such practices and responds to them in eleven languages. The Observatory is also concerned with monitoring terrorist ideas all over the world and warning the youth against the false conceptions. It also has a distinct role in combating extremism and terrorism, relying on electronic means.

Dear Attendees,

The Association of African Universities is the entity responsible for developing the strategic plan for higher education in the continent. So, you may agree with me that one of the tasks that should be undertaken by the AAU in this stage, in tackling critical issues of the continent, is to build quality education systems systems to

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ensure the efficiency of graduates and their ability to compete in the international labour market.

Dear Attendees!

You know that the internal conflicts in the continent form one of the main obstacles to development. Therefore, you may see the importance of adopting a program strategy for university students – the future leaders – to install the values of peaceful coexistence, tolerance, diversity and training in communication skills.

Dear Attendees!

You may share my view on the need for creating a capacity-building entity for the people of the continent to participate in the sustainable development. Also encourage academic mobility and create double degrees between different African countries to create integration which bridging the gaps and building trust.

Dear Attendees!

Based on climate change in the world, some countries in the continent during coming years may face a drought problem, the case that requires finding alternative, non-conventional irrigation systems. This can be achieved through designing academic programs in the field of agriculture and irrigation that serve development of the continent and use of technology in irrigation and cultivation.

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Mr. President!

Among the key challenges of development in the continent, that cannot be overlooked, is the issue of endemic diseases which result in economic burdens and hinder the development. So, you may share my view that the academic programs and scientific research should pay due attention in order to eliminate these diseases.

- With its natural resources, Africa is the richest continent in the world. So, it is necessary to explore and effectively invest its natural resources through the academic programs and scientific research.
- The woman is a key partner in sustainable development of the continent. Therefore, the academic programs and cultural activities should take into account the role and contribution of women in the sustainable development, working on establishing the principle of equality between man and woman, and confirming that distinction is the only criterion of superiority.

Regarding these missions, Al-Azhar University, building on its expertise, can effectively contribute to the development and implementation of these operational plans.

Mr. President; dear Attendees!

In the name of Al-Azhar Ash-Sharif and of Al-Azhar University, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation for this noble invitation and for kindly listening, invoking Almighty Allah to guide us to work together for the benefit of humanity at large, at all times and places.

Our last call, is thus, that all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.