



ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS AFRICAINES

اتحاد الجامعات الإفريقيه

ADDRESS OF THE
**SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES
(AAU)**

PROFESSOR ETIENNE E. EHILE

AT THE

**INAUGURATION OF THE
EAST AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE AAU**

Khartoum, Sudan, March 14, 2018

- *The Minister of Higher Education of the Republic of Sudan*
- *The Representative, African Union Commission*
- *The President of the Association of African Universities*
- *The President, University of Khartoum*
- *The Vice- President of the Association of African Universities for Eastern Africa, Prof. Bakari Osman Saeed*
- *Distinguished AAU Board Members*
- *Colleagues from various diplomatic missions and development partner organisations*
- *Executives and Board Members of the University of Khartoum*
- *Executive members from Industry, Student Groups and other bodies*
- *-Special Invited Guests*
- *-Ladies and Gentlemen*
- *-All Protocol Observed*

On behalf of the Association of African Universities, I welcome you all most cordially to the official inauguration of the East Africa Regional Office of the AAU being hosted by the University of Khartoum, here in Sudan.

The establishment of regional offices in four regions of Africa forms a key focus of the AAU's strategy for effective programme delivery at the regional level in 2018 and beyond. The time is indeed ripe for us to work together as African countries to effectively respond to some of our basic higher educational needs and demands. We can work together to harness the opportunities in some countries, especially in areas like medicine, to bridge the gap and reduce the deficiencies in other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In a typical university in Cote d'Ivoire, for instance, over 3,000 students apply and compete for 200 positions available for admission into the medical school, whereas there is enough capacity to admit some of these students in other countries, through strategic collaborations.

Strategic collaboration is key in availing unlimited opportunities to the African Higher Education Community. This new home of the Association of African Universities, being established in Khartoum today, will provide us the opportunity to get closer to our members and increase our impact in the East Africa sub-region. The regional offices will further present the opportunity for AAU to work collaboratively with its members in finding solutions to issues confronting them and help respond to the broader mandate of improving higher education quality as recommended by African Union (AU)'s Agenda 2063 *The Africa we want* and other various strategies.

I seize this opportunity to express the AAU's profound gratitude to the Government of Sudan and specifically to the University of Khartoum for offering to host the AAU's regional office in this beautiful country. We naturally cannot predict the exact impact of what will emerge from the establishment of this office, but I am very convinced, and can assure you that it will yield enormous benefits for all Higher Education Institutions, especially AAU members in your country and in the East Africa sub-region at large.

Ladies and Gentlemen, AAU was founded on November 12, 1967, in Rabat Morocco by representatives of 34 of the then 46 institutions of higher learning that qualified for membership. This group of 34 founding member universities included the University of Khartoum, University of Algiers, Ain Shams University, University of Ghana, Makerere University College and the University of Dar es Salam among others.

The Association of African Universities was established as an International Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and the apex organization and forum for the consultation, exchange of information and co-operation among institutions of Higher Education in Africa.

AAU represents the voice of Higher Education in Africa and supports networking by African Institutions of Higher Education with the aim of improving the quality of teaching, research, and information exchange and collaboration.

The headquarters of the AAU is permanently located **in Accra, Ghana since 1970 under a Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Ghana and the AAU.** Together with our stakeholders, we celebrated AAU's 50th Anniversary and Golden Jubilee in Accra in June last year. The founding fathers of the Association envisioned the AAU as an organization that would bring together African Universities in the same way that the Organisation of African Unity had brought together newly independent African Countries. I am glad to say that, up to present, the AAU still operates within this framework.

You would agree with me, that after 50 years of operation, the trends of Higher Education have surely changed and therefore there is the need to get closer and closer to our membership so that we can identify their actual needs and together develop demand driven and relevant interventions.

In line with this, the AAU Governing Board tasked the Secretariat to set up regional offices in the four regions of Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, AAU has been appointed by the African Union Commission (AUC) as the coordinator for the implementation of The Higher Education Cluster of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25). CESA capitalizes on numerous, and active, players ready to mobilize financial, human and technical resources within national, regional and continental coalitions for education, science and technology. The strategy thus seeks to provide each education stakeholder the opportunity to make its best contribution to education and training in Africa.

Through this platform, I wish to once again reiterate the Association of African Universities' commitment to ensuring that the goals and strategic objectives of CESA are achieved by the 2023 timeline. Indeed, the AAU has put in place various strategies to ensure that we work more collaboratively and closely with the higher education community in Africa to improve the quality of service, in keeping with its mandate. Establishing this regional office today, is a step in the right direction.

Distinguished Guests, I would like to emphasize that AAU is proud of Sudan for always taking up one vice president position out of the three available slots provided by the Association over the past 8 years.

Prof. Bakari Osman Saeed, President of Sudan International University has just taken over from **Prof. Karrar Elabbadi, Vice Chancellor of Omdurman Ahlia University** at the last 14th General Conference.

I call on us all, gathered here today, to fully support the AAU regional offices, especially the one to be hosted by the University of Khartoum, to function effectively and help improve the quality of education within the region. We have put in place a well-designed programme of activities, ranging from institutional evaluation on quality assurance, leadership and management development trainings activities and a programme on university industry linkages among others for all Higher Education Institutions within the region. These programmes were developed in consultation with various institutions on the needs of the African Higher Education sector.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, although we have achieved much in our respective institutions, there still remains a lot to be done to meet the capacity needs of our beloved continent. I reiterate that collaboration is the way forward and call on all parties to join forces with the AAU in fostering mutually beneficial partnerships among ourselves, with industry, government and all relevant stakeholders.

Permit me to end my speech, by extending the AAU's appreciation to all the people who have worked tirelessly to make the establishment of this regional office a reality. We say a big thank you to you all for your enormous support.

Thank you for your attention.