

For immediate release

## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **Strengthening Capacities of African Universities to Deliver Quality Post-Graduate Training and Applied Research: Africa Centers of Excellence meet in Dakar from September 23-27, 2019.**

**Dakar, September 18 2019.** The Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence (ACE I) and Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) projects will be holding a biannual meeting in Dakar, Senegal. With support from the Ministry of Higher Education in Senegal, the World Bank and its partners (Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the Association of African Universities (AAU)) launches the eleventh ACE I and second for the ACE Impact since the inception of the projects. The meeting will take place on September 23 – 27, 2019 at the Radisson Blu and King Fahd Hotels in Dakar, Senegal.

The meeting brings together several actors of the higher education sector, including, Vice Chancellors and academics from institutions hosting the Centers, government representatives from the participating ACE1 and ACE Impact Countries, the private sector, industry players and policy think tanks. The overarching goal is to create a platform for the Centers to gain knowledge relevant to the implementation of the projects, exchange information on their respective programs, build networks and forge partnerships to ensure the successful implementation and realization of the project's objectives.

Moreover, the ACEs will have an opportunity to discuss ongoing activities and progress, share experiences, strengthen their strategies for addressing the continent's development challenges and engage with several ICT-related companies on issues around digital skills, digital infrastructure and smart campuses.

The Official Opening and Closing ceremonies of the meeting will take place on September 24 and 27 respectively, at the King Fahd Hotel, Dakar. Additional planned workshop activities will be held at Radisson Blu Hotel on September 25-26, 2019. They would include implementation support and peer learning sessions for all the participating Centers across Agriculture, Health and Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) themes as well as operational clinics on Monitoring & Evaluation, Procurement and Financial Management. The objectives of these sessions are to equip the participating ACEs, their host institutions and governments with tools necessary to improve their Project effectiveness and Implementation. Key results that the project seeks to achieve include post-graduate expansion of MSc, PhD students in priority disciplines, international accreditation to improve quality and relevance of programs, outreach and impact to society through internship placements for students and external revenue generation through research consultancies and partnerships with private sector.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings for ACE I and ACE Impact will take place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2019 at the World Bank Office in Dakar. The PSC comprises representatives of all participating countries, regional bodies and industry. They serve as the policy making body of these Projects.

**Journalists wishing to cover the event are requested to register with Mme. Kane to obtain their accreditation and receive the program. Mme Kane can be reached via email [coumba.toure@ucad.edu.sn](mailto:coumba.toure@ucad.edu.sn)**

### **Background information:**

The Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE) Project is a World Bank initiative in collaboration with governments of participating countries to support Higher Education institutions in specializing in

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Agriculture, Applied Social Sciences, Education and Health. The first phase (ACE I) was launched in 2014 with 22 Centres of Excellence in Nine (9) West and Central African countries namely; Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. The Project aims to promote regional specialization among participating universities in areas that address specific common regional development challenges. It also aims to strengthen the capacities of these universities to deliver high quality training and applied research. The ACE I Project ends in March 2020.

Based on the successes of ACE I, the World Bank and the French Development Agency (AFD) in collaboration with the African governments, launched the ACE Impact Project which seeks to strengthen post-graduate training and applied research in existing fields and support new fields that are essential for Africa's economic growth. There are 56 ACEs (25 new ones and 18 from ACE I); 5 Emerging Centers; and 5 Colleges and Schools of Engineering. The Thematic areas include Agriculture, Health, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Education and Applied Social Sciences.

## **CONTACTS**

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISERS**

- **About the Association of African Universities (AAU).** *The Association of African Universities is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization created by African Universities to promote cooperation among them on the one hand, and between them and the international academic community on the other. Created in 1967, the AAU is the voice of higher education in Africa. AAU aims to improve the quality of African higher education, and to strengthen its contribution to Africa's development by supporting the core functions of higher education institutions and facilitating critical reflection and consensus building on issues affecting higher education in Africa. The AAU is the Regional Facilitation Unit of the Africa Centres of Excellence project.*
- **About the World Bank Group.** *The World Bank Group is a multilateral development institution that works to reduce poverty. Its subsidiary IDA (International Development Association), which finances the Africa Centres of Excellence series of projects and was founded in 1960, provides interest-free grants and credits to the poorest countries to help them implement projects and programmes that stimulate economic growth, contribute to poverty reduction and improve the living conditions of the poor. IDA is one of the largest donors to the 77 poorest countries in the world, 39 of which are in Africa. IDA's resources concretely benefit 1.3 billion people. Since its inception, IDA has supported activities in 112 countries. The annual volume of its commitments has averaged \$19 billion over the past three years, with about 50 per cent of that amount going to Africa.*
- **About the French Development Agency.** *For more than 75 years, the French Development Agency (AFD) has been fighting global poverty by supporting policies and investments that benefit the poorest populations. Strengthening the social link between individuals, groups and territories is*

*now at the heart of its actions in education, health, employment, urban planning, climate or biodiversity. For AFD, balanced development requires a real reduction in inequalities.*

- **Ministry of Higher Education, Senegal:** *The Ministry of Higher Education is key to policy making and decisions related to Higher Education in Senegal and the African region at large. The Ministry oversees all Higher Education bodies in Senegal. As part of its contribution to the ACE project, the Ministry supported the idea to host the 11<sup>th</sup> ACE I and 2<sup>nd</sup> ACE Impact workshops. Through Cheikh Anta Diop and Gaston Berger Universities, the Ministry houses four (4) ACE Impact Centres and two (2) ACE I Centres.*