Volume 21 Issue 44
Originally issued as H7



Global Journal of human-social science: H Interdisciplinary
Volume 21 Issue 7 Version 1.0 Year 2021
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Private Universities and Building a World Class University in Africa

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GJHSS-H Classification: *FOR Code: 139999*



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Private Universities and Building a World Class University in Africa

Caseley Olabode Stephens

Abstract- In the past decade, the term "world-class university" "WCU" - also called "globally competitive universities", "world-class", "elite", or "flagship" universities- has become a catch phrase, not simply for improving the quality of learning and research in higher education but also, more important, for developing the capacity to compete in the global higher education marketplace through the acquisition and creation of advanced knowledge. This paper will provide a description of the attributes of world-class universities, the steps in building and sustaining world-class universities in Africa and will propose methodologies by which private universities in Africa can attain world-class status sharing the experiences in Nigeria. The paper will be concluded to offer a few tips to private Universities to guide their earnest quest to attain world-class status.

I. Introduction

The goal of establishment and changing the university to world Class University is compete in the universal knowledge economy and also training productive human resources and promote national development. Furthermore, worldwide competitiveness has given rise to the idea of world-class university. Considered one of the four recent movements in higher education, "the new concern on 'excellence' in the context of competing universities" (Bellon, 2005, p. 56) has prompted the interest of economic observers as well as higher education observers. The recent survey of higher education trends by The Economist argues that "the emergence of a super-league of global universities," also called world-class university, is the most significant development in higher education. As the global dynamics of higher education have expanded and grown in complexity, stakeholders in the sector are re-evaluating their priorities and expectations (World Bank, 2009b: ix). The dynamics have also led to the emergence of phenomenon that scholars are calling the World-class university (also called Flagship University, World-Class Higher Education Institution) institutions that transcend culture and education. They are "points of pride and comparison among nations that view their own status in relation to other nations" (World Bank, 2009b: x).

Since the emergence of global university rankings in 2003, the interrelated connection between World-class Universities and university rankings has been a heated topic around world, which very few studies and researches have investigated the subject of World Class Universities and as far as the researcher searched, has not find similar research about the establishment of World class universities in Africa.

According to Lin 2009 necessarily any country should have a world class university in order to play its role in the world. (Lin 2009) states that "No longer are countries comfortable with developing their higher education systems to serve their local or national communities. Instead, global comparison indicators have gained significance in local development of universities". Having a World Class University is everyone wishes and requires national, collective, and programmed efforts (Altbach, P.G., 2007). The same author adds ''The problem is that no one knows what a world-class university is…'' It may be true that there is no agreement on a definitive concept of ''world Class University'', but the research university model is in everyone's mind when the idea of ''world class universities'' is mentioned. Based on this thinking Egypt should focus on how to transform a few selected universities into World Class Universities. One definition of WCUs follows from Williams and Van Dyke 2007.

"In the past decade, the term 'world-class university' has become a catch phrase for not simply improving the quality of learning and research in higher education but more importantly for developing the capacity to compete in the global higher education marketplace through the acquisition and creation of advanced knowledge. With students looking to attend the best possible institution they can afford, often regardless of national borders, and governments keen on maximizing the returns on their investments on universities, global standing is becoming an increasingly important concern for institutions around the world". Governments have responded to this global reputational competition with additional funding to promote their national elite universities, as illustrated by the various "Excellence Initiatives" in countries as varied as China, Denmark, Germany, Nigeria, Russia, South Korea, Spain, or Taiwan. In some cases, the government has also encouraged its top universities to merge so as to achieve economies of scale and reach a better position to compete globally. A few countries have even decided to establish new universities from scratch, with the explicit purpose of creating world-class institutions.

Another definition of a WCU follows from Levin, et. al. (2006): "In general, there is wide agreement that great universities have three major roles: (1) Excellence in

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education of their students; (2) research, development and dissemination of knowledge; and (3) activities contributing to the cultural, scientific, and civic life of society. Excellence in education means the resources and organization of undergraduate, graduate, and professional instruction and educational opportunities for students. Clearly, this goal requires outstanding faculty, high quality teaching and other instructional activities, and availability of good libraries, laboratories, and other pertinent facilities as well as highly prepared and motivated students who serve to educate through their peer influence. Research, development, and dissemination of knowledge refer to the embryonic identification, growth, and extension of concepts and ideas as well as their transformation into applications, goods, and services that enhance understanding and welfare. Activities contributing to the cultural, scientific, and civic life of society are many and varied, but include conferences, publications, artistic events and forums as well as provision of services (e.g. medical clinics and hospitals or museums) that engage and contribute to the larger community including the regional, national, and international communities."

II. The Concept of World-Class Universities

The concept of world-class universities, a term adopted largely interchangeably with global research universities or flagship universities has been firmly embedded in governmental and institutional policies to promote national competitiveness in the increasingly globalized world. However, the paradox is that the concept has been widely employed without an explicit, clear definition. Philip Altbach (2004) notes the paradox of the quest for a — world class university thus: — everyone wants one, no one knows what it is, and no one knows how to get one.

"A world-class university as "an institution with teaching, learning and research delivery systems meeting global standards" (Okebukola 2010a), the world-class university has an origin dating several countries.

"In the early days of development of universities in Europe, especially between the 12th and 15th centuries, students, and teachers were attracted to universities far from home., propelled by two major forces. The environment where radical thoughts could be expressed without hinderance and where research could be conducted unfettered by the ruling authorities, especially the church, was one of such forces. The other was the availability of resources for quality teaching, learning and research" (Okebukola and Shabani, 2007).

By early 18th century, many universities in Europe and North America, especially Bologna, Ocford and Harvard enrolled scholars as students and teachers from wide array of countries and offered what could be described at that time as qualitative education. These universities whose processes and products were able to favourably compete in the world market were referred to as "world class".

With the rapid increase in universities across the world in the 20th century, there arose a variegated profile showing some universities are doing better than others in meeting what can be referred to as "world-class standards". The need to reach consensus on such standards emerged and the defining framework for a world-class university became necessary. Thoughts gravitated around defining a world-class university as exhibiting a number of basic features such as highly qualified staff; excellence in research; quality teaching; high levels of government and non-government sources of funding; international and exceptionally talented students; academic freedom; well defined autonomous governance structures; and well-equipped facilities for teaching; research, administration, and student life (Altbach 2004; Khoon, et al. 2005; Niland, 2007). As Salmi (2009) noted, world-class universities are recognised in part for their superior outputs. They produce well-qualified graduates who are in high demand on the labour market; they conduct leading-edge research published in top scientific journals; and in the case of science-and-technology oriented institutions, the contribute to education and technical innovations through patents and licences.

By the beginning of 21st century, notably in 2001, global ranking of universities gained increasing prominence and the defining characteristics of the world-class university was fine-tuned (Okebukola, 2008). The indicators for ranking gradually fused into the defining parameters for world-class universities as the institutional ranks were used as basis for conferring world-class status. Thus, institutions or programmes listed high on league tables were broadly adjudged as world class. Whether this proxy using high ranking on league tables is an acceptable measure of world-class status has been a matter for debate.

There would appear to be growing consensus about the following major characteristics of a world-class university as mentioned by (Alden and Lin, 2004; Okebukola, 2008; Salami, 2009):

- Has an international reputation for its research.
- Has an international reputation for its teaching.
- Has a number of research stars and world leaders in their fields of endeavours.
- Recognised not only by other world-class universities but also outside the world of higher education.
- Has a number of world-class departments.
- Identifies and builds on its research strengths and has a distinctive reputation and focus.
- Generates innovative ideas and produces basic and applied research in abundance.
- Produces ground-breaking research output recognises by peers and prizes such as Nobel Prize Winners.
- Attracts the most able students and produces the graduates.

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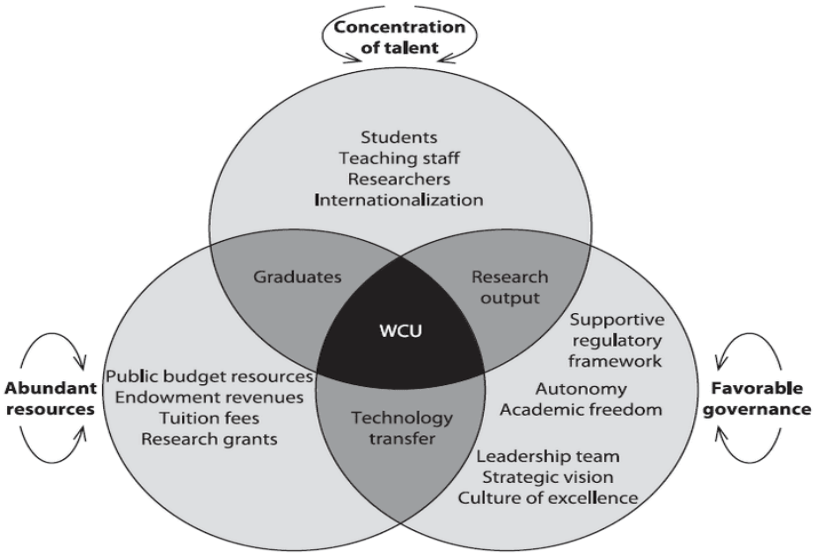
- Runs an efficient governance and management system.
- Can attract and retain the best staff.
- Can recruit staff and students from an international market.
- Attracts a high proportion of students from overseas.
- Operates within a global market and is international in many activities such as students and staff exchanges, and research links.
- Has a sound and strong financial base.
- Receives large endowment capital income.
- Has diversifies sources of income from private companies, research income, and high fees paid by overseas students.
- Provides a high quality and supportive research and educational environment for both its staff and students such as high standard buildings and facilities to make high quality campuses.
- Has a first-class management team, with strategic vision and implementation plans.
- Produces graduates who end up in positions of influence and power.
- Has a long history of superior achievement.
- Makes important and huge contributions to the society.
- Continually benchmarks with top universities and departments world-wide.
- Has the confidence to set its own agenda.

III. Alignment of Fundamental Characteristics of World-class University

The superior essential features and characteristics of world class University — highly sought graduates, leading-edge research, and dynamic technology transfer—can essentially be attributed to three complementary sets of factors (Salmi, 2009): (a) a high concentration of talent (academics and students), (b) abundant resources to offer a rich learning environment and support advanced research, and (c) favourable governance features that encourage strategic vision, innovation, and flexibility, enabling institutions to make decisions and manage resources without being encumbered by bureaucracy (Figure1). While the configuration of results—research, learning and technology transfer— depends on the nature and specific mission of each higher education institution (research intensive, teaching, applied science, etc.), the alignment of the three sets of factors is a requirement for any kind of institution.



Source: Salmi, 2013, p. 132.

Figure 1: Characteristics of a World-class university (WCU): Alignment of Key Factors

Salmi, 2014, indicated that the first and perhaps foremost determinant of academic excellence is the presence of a critical mass of top students and outstanding faculty. The most recognized universities globally are able to select the best students and attract the most qualified professors and researchers, not only from the country where they are located but also internationally. Abundance of resources is the second element that characterizes well-performing universities, especially in the case of research-intensive universities that require sophisticated laboratories and equipment. These universities have four main sources of financing: government budget funding for operational expenditures and research, contract research from public organizations and private firms, the financial returns generated by endowments and gifts, and tuition fees.

The third dimension concerns the degree of those universities enjoy. World-class universities operate

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in an environment that fosters competitiveness, unrestrained scientific inquiry, critical thinking, innovation, and creativity. Institutions that have substantial autonomy are also more flexible because they are not bound by cumbersome bureaucracies and externally imposed standards, notwithstanding the legitimate accountability approach s that do bind them. As a result, they can manage their resources with agility and quickly respond to the demands of a rapidly changing global labor market. These autonomy elements are necessary, though not sufficient, to establish and maintain world-class universities. Other crucial governance features are needed, such as inspiring and persistent leaders; a strong strategic vision of where the institution is going; a philosophy of success and excellence; and a culture of constant reflection, organizational learning, and change.

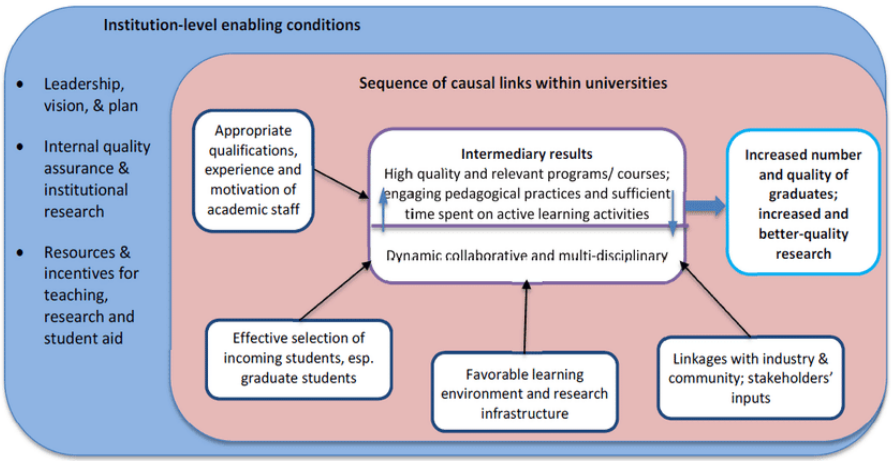
Jamil's paradigm could be referred to as the World Bank paradigm because he anchors educational matters at the institution. There is no doubt that his analysis is ideal for establishing a world class university worldwide. He, however, missed the realities in most developing economies. Favourable Governance, for instance, is elusive in most failed States and remained suspect in stabled and emerging developing nations like Egypt. There is absence of abundance resources because promises are common at fanfares that celebrates opening of new universities. The culture of endowment is mostly absent, and where it exists, corrupt officials use the opportunity to become billionaires. There is a continuous dichotomy between faculty, staff, and students.

It should be noted that the World Bank report on the subject and its definition of world paradigm for classification of an institution is subjective and not entirely adaptable in many parts of the world. To the World Bank,

> All world-class universities are research universities, and they always play a critical role within the tertiary education system in training the professionals, scientists and researchers needed for the economic development and generating new knowledge in support of the national innovation system (World Bank, 2002).

IV. Theory of Change Within Higher Education Institutions

Salmi, 2014, indicated that the above framework can be complemented by a theory of change as represented in Figure 2, the theory of change involves two dimensions. First, it identifies institutional-level factors that affect the performance and sustainability of higher education institutions by directly influencing their mode of operation. Second, it models the inputs and intermediary results that, according to the literature and international experience, lead to better graduates and research.



Source: Salmi (2014).

Figure 2: Theory of change for producing well-qualified graduates and high-quality research

The most important dimensions in the causal chain explaining the performance of any higher education institutions include the following aspects (Salmi, J., 2014):

a. Academic preparation and motivation of incoming students.
b. Qualifications, experience, and motivation of academic staff influenced, in turn, by Institutional recruitment policies, faculty development programs and incentives systems.
c. Existence of close linkages with employers and the community to improve the relevance of students' learning experiences and ensure that university research is oriented to the resolution of priority economic and social problems.
d. Learning environment and research infrastructure.

V. Higher Education Ecosystem and World Class University

The best universities in the world, or in a country, do not operate in a vacuum. A full assessment

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cannot be made without taking into consideration some significant external factors of what could be called the higher education ecosystem. As illustrated in Figure 3, the main dimensions of the ecosystem include the following elements (Salmi, 2011).

a. *Macro Environment:* The political and economic situation of the country, along with the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms among those who exert influence, in particular, on the governance of higher education institutions (selection of university leaders), their level of funding, academic freedom and safety for individuals.
b. *Leadership at the National Level:* Vision and strategic plan to shape and guide the future of higher education and the technical and political capacity to implement the necessary reforms.
c. *Governance and Regulatory Framework:* Governance structures and processes at the national and institutional levels that determine the degree of autonomy, as well as accountability approaches.
d. *Quality Assurance System:* The institutional framework and the tools for assessing and encouraging the quality of research, teaching and learning.
e. *Resources and Financial Incentives:* The resources available to fund higher education and the approaches used to allocate these resources.
f. *Location:* The quality of the setting and infrastructure, which allows the university to attract top scholars and talented students, and finally.
g. *Digital and Telecommunications Infrastructure*: The availability of a broadband connection.

Salami, 2011b reached a significant new finding from the case studies is the weight of the higher education ecosystem in influencing the performance of universities seeking to achieve world-class status. The various features of the ecosystem—from the macroeconomic and political situation to key dimensions of governance to resource mobilization and allocation to location and the digital infrastructure—have a strong effect on the ability of universities to make progress on the road to world-class universities.

VI. Top 10 World-Class Universities in Africa

The ranking rates university performance was measured using some indicators such as teaching, research, research impact, innovation, and international outlook.

Table 1: Top 10 World-Class Universities in Africa

World Ranking	University
155	University of Cape Town, South Africa
201	University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
251	Stellenbosch University, South Africa
351	University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
400	Aswan University, Egypt
421	Durban University of Technology, South Africa
431	University of Ibadan, Nigeria
451	Makerere University, Uganda
500	Mansoura University, Egypt
501	Lagos State University, Nigeria

Source: Face2Face Africa.

Table 2: Top Ten World-Class Universities

World Ranking	University
1	Harvard University
2	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
3	Stanford University
4	University of California--Berkeley
5	University of Oxford
6	Columbia University

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7	California Institute of Technology
8	University of Washington
9	University of Cambridge
10	Johns Hopkins University

Source: US Global News 2021.

VII. Overview of the Problems and Challenges of Higher Education System in Africa

Since Plato's time the academy has shown remarkable improvement and durability. Through turbulent times it has survived, transformed, accommodated, and absorbed new religions, evolving political systems, demographic pressures, and technology (Buchen, 2005). Unlike many corporations which have emerged and collapsed, most educational institutions are still thriving in many parts of the world including Africa. Actually, on the contrary except for a small number mostly sectarian, the number of institutions has increased. Indeed, the dramatic period of growth in Africa has occurred during the age of liberalization when most governments resolved to open up and embrace other players. More significantly the church has played a dramatic role in accelerating the accessibility of education to the masses. Buchen (2005) continues to argue that professional development gradually has transformed globally all education and training to the point where it not only has supplemented, competed with, and even exceeded its parental versions of higher education, but also spawned two separate and distinct future-driven education alternative providers. The first are institutions which can be referred to as educational entrepreneurs. They operate as creative and experimental variations on the traditional academic model. They are close to resemble conventional programmes but distinct enough to appear as alternative in their own right. The second is the emergence of corporate universities which function as intact and autonomous learning enterprises situated in their own corporate campuses. They are characterised by a corporate research capacity. These two alternatives provide a more personal and market driven needs. As professional development seeks to keep pace with changing and greater workforce demands and threats of downsizing and outsourcing, professionals will seek and even be required to become permanent students. This means that our educational system will be transformed by emerging alternatives driven by workforce needs and professional aspiration. Essentially this kind of trend means constant development of innovative customized curriculum.

VIII. Problems and Tasks of African Education

Since independence African states have faced numerous problems in implementing an educational policy that would encourage economic and social development, curriculum and Pedagogical problems and economic and political problems intermixed. The difficulties confronting most governments, however, have been attributed to be basically political. (Scanlon and Moumouni 2012). Africa's problems have no single explanation and differ considerably from country-to-country Summers (2000). Most observers attribute the downward divergence of the continent in the past few decades to a number of factors, including poor national economic policies; the prevalence of autocratic and corrupt governments; frequent civil and regional conflicts; and the challenges posed by the environment, which leaves Africa vulnerable to infectious disease and makes it more difficult to produce adequate food or trade with the global economy. In 1968 a conference held in Nairobi indicated that there was an alarming lack of progress in education and literacy in the context of growing populations.

Scanlon and Moumouni (2012) report that Increasing emphasis was placed on improving and expanding vocational-technical, adult, and nonformal programs of education. There was also insufficient liaison between educational policy makers and the planners of economic and social development. In short, an educational crisis developed and ripened in Africa. Africa's recovery and sustainable development will therefore depend on many important factors, including the expansion - both quantitative and qualitative - of the continent's stock of human capital through education (Kwapong 1988). A onetime President of the World Bank, Barber Conable, introduced a study on education by remarking that "Without education, development will not occur. Only an educated people can command the skills necessary for sustainable economic growth and for a better quality of life". Zuma (2011) commenting on education says that Schools do not provide the skills to enter the job market, leaving the incubation of business too late down the chain. Education in Africa is poor and far behind the rest of the world. Too many schools have not been reached with correct curriculum and those who have, do not have money for books or the technology to access the work. Much is said by government, but implementation and, action is way behind the needs of our youth. Zuma finally says, "Success in education will

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determine the scope and extent of the country's future growth and development".

- *Technology, Education and Development*

The engineering, technical and vocational schools are still teaching 1960"s and 1970"s techniques and technologies. There is a complete mismatch between the knowledge and skills acquired by the graduates from these schools in Africa and those actually required by industry or for self-employment. The result is a growing number of unemployable youth and job losses by technical artisans and slower economic growth because industry cannot find the qualified and the skilled employees they need. Those unemployed and unemployable are getting restless (Twinomugisha, 2009). Most of these unemployable people are the youth who constitute a political time bomb. The recent uprising and riots in many cities in Africa pose an alarming trend. Governments across Africa are seriously re-examining the technical education system. A research by Castells found little evidence of national 'pacts' around higher education and development in African countries, limited coordination between "weak" government departments on funding university projects, too many projects undertaken by academics for "individual advancement" rather than academic worth, and vice-chancellors struggling to juggle competing notions of the role of universities, among other things (as cited by MacGregor, 2009).

> Despite of the negative scenario there are indications that Collaboration with industry is growing and more importantly private industry is becoming more vocal on issues of education and employment. The link between technology, education and socio-economic development is getting clearer and African governments need take practical and urgent steps to address these issues. Otherwise, Africa risks negating recent progress made and being left further behind by the rest of the world. There is need therefore of entrepreneurial universities that create the capacity for people to directly relate research to what happens in society.

- *Role of Higher Education*

Higher education `in Africa is as old as the pyramids of Egypt, The obelisks of Ethiopia, and the Kingdom of Timbuktu (Teferra and Altbach, 2004). All other universities in Africa have adopted the western model of academic organization. While Africa can claim an ancient academic tradition the fact of the matter is that traditional centres of higher learning in Africa have disappeared. Concern about the quality of higher education is on the rise in Africa. It comes at a time of growing recognition of the potentially powerful role of tertiary education for growth, and it is a natural response to public perception that educational quality is being compromised in the effort to expand enrolment in recent years; growing complaints by employers that graduates are poorly prepared for the workplace; and increasing competition in the higher education marketplace as numerous private and transnational providers enter the scene. (Materu, 2007). As African countries look to tertiary education to make a significant contribution to economic growth and competitiveness, improvements in the quality of programs and institutions will be critical.

Education provides essential skilled manpower for both the formal and informal sectors of the economy, provides the means of developing the knowledge, skills, and productive capacities of the labour force, and acts as a catalyst in encouraging modern attitudes and aspirations. In the case of Africa, tertiary education plays a critical capacity building and professional training role in support of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Recent research findings indicate that expanding tertiary education may promote faster technological catch-up and improve a country's ability to maximize its economic output (Bloom, Canning, and Chan 2006). A new range of competences will be needed, and higher educational institutions are challenged to adjust their program structures, curricula, teaching and learning methods to adapt to these new demands. In recognition of this challenge, greater attention is should be focused on quality assurance as a critical factor to ensuring educational relevance. New Challenges for higher education underscore the importance of establishing robust quality assurance systems as necessary instruments for addressing today's challenges (World Bank 2008).

- *Education for sustainable development*

Education is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills, and behaviour consistent with sustainable development and for effective public participation in decision-making (UNSECO, 1992/2012). According to UNESCO, sustainable development is a culturally directed search for a dynamic balance in the relationships between social, economic, and cultural systems, a balance that seeks to promote social equity (UNESCO-UNEVO, 2008). Although it has commonly been remarked that "In Africa, we are very good at drawing up strategies and plans but when it comes to implementation, there is always a difficulty", which was also cited by African Union, 2007, p. 41). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is being regarded as the key component of implementing sustainable development. In particular, the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) for entrepreneurs has been identified as a vehicle for the implementation of education for sustainable development. Given that sustainable development is the emerging challenge of the 21st century, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization asserted that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs need to play a pivotal role in developing a new generation of individuals who will face the challenge of

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achieving sustainable socio-economic development throughout the globe (UNESCO, 1999).

- *Science and Technology*

Without a strong science and technology base no country can develop in this modern era. African countries are really handicapped in this field. New techniques and products are emerging in the information sciences, communications, biotechnology, space science and aeronautics, medicine, and many other areas. (Sawyerr, 2012). Our Universities and Research Institutes should take up the challenge. Universities in Africa should be more flexible by shedding off the excess baggage carried over from the colonial era and re- equip themselves with learner more efficient resources.

The 21st Century will therefore see many young people as youths and young adults demanding education, employment, basic services, and other citizen's rights. The education sector must be ready to provide the necessary social, economic, and technological skills for productive existence while at the same time offering the cultural and spiritual dimension necessary for an integrated and fulfilled life. Technical and vocational training provides personnel with knowledge and skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial, and economic development matching the supply of skilled labour with demand. It also provides the operatives, artisans, craftsmen, technicians and other middle- level technical personnel and prepares them for self-employment.

- *Envisioning the Future*

Despite this good trend, it is time to take stock of our practices and look into the future. It is always significant to draw experiences from ancient civilization. The Romans were so immersed in their numbering system, such that they had no clue that it was preventing them from doing every rudimentary mathematics such as adding a column of numbers or simple multiplication or division because they were in form of equations. Indeed, it actually prevented them from advancing in areas of science, astronomy, and medicine. The author of megatrends, John Naisbitt, writes “education is now the number one economic priority in today’s global economy.” Indeed, the future is likely to place an even higher demand on how our people are educated and the substance of this education. The future of human existence, therefore, depends on advancement in education.

If we want to move Africa forward with confidence, then we need to change our ways of educating and training our students. We cannot achieve this with our minds buried in tradition, custom and beliefs. We need to break new ground. Our priority must be to deliver quality education and training.

Our extricable bond, therefore, must be established between our training infrastructure including the state of art technology, curricula and what actually happens in classrooms. Development occurs where appropriate investment has been made in the cultivation of talents, skills, and knowledge. We must endeavour to seek opportunities in the unknown world by leaving the present behind. Envisioning is about applying our imaginations to the future and cutting for us niches from the opportunities available. This begins by decidedly endeavouring to educate, develop and train our people. We need to develop an educational curriculum that is designed specifically for transformation of our society and prepare it for the knowledge economy, (Tapisa,1999). The pace of development will be determined by the speed of various transactions. The decisions taken, the speed with which new ideas are created in laboratories, the rate at which ideas are brought to the market, the velocity of capital flows and above all the speed with which information pulses through the economic system. The pertinent question is, can our children be prepared for this transformation, (Toffler,1990).

We should empower our future generation with the ability to participate actively, creatively, and comprehensively in the information economy where they will use pertinent information to create the knowledge surplus that is needed to transform society. Our first step towards that goal should be to change from overtly academic and theoretical orientations to workplace educational and training programmes. In achieving this our objectives should be:

- To bring education and work together.
- To equip students with job-oriented competencies so that they become active and creative participants in the economy.
- Strengthen the relationship between education and employment by emphasising the application of skills in real work situations.

It is worth noting that in doing all these greater opportunities should be given to employers and other stake holders to influence and become involved in education.

- *Knowledge to Skill based*

We need to educate and train our young people for now, for the future and for change. What is required is a process which can produce a workforce which is actively involved in the business, as well as flexible and responsive enough, not only to recognize the need for change, but also to anticipate and contribute to the process with innovative and progressive ideas, (Kay, Nickie & Chris, 1992). There is an increasing need for learners to have a range of transferable academic and vocational skills in order to operate independently and autonomously. Discussion on the need to teach students how to learn have been going on for decades but the requirement to teach the subject-based national curriculum along with the traditional methods I, mean it

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has so far not been achieved. The national imperative for a skilled world-class workforce, the IT revolution which is robbing teachers of their exclusive hold on knowledge alongside the wishes and needs of individuals mean this trend will inevitably gain momentum in the future.

In order to move forward, (Frey,2007) a futurist observes that, as a starting point, one question we should be asking is, "what systems do we employ today that are the equivalent of Roman numerals, preventing us from doing great things? This question is very revealing. It has a way of opening a pandora box full of friction points, inefficiencies, and flow restrictors that we contend with every day in our educational systems. The pace of change dictates that we produce a faster, smarter, and better grade of human being. In realizing this future education system will be unleashed with the advent of a standardized rapid courseware- builder and a single point global distribution system. As a matter of fact, only a small percentage of the information being developed today is being passed on to future generations in the form of classes or courseware meaning that, supply has clearly not kept up with demand.

- *Future Educational Challenges*

Roy (1990) a futurist and president of the Institute for the Future cautioned that "anything you forecast is by definition uncertain" therefore our planning to shape better ways of life must be based on a blend of interpretations of projections as well as our aspirations. The question we need to ask ourselves is do we actually have the foresight needed to give us reasonably accurate images of tomorrow's world, (Roy, 1990). Some of the challenges that are likely to complicate educational planning in the next decade according to Harold, (1990) are as follows:

- Trends in population and shrinking job markets. The increasing youth population possess a special challenge to educators in providing self-sustaining skills in the light of decreasing job opportunities.
- Environmental problems. Hazards including deforestation, acid rain, misuse of energy resource, pollution and generally climate change. Learners need to understand that security of nations also depend on policies regarding the environment. There is need, therefore, for education systems to participate actively and intelligently in these issues.
- Family challenges. Change in family such as single-parent, endemic homelessness and working mothers. Schools may be left with responsibilities formerly assumed by the family such as providing day care and teaching important values and behaviours.
- Teen pregnancy, Alcohol consumption, and Drug abuse.
- Technological developments. These developments are creating other challenges for education and society. They include the possibility for information overload with knowledge expected to increase fourfold and changes in the nature of knowledge and what we believe. Education must learn to deal with rapidly accumulating innovations such as laptop computers, interactive video technology and robots with artificial intelligence.
- Schooling in the home may find a place in the future. Distance learning creatively well designed will play a major role in educating people. Herold, (1990), therefore warns that we must remain diligent in dealing with changes for tomorrow and not be immobilized by trying to polish the aged mosaics of past practices.

Currently, virtual schools have been developed world-wide due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but students could still meet in person for athletic and other social events, observing the existing Covid-19 protocols. In this case, physical plants are shrinking, and some administrative and ancillary jobs have reduced drastically and learners and are being forced to buy whatever instruction they want online. Teachers and students can live anywhere in the world and only meet online. This means that it will prove difficult or impossible to preserve many contemporary institutions in the future. In addition, Fray, (2007), foresees some school buildings transitioning into learning centres that are open 24 hours a day, accommodating both child and adult learners, providing support staff to assist people who struggle with the system or specific topic. Teachers on the other hand will become event planners, guides and coaches and some who are entrepreneurial-minded may choose to become full-time course producers.

Future education and its practical application is key to the future of Africa. Future education will continue to change as education has always changed to meet the needs of business and industries. A strong economy depends on our educational system's ability to provide a workforce to sustain our current and future economy. It is evident that certain amount of forecasting or predicting of future educational needs will become more important with increased population and decreased renewable resources. The preparedness for these challenges is significant for Africa.

In 2009, the World Conference on Higher Education of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) noted the progress made in Africa since its previous conference, in 1998, but acknowledged that many challenges still existed to be met in the 21st century. Such challenges include the underlisted which are believed can be dealt with at the institutional level, some at the national level, and others will require a regional approach. It was also mentioned

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that, if the African governments and higher education institutions are to meet these underlisted challenges, they need to plan and innovate. Their policies require commitment and collaboration of all the stakeholders. There is no reason why African countries cannot transform these challenges into opportunities to make their higher education sector a vibrant and productive one.

- *Increased Enrolment*

The tertiary student enrolment ratio in sub-Saharan Africa reached only around 6 percent in 2007, the lowest quantity of the world regions. Thus, a determined effort must be made to significantly increase tertiary enrolment in Africa. In increasing enrolment, however, the intake to existing public institutions must be controlled, considering their capacity. The vast majority of public universities in Africa have student enrolment far beyond what they were designed to accommodate.

Further enrolment without adequately increasing the infrastructure and other resources can only worsen the situation and affect quality. At the same time, in several African countries an effort has been taken to rapidly set up new universities that are almost copies of the existing ones. This is not the right approach, as in many cases this results in depleting the staff of the existing institutions and transferring them to the new ones. Yet another tendency is to create new universities by simply upgrading polytechnics and technical colleges. Africa needs differentiated institutions, ranging from research-strong universities to polytechnics and technical colleges, as well as diversified programs within each institution, to cater for different types of learners and needs of the country. During increasing access, appropriate steps must be taken to ensure the success of the admitted students. The lack of resources, including faculty, often leads to high dropout rates. The time to complete a three-year degree program sometimes takes as much as five to six years. The situation is also exacerbated by frequent campus closures as a result of student unrests, which hamper revitalization initiatives. Both a national and regional approach to this challenge needs to be considered. Clearly, the increasing demand for higher education in Africa will never be met by traditional face-to-face delivery alone. Other approaches such as open, distance, and online learning will have to be met, especially for continuous adult education and teacher training. This is already happening with the creation of open universities in several countries and the use of distance education in traditional universities to complement face-to-face teaching.

- *Funding*

The dramatic increase in student enrolment in higher education in Africa has not been matched by public funding. Effectively, the public expenditure per student has declined considerably, and this has inevitably led to deterioration in quality. The daunting challenges facing African higher education involve the ongoing increase in student numbers, the more faculty needed to be recruited, additional infrastructure to be built; and yet, the availability of public funds will be limited.

Paradoxically, public spending per higher education student in Africa is much higher than in other developing countries, indicating overspending and inefficiency in the use of resources. Reduction in expenditures and promoting efficiency in the institutions should therefore be the first step in coping with the shortage of funds. Changing the method of budgeting is another approach. Currently, in most countries the annual institutional budget allocated by government is determined by simply adjusting the previous year's budget by a percentage, depending on the availability of public funds. The use of formula funding, for example, based on the unit cost per student, can stimulate improvement in institutions and help to achieve more accountability and transparency.

Ultimately, however, public institutions will inevitably have to resort to the charging of tuition fees from students if they are to provide quality education. The danger here, moreover, is that public higher education then will eventually be regarded as a private enterprise, receiving decreasing contribution from the state. African governments should recognize that higher education is a "public good" and, accordingly, must benefit from state support. While fees should be introduced, they should represent only a proportion of the actual economic cost and should be accompanied by appropriate loan schemes or scholarships for the socially disadvantaged students.

The income from cost-sharing measures, however, will never sufficiently cover the huge cost of physical infrastructural development. Capital expenditure funding to a large extent must come from government. Some countries—for example, Ghana—have served an innovative approach of using a small proportion of the national contribution from the value-added tax for funding capital projects in higher education.

Public-funded institutions alone will never manage to meet the huge demand for higher education. Private and cross-border higher education institutions, which already operate in significant numbers in Africa, should be encouraged and can be beneficial in many ways. However, many of them are profit motivated and offer poor-quality education. They, therefore, need to be regulated and quality controlled.

- *Research*

The research output from African universities is very low. The reasons include a lack of research-experienced faculty, given brain drain, heavy teaching

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load, moonlighting by faculty, and lack of resources—such as, library facilities, information and communications technology infrastructure, and well-equipped laboratories. The relevance of the research carried out is also questionable. Most faculty undertake research for personal gain, with the aim of publishing in internationally refereed journals for promotion purposes. The chosen topic is often not appropriate to national development. Most faculty do their research as individuals; there is insufficient multidisciplinary research, essential for solving development problems. Much of the research is externally funded, and being determined by the funders, the topics may not be of direct relevance to national development.

Research publication comprises another challenge. Most of the research results end up on university library shelves—in theses and dissertations or advanced research journals. They are, thus, not accessible to or understood by policymakers or communities. There is a dearth of African research journals; those that are started are often not sustainable.

Several steps need to be taken to redress the situation. Adequate provision should first be made for funding research at the national level. The setting up of national research councils can extend toward mobilizing resources and identifying national priorities for research. At the institutional level, universities should incorporate research in their strategic planning and ensure that it is given the same priority as teaching. Each university should also create a central research office to coordinate, promote, facilitate, and manage research. A process of upgrading the research qualification of university staff—through, for example, split-site PhDs—is already under way in many institutions and needs to be expanded. With regard to accessing publications on and in Africa, efforts should be made for greater online access to research publications and theses in Africa.

- *Quality Assurance*

Quality assurance in higher education is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa. In 2007 only 16 out of 52 countries in sub-Saharan Africa had national quality assurance 6 agencies, most of them recently set up. The agencies have been created mainly to regulate the development of higher education provision, especially by the private sector, rather than ensuring accountability or improving quality. The main challenges facing quality assurance in Africa are a dearth of adequately trained professional staff in the national quality assurance agencies, lack of knowledge about the related process among the staff in the institutions, resistance from faculty to get fully engaged in the very time-consuming process of data collection and processing, and lack of funds to establish quality assurance systems in the institutions. Sensitization, capacity building, and funding are, thus, the main issues that need to be addressed in promoting quality assurance.

IX. Africa's Future, through Agenda 2063 – Progress so Far, and Recommendations

Agenda 2063 is the continent's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is the concrete manifestation of how the continent intends to achieve this goal within a 50-year period. The First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, spanning from 2014 to 2023, outlines a set of goals, priority areas and targets that the continent aims to achieve at national, regional, and continental levels. It is at this background that the African Union Commission and African Union Development Agency-NEPAD were tasked by policy organs of the African Union to coordinate and prepare biennial performance reports on Agenda 2063. This is the first continental-level report that consolidates progress reports from 31 out of 55 AU Member States, covering 56% of the continent, and six Regional Economic Communities. There have been reports presenting an analysis of progress made on the implementation of the seven aspirations of the Agenda 2063 against the 2019 targets.

The continent embarked on the implementation of her 50-year development blueprint through domesticating and implementing Agenda 2063 into national and regional development strategies, achieving an aggregate score of 32% against the 2019 targets. At aspiration level, the continent registered a good performance on Aspiration 4 "A peaceful and secure Africa" (48%), with most Member States reporting the existence of functional national peace mechanisms, in addition to the continental-level Africa Peace and Security Architecture. Similarly, relatively good progress was made on Aspiration 2 towards achieving "An integrated continent, politically united that is based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of an African Renaissance", with a score of 44%. This was achieved through the collective and concerted efforts of Member States on operationalising the African Continental Free Trade Area, amongst others. Aspiration 6 "An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of the African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children" recorded a relatively strong performance of 38%. This was attributed, amongst others, to the implementation of the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights of the Youth which realised 77% of the 2019 target.

The continent saw a weak performance under Aspiration 1 "A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development", with an aggregate score of 29%. Even though a strong performance was achieved for Goal "A high standard of

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living, quality of life and wellbeing for all" – attributed to the exponential growth in the percentage of the population with access to internet. Furthermore, low scores were recorded on matters pertaining to good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law – related to Aspiration 3 with an aggregate score of 16%. This was mainly due to high levels of corruption in delivering public services; weak mechanisms and institutions of holding leaders accountable; and low freedom of the press. The continent saw a very weak performance on Aspiration 5 "An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and beliefs", with the continental score standing at 12% against the 2019 target. This was largely due to weak integration of indigenous African culture, values, and language into primary and secondary schools' curricula.

At the regional level, East Africa recorded the highest performance in five out of the seven aspirations in Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan with an aggregate score of 40% against the 2019 targets. The aggregate performance of West Africa stood at 34%, while the aggregate performance of North Africa stood at 27%. Southern and Central Africa both recorded an aggregate score of 25% against the 2019 targets.

The continent made notable progress on implementing the 14 African Union Flagship Projects. Noteworthy was the progress made on operationalising the African Continental Free Trade Area. The overall performance of African Member States on advancing the AfCFTA stands at 92% of the target set for 2019. To-date, 54 countries have signed and 29 have ratified the AfCFTA. Similarly, notable progress was registered on the "Free Movement of People and the African Passport". 32 Member States have signed the Protocol to the Treaty on the Establishment of the African Economic Community relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment.

The Single African Air Transport Market was launched in January 2018 during the African Union's 30th Ordinary Summit. Following the launch, 29 AU Member States – covering almost 80% of intra-African air traffic – signed the Solemn Commitment to establish the SAATM of which 18 Member States have signed a Memorandum of Implementation to remove any air service agreement restrictions that are not in compliance with the Yamoussoukro Decision.

"Silencing the Guns in Africa" was adopted by Member States as the African Union Theme of the Year 2020, aimed at highlighting the remarkable progress made by the continent on reducing the number of armed conflicts. Furthermore, African Members to the UN Security Council are making efforts to promote the Silencing the Guns agenda on the international forum.

Notable progress was also made with regards to the Great Museum of Africa, which is planned to be launched in 2023. The Museum of Africa Permanent Memorial of Slave Trade will showcase, protect, and promote the rich cultural heritage of the continent, and will be hosted by the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria in Algiers.

Since the adoption of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan in 2015, technical support has been provided to 42 Member States and five RECs in domesticating Agenda 2063, aligned to national and regional development strategies. Furthermore, a number of these countries have anchored Agenda 2063 in their national structures and integrated the Agenda 2063 Results Framework into their national development plans with designated focal persons.

The Executive Council approved the Agenda 2063 Financing and Resource Mobilisation Strategy and requested the African Union Commission and African Development Bank in close collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and African Union Development Agency-NEPAD to prepare an "Agenda 2063 Financing and Domestic Resource Mobilisation Roadmap and Guide" for AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities.

On the recommendations, looking at the report of progress made, the need for more sensitisation on Agenda 2063 and its added value to country and regional development efforts were cited. Further efforts should be made towards deepening domestication and mainstreaming of the continental development agenda into planning, budgeting and implementation at national, regional and continental levels. It will be important to anchor Agenda 2063 within existing country and regional institutional mechanisms with designated focal points for improved domestication, coordination, implementation and reporting on Agenda 2063. Institutionalising evidence-based reporting on Agenda 2063 among all AU Member States, RECs and AU continental-level bodies is thus required to review progress on a biennial basis. On this note, it is recommended that AUC, AUDA-NEPAD and other relevant bodies strengthen the capacities of Member States and RECs in data collection, data analysis and reporting on Agenda 2063. Furthermore, flexible mechanisms for domestic resource mobilisation should be deployed. AUDA-NEPAD, as the continental development agency, should continue to leverage through partnerships to provide knowledgebase advisory services to support Member States in driving their national development priorities, as well as play a critical role in disseminating best practices.

A harmonized and integrated approach to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda will help to minimize duplication, optimize resource use, and mobilize the support of domestic and external

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stakeholders and development partners. AUDA-NEPAD and the AUC should support Member States and RECs to use the methodology to report concomitantly on both development agendas.

It was concluded that, the continent has registered good progress in attaining several goals and targets defined in the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. The continental blueprint is a rallying point for African Union Member States, regional bodies, and development stakeholders to garner investments and collective efforts towards a common development agenda. This first continental-level progress report serves as a key milestone to promote peer learning and mutual accountability among Member States and thereby accelerate implementation of Agenda 2063. The progress in implementation notwithstanding, more efforts will be required to accelerate implementation of the First-Ten Year Implementation Plan to move Africa closer to "The Africa We Want". The continent will need to address key challenges encountered in domestication, implementation, monitoring and reporting on Agenda 2063. It will also require concerted and coordinated efforts at sub-national, national, regional, and continental level to effectively harness opportunities, including the potential of the youth dividend.

X. Higher Education, World-Class Universities, Africa's Future, and the Attainment of Agenda 2063

Africa's future and the attainment of the Agenda 2063 is inextricably linked with the quality of higher education delivered on the Continent. The socio-economic performance of the region can be significantly bolstered and sustained if basic ad higher education Is paid greater attention and the challenge of skills shortage, among others is addressed. African economies face unmet demand for highly skilled engineers, medical workers, agricultural scientists and researchers, particularly in the growing sectors of extractive industries, energy, water, environment, infrastructure, and service sectors, such as hospitality, banking and ICT (Materu, 2011). For instance, the extractive industries demand specialised civil, electrical and petroleum engineers a s well as geologists, and environmental and legal specialists.

Investment dealing with the development of human capital in Africa – a critical element in socio-economic transformation is still far from optimal. Unsurprisingly, Africa is at the bottom of almost every knowledge-economy indicator. For instance, it contributes less than 2% to global patents in 2013 and had the lowest researcher-to-population ration in the world with less than 120 researchers per million inhabitants compared to about 700 in North Africa, 300 in Latin America, and 1,600 in central and Eastern Europe. Investment in quality higher education would generate more high-quality professionals with higher-order skills, entrepreneurial spirit and high research capacity. Part of the driving force of the East-Asian economic miracle was a rapid build-up of technical and technological workforce stimulated by quality higher education and an ever-improving applied research system. These capacities will also be important for diversifying the African economies by increasing the likelihood of new economic growth sectors with higher value added.

Higher education, defined as "all forms of post-secondary education offered in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and their equivalents", has witnessed impressive numerical growth in Africa since the 1989 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education. The report on Africa at the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education which traced growth trends confirmed a 25% jump in students' enrolment into higher education institutions and the high international mobility of African students. In comparative terms, African students may be considered the most mobile in the world, largely due to limited access and lack of comprehensive study programmes in the region. In a number of countries, the outbound mobility ration is one third of the students. These countries include Botswana (89%), Namibia (61%), Swaziland (58%), Lesotho (48%), and Mauritius (41%). Given the global average is 1.8%, the outbound mobility ration is still high in many other African states, such as Malawi (31%), Niger (22%), Central Africa Republic (21%), Senegal (17%), Cameroon (15%), and Kenya (11%). The lowest rations for the region and found in South Africa (0.8%), Nigeria (1.6%) and Ethiopia (2.1%) - UNESCO Institute for Statistics – UIS, 2013. The rate of growth of private higher education institutions especially universities has remained one of the highest in the world over the last 15 years (Varghese, 2012).

The higher education systems of Africa are currently not capable of responding fully to the immediate skill needs in the medium term. There are several impeding factors. There is shortage of a critical mass of quality lectures, insufficient sustainable financing, inappropriate governance, and leadership, disconnect with the demands of the economy, and inadequate regional integration. The average percentage of staff with PhD in public tertiary education institutions in Africa is estimated to be less than 20% (based on a study of 10 countries in the region by Materu, 2009: 2011). Most departments do not have more than one or two senior Professors. This prevents departments and universities from establishing vibrant research environments. The relatively low salaries of lecturers, lack of research funding and equipment as well as limited autonomy provide disincentives for Professors to stay in African universities (Materu, 2011; Okebukola, 2014).

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Some other issues which the higher education system in Africa is grappling with as summarised by Mater, (2009), include (a) efforts to improve educational quality at secondary level are still not yielding desired results, as shown by African countries' performance in international mathematics and science tests; (b) a review of distribution of graduates in 23 African countries shows the predominance of "soft" disciplines: social sciences and humanities (47%); education (22%); and engineering (9%) ; sciences (9%); agriculture (3%); and (c) funding for research in African universities is low and is mostly supported by outside organisations.

Woldetensae (2013) identified challenges to quality in higher education in Africa to include increased enrolment; inadequate facilities and infrastructure; shortage of qualified and heavy workloads; outdated teaching methods; weakening of research and publishing activities; mismatch between graduate output and employment; low level of quality management system and limited capacity of governance and leadership; many countries yet to establish regulatory agencies for quality assurance and accreditation; and the problem of comparability (credit transfer). In a recent regional survey by Shabani (2013), the top ten challenges facing higher education in Africa are listed in the table below.

Table 3: Ranking of Challenges to Quality Higher Education in Africa

Rank	Challenges
1	Depreciating quality of higher education teachers
2	Research capacity deficit
3	Infrastructural / facilities inadequacies
4	Lack of regional quality assurance framework and accreditation system
5	Slow adoption of ICT for delivering quality higher education including distance education
6	Capacity deficit of quality assurance agencies
7	Weak internationalisation of higher education
8	Management inefficiencies
9	Slow adoption of LMD reform
10	Poor quality of entrants into higher education from the secondary level

Source: Shabani (2013).

The removal of the foregoing challenges to quality higher education through the activities of the universities of world-class ranking, is imperative for the actualisation of the vision of the African Union. The Agenda 2063 vision of the African Union is "to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, an Africa driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena". One of the major thrusts of African Union in the realisation of this vision is the strengthening of the higher education systems in the continent. The African Union overarching framework for the development of higher education is the harmonization Strategy with four key policy objectives. These are:

a. To establish harmonised higher education systems across Africa.
b. To strengthen the capacity of higher education institutions to meet the many tertiary educational needs of African countries through innovative forms of collaboration; (c) to ensure that the quality of higher education is systematically improved against common, agreed benchmarks of excellence; and
c. To facilitate mobility of graduates and academics across the continent. At the heart of the five objectives is quality higher education.

The African Union identified quality in higher education as focus in the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa known as the Continental Education Strategy for Africa – (CESA 16-26). The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) was adopted in 2015, to respond to the education crises and thereby transform Africa's education systems. This is through implementation of twelve (12) strategic objectives that articulate high-level results aimed at reorienting and improving African education and training systems. The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) also serves as a platform for bringing together Education actors across the continent behind a transformative Pan African agenda for education. It is in this regard that the thematic cluster approach was adopted to bring together various stakeholders in specific fields of education to contribute to the achievement of The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) strategic objectives. In the furtherance of this, the African Union Commission developed a framework for Harmonisation of Higher Education Programmes in Africa, with the specific purpose of establishing harmonised higher education systems across Africa, while strengthening

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the capacity of higher education institutions to meet the many tertiary education needs of African countries through innovative forms of collaboration and ensuring that the quality of higher education is systematically improved against common, agreed benchmarks of excellence and facilitates mobility of graduate and academics across the continent. One of the key result areas of the Harmonisation strategy is 'Cooperation in information exchange'. This involves the:

- Establishment and maintenance of central database of African higher education institutions and programmes.
- Establishment of an African system to measure and compare performance of higher education institutions; and
- Representation of African interests in global higher education ranking systems.

The African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) is a product f this Strategy. The aim is to establish an African system to measure and compare performance of higher education institutions. The purpose of this is threefold:

- Establishing an African system will ensure that the performance of higher education institutions can be compared against a set of criteria that takes into action the unique context and challenges of higher education delivery on the continent.
- Creating a system that allows for comparison can – if well designed – facilitate improvements in quality of delivery of institutions across the continent and allow for an objective measure of performance.
- A continental system will pave the way for African institutions to compete more effectively in similar systems in operating at a global level, while also creating a case for review of the basis on which those global systems operate.

Together with the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM), the African Union Commission, the operating organ of the African Union, is also running the Mwalimu Nyere African Union Scholarship Scheme. The Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme (MNAUSS) is a Flagship project of the African Union, initiated in 2005. From the beginning, the Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme (MNAUSS) was planned as an 'umbrella' programme, which would cover a range of initiatives for mobility of African students and academic staff. The Scholarship Scheme is designed to enable African students undertake degree programmes (Masters and PhD) in African Universities, in science and technology.

The aim of Scholarship Scheme is to contribute to production and retention of high calibre human resources in Africa, promote African higher education and enhance intra-African mobility of students. Thus, the scheme will contribute to regional integration, attractiveness and competitiveness of African higher education, and reversal of brain drain. Since the Scheme covers specific areas of study and research necessary for addressing Africa's development challenges, it will in this way contribute to Africa's prosperity, particularly in the areas related to science, technology, and innovation. The scheme directly supports Pan African University networks, which was launched in 2010.

So far, 240 African students are currently benefiting from the Scholarship Scheme, which all their costs for tuition, travel, and subsistence, with modest allowances to cover purchase of a laptop and textbooks, are covered. In addition, the most popular destinations for students appear to be the Republic of South Africa, followed by Ghana. It is also noteworthy that many students opted to study in universities in their home countries. The high numbers of student that are benefiting from the Scholarship Scheme from certain countries was a result of respective Ministries of Education making extra effort to publicize the Scholarship Scheme and compile applications.

XI. Development of Private University Education in africa

As narrated by Okebukola (2015), private universities have increased in number and scope of programmes in response to the need to provide higher education to a larger proportion of the workforce. Even in countries where historically, the higher education sector was made up only of public institutions under central control, private universities have shown extra-ordinary growth. This growth means increased access as well as more diverse educational options for students and nations. In most countries with a higher education system, there is a minimum of 20% of private degree-awarding institutions actively competing for students with public-funded institutions.

Over time and as a consequence of diminishing government financial subsidies, public universities are turning out to be private in the sense of fee paying. Introduction of user fees/charges, cost-sharing, free market competition and higher education contributions which are essentially fees by other names are now common features of public universities. Recently, "privately-controlled" has been used to express the essential differences between private and public universities, as the structure and operation of their governance and legal control are what radically distinguish one from the other.

Varghese (2004) identified three types of private higher institutions. State-supported private higher institutions which receives some form of grant from government and hence are subjected to regulations of fees. For example, in India, state support for private colleges can account for more than 90% of recurrent

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expenditure. The second type of not-for-profit private institutions. These are owned and operated by thrusts that depend largely on endowments and fees collected from students. Some of the best universities in the Unites States of America, such as Harvard, Yale and Princeton fall within this group. The third group is for-profit institutions. Many of the private universities in developing countries belong to this category and are established for profit, albeit marginal profit.

Private university education has expanded dramatically in a number of European countries especially since the integration of the countries into the European Union. Between 1990 and 2014, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, for example, have seen average annual growth rates of nearly 60% each year. In Asia, the growth of private universities is also phenomenal. In Japan, the 579 (78% of total) private universities are expected to play key role in the Japanese government's "300,00 International Student Plan", which sets a long-term goal of having 300,000 registered international students at universities by 2020 (Zang and McCornac, 2014).

India and Pakistan show a very contrasting history of the development of private universities, India has a long tradition of private schools even before independence where private initiative and households played substantial role in supporting higher education. Cutbacks in public higher education funding in the wake of structural adjustment in 1980s and 1990s, paved the way for the rapid expansion of self-financed private university education. The exact number of private colleges, universities and enrolments in India higher education system is unknown (Gupta, 2014). Both federal and state governments in India have legal powers to regulate and legislate higher education thus, paving the way for some states to pass legislation on private higher education.

Unlike India, Pakistan had one of the poorest rates of increase in higher education. The situation in Pakistan is partly blamed on the role of the state in its insistence on paying for the higher proportion of the cost of public sector education. Private sector participation in university education took a firm stand in 1970 under an act of Parliament. High tuition fees and an underdeveloped student loan scheme led to extremely low enrolments in accredited private universities and a limitation to their growth. Non-accredited private institutions are however flourishing under the guise of affiliation with one foreign university or another.

China's higher education has been under government control characterised by central control and allocation. It was not until the mid-1980s that China began to diversify education services, allowing and encouraging the establishment of institutions run by the non-state sector. In recent years, private university education has been undergoing rapid development particularly in big cities. By 2012, the number of private universities in China has soared to more than 630, up from 20 in 1997 (Butrimovicz, 2012).

In Malaysia, all private institutions of higher learning come under Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996. This act allows private universities and university colleges to provide tertiary education and to confer their own degree. There are now 47 of such institutions. Indonesia has over 1,200 private higher education institutions enrolling about 60% of tertiary education students.

Private sector participation in the provision of university education in Africa assumed a rapidly changing scene from 1995. Prior to this period, only Ghana, Zimbabwe and Kenya had private-owned universities in Anglophone Africa. The entrance of Nigeria and South Africa into the 'scene' in 1996 and 1997 respectively changed the face of private higher education in the region. Today, most countries in the continent have private higher education institutions, mostly universities, offering programmes in "market attractive" disciplines like Busines, Finance, Economics, Management, Information and Communication Technology, and Law. In some of the countries, like Ghana, the universities can only affiliate with a public institution for the award of degrees. Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Egypt are all witnessing rapid growth in the number of private higher education institutions and are developing quality assurance mechanism to address concerns on quality issues.

XII. Development of Private Universities in Africa - Nigeria Historical Perspective

The establishment of private universities in Nigeria dates back to 1979 when education was placed on the concurrent list in the nation's constitution permitting individuals and organisations to establish and run such institutions. Within a period of four years, twenty-four of such universities were established. The university were hurriedly established without due regard for proper planning and implementation. It was observed during this period, that the threat to qualitative university education was so real that its subsequent devastating effect would be irreparable hence the promulgation of Decree (Act) No. 19 of 1984 and 16 of 1985 to sanitise the system (Obasi, 2007).

The growing increase in the number of prospective candidates for admission into universities and increasing inability of existing public universities to cope with the increase in demand for university placement, necessitated a review of the 1984 ban. The review led to the enactment of Decree No. 9 of 1993, which allowed individuals, organisations, corporate bodies as well as local governments to establish and run private universities upon meeting laid down guidelines and obtaining approval of government. The

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decree stipulated the conditions that must be met to enable the National Universities Commission (NUC), assess the adequacy or otherwise of applications for government's approval (Okebukola, 2002; 2004).

The followings are the National Universities Commission (NUC) 14-step Process in the Licensing of Private Universities.

1. Application in writing stating the intent for the establishment of the university.
2. Interview of Prospective Proprietors
3. Collection of Application Forms
4. Submission of Application Forms and relevant documents
5. Intensive review/analysis of documents by experts in relevant NUC Department
6. Revision of documentation by proprietors based on report by SCOPU
7. Interactive Meeting of SCOPU with the proposed Universities
8. First Site Assessment Visit
9. Finalization of Documentation
10. Second (final) Site Assessment visit
11. Security Screening of Proprietors and Board of Trustees
12. Approval by NUC Management
13. Approval by NUC Board
14. Approval by the Federal Executive Council

Six years after the promulgation of decree 9 of 1993, the first set of private universities were licensed. These are Igbinedion University, Okada; Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo; and Madona University, Okija. Thereafter, five others were licensed between 31st July, 2001 and 28th May, 2003. In 2005, 15 private universities were established, and the rate had maintained a slow and steady climb bringing the total to 79, as at October 28, 2019 (Okebukola 2019).

XIII. Place of Private Universities in Africa

In recent years, the African Union and the Member States have driven major reforms for modernizing the countries and the continent. While the success of this effort depends heavily on the quality of education and skills of the population, accessibility and lifelong learning is currently going through the second phase of its Higher Education Reform plan, which began in in 2016 after the endorsement of the Continental Education Strategy in 2015, by the African Head of States and Government. In some African Union Member States, some positive steps and changes have taken place relating to the situations found in each of the Member State, and whether or not these changes will continue is still a question that only time can provide an answer for. Some governments have set out a long-term program which is aimed at raising the level of efficiency by granting universities more autonomy in the modernization of their curricula and the allocation of their internal resources. Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education for example, has indicated that the plans which began to be implemented before the revolution are continuing as planned without significant changes in the postrevolutionary period. Since the revolution, the ministry has, however, been undergoing continuous changes to its structure and personnel, and this has caused some stagnation in the policy design and its implementation (Rezk; Katarína, 2012). This part will be discussed under some important sub-heads, using Nigeria as a case study, for proper explanations and understanding, due to first-hand information available.

- *Significant Contributor to High-Level Human Resources Development*

Universities al over the world are spawning grounds for high-level human resources. The nation's doctors, engineers, teachers, lawyers, architects, and other categories of workers who drive the economy are largely products of universities. While public universities demonstrate their slice of the production cake, private universities are worthy partners in the graduate production process. Private universities offer a delivery system wrapped around small class sizes and well-resourced classrooms that stimulate the production of good quality graduates. All the private universities especially in Nigeria that have turned out graduates have documented success stories on the quality of their products. These are the high-level human resources contributions to the Nigerian economy that cannot be wished away.

There would appear to be a global trend where in the early decades of establishment, private universities, relative to their public counterparts, have initial business in the delivery process and are a shade weaker in the quality of their graduates. About four decades down the line, the private university system springs to surpass the public, having gained traction from sustained investment over the years to improve human and physical resourcing while keeping the comparative advantage of small class size and improved staff welfare. For example, it is still under 18 years since the establishment of the first university in Nigeria and if the Nigerian case does not deviate from the global trend, the forecast that there be distinctive edge of private over public, say in another two decades.

Talking about the healthy competitor to public universities, the monopoly of public universities was effectively broken in 1999 in the case of Nigeria. Public universities were characterised by staff and students' strikes, leading to disruption to the academic calendar, manifestation of cultism and violent students' behaviours, examination malpractices, undisciplined

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behaviours of lecturers, and general weak disciplinary philosophy. With the appearance of private universities redefining the space with no strike actions to disrupt the academic calendar and unnecessary lengthen the duration of the degree programme, better disciplinary environment, and insignificant manifestation of social vices, public universities will begin to be re-evaluating and revitalizing their delivery system and general operations to shake off their ignoble attributes.

The attraction of many parents to private universities is the predictability of the academic calendar. They are aware that, a student will not stay a day more for a four-year degree programme to graduate. On the other hand, the student on a four-year degree programme in many public universities, looking at the case of Nigeria, unsure of graduation date, which could extend to be six years. Over the past five years, there appeared to be a general improvement in all public universities with regard to the stability of the academic calendar which many believe is nudged by the competition which private universities have stimulated.

- *Training of Persons with Better Values*

Cherished values, such as honesty, discipline, diligence, abhorrence of drug us and abuse, fear of God, good neighbourliness and teamwork have become the hallmarks of most private universities in the case of Nigeria, especially, those that are faith-based. Co-curricular activities in these universities are mainly designed to slough off unacceptable behaviours and ingrain the behaviour that society embraces. It has also been noted that, public universities do not have platforms as rich as private universities for the implementation of such co-curricular activities. For example, in an assemblage of graduates of Nigerian universities, typified by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme, where the young graduates are mandated to serve the Nation for a period of one year to gain experience into the labour market, while being paid certain amount as stipends by the government, a larger proportion of those who win national awards, based on the cherished values of society is from private universities. If nothing else, the private university experience may be an explanatory factor.

- *Model for University Governance*

In more ways than one, the governance structure in private universities provides a model for their public counterparts, especially in terms of observance of due process, accountability, discipline, and probity. In Nigeria, for example, whereas policy making, and oversight powers reside in Council of Public Universities, Private Universities have Board of Trustees as another layer on top of Council in the organogram. The Board provides additional layer of superintendence over Council, thus strengthening the apparatus for accountability and due process.

In Nigeria, the Vice-Chancellor of a public university can exploit loopholes in the governance system that can bring probity under question. Not so for the Vice-Chancellor of a private university who is under constant surveillance and scrutiny by Council, Board of Trustees, and the proprietor. While this may be an advantage in itself, it has been noted to constrict creativity of the Vice-Chancellor.

- *Model for Financial Autonomy*

A pull-out of government subvention will bring all public universities to their knees. The over dependence on such subventions have blunted the appetite of managers of these universities for the creatively sourcing extra-governmental funding and move gallantly towards financially autonomy. Herein comes private universities that are in a swim-or-sink situation with regard to funding. In most cases, as soon as set up, many of the owners continue to invest scantily making the universities very weak on financial resources. Necessity being the mother of invention, most of the private universities have decided to take their financial destiny in their hands by striving assiduously towards financial autonomy.

Private universities are setting worthy templates for financial autonomy through maintaining the delicate balance between income and expenditure. To achieve such autonomy, whatever is made through tuition is supplemented by income from ventures and motley sources. The aggregate of these income is what is expected in the payment of salaries, attending to a few capital needs and for running expenses. At the end of the financial year, a nil balance is often returned. Expenditure is not allowed to outpace income, and avenues of financial leakages are blocked, and prudence becomes the common vocabulary in financial management, which is a key ingredient of financial autonomy.

- *Model for Discipline of Staff and Students*

The weak disciplinary culture of many public universities has no place in private universities. Discipline is key to building graduates who will embed disciplinary tone in their daily activities. Discipline is important for keeping within the boundaries of the laws, policies, rules, and procedures of a university and of the community and nation where the university is located. It is a key ingredient in running an efficient university. When discipline goes out of the window, staff acquire liberty for licence to cut classes, engage in sexual misconduct and aid and abet examination malpractices as well as display indiscipline in dressing and overall general behaviour.

In a typical private university, staff and students are under written and unwritten obligations to be disciplined in all things and in all ways. The more propelling is the consequences of sanctioning behaviours which falls out of line of the disciplinary

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boundaries. There are red lines if when crossed, are met with sanctions already specified in the conditions of service or other instruments. On the other hand, in many public universities, even when such red lines are specified, crossing them meets with weak sanctions, if at all. This tides over from the general national malaise of skirting sanctions. Little wonder you find motorists jumping red light, corruption in high and low places even as stark as you find on the streets with policemen, are taken as a matter of course and not eyebrow-raising. The culture of indiscipline is nationally pervasive, as private universities are proving to be agents of positive change and are looked upon as institutions that produce future generations of disciplined leaders and citizenry.

- *Model for Exploring New Grounds*

Private universities in Nigeria have played leadership role in innovating courses and exploring new grounds in research and development. On the matter of new programmes, private universities have been more preponderant than public in proposing new courses which are not captured in the National University Commission (NUC) Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). These courses are visionary and are targeted at producing truly 21-Century graduates. The courses are futuristic and are in the league of those that will produce what have been labelled "jobs of the future". There are many Private universities in Nigeria that are noted for exploring new ground.

New grounds in research and development have also been explored by private universities, setting standards for the public. For instance, while Ebola virus raged, public universities made feeble efforts to support the national effort to respond to the Pandemic. In the Covid-19 generation, private universities also responded by putting together resources to set up well-equipped Covid-19 test and isolation centres. Rising stoutly to the challenge and researching these diseases and its containment was Redeemer's University, a private university. It sets a model for partnership in research and development that is now a global case study. Much can also be said of the research and development efforts of American University in Nigeria (AUN), in Yola, in connection with tackling radicalism and dealing with the ricochet of insurgency. Landmark University, Nigeria, has also been a star in research and development in food security and is serving as a model for prosecuting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 2, on zero hunger.

XIV. Pathway to Attaining World-class Status by African Universities

Most Nigerian universities desire world-class status in present and in future. This dream is realisable using the suggested pathways that may be adopted by such university.

- *Programme/Institutional Benchmarking*

Basing judgement on its vision, mission and strategic goals, the Nigerian University desiring world-class status decides on an already-established world-class university against which it will benchmark itself. The university has three benchmarking options – Programme(s), institutional, or both. The Senate of the university may decide in favour of elevating one or two of its programme to world-class status. The easier path to tread is to decide in favour of those programmes where the university is currently well ranked. For instance, Arts/Humanities for University of Ilorin; Las of University of Lagos; and Medicine/Health Science for University of Ibadan.

The second option is to benchmark the entire university against a world-class university as an institution. The institution to be selected should exhibit congruence with the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the Nigerian university. The third option is a combination of both where the university decides on benchmarking one or more of its programmes with a world-class programme in another university and also selects a whole university for benchmarking. In all of these, the target programme or institution may be from one or more world-class universities. If two programmes are targeted for elevation to world-class status, the two programmes may be drawn from the same or from two different universities. Indeed, in the combination model, that is, programmes plus institutional, the university to which a Nigerian university desires to pitch its benchmark maybe different from the location of the programme(s).

Three key clusters of variables from the basis for the programme or institutional benchmark. These are input, process and output. The figure below summarises the elements in the three clusters.

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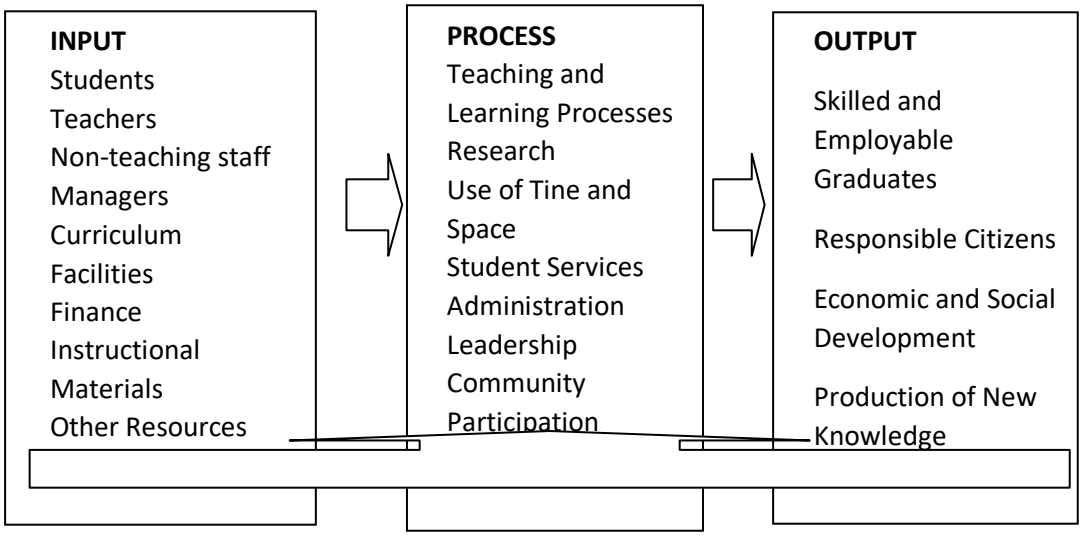

Figure 3: Clusters of Variables for Benchmarking

- *Gap Analysis*

The next step is to conduct a gap analysis between where the Nigerian university is, in this case, where the world-class's programme or entire institution is using the input-process-output model as templet. For instance, if the Bachelor of Science in Criminology and Security Studies programme of Oxford University is the target for any university, a qualitative and quantitative gap analysis of student enrolment which is seen as an input variable should be conducted. The level at how the quality and quality of candidates admitted to first degree in that course at Oxford, relative to the programme's carrying capacity, should be compared with what obtains at any university in Nigeria.

An onsite study visit to the target university is strongly advised. In this case, staff of the Bachelor of Science in Criminology and Security Studies programme of any university in Nigeria should undertake a study visit to Oxford. The quantitative and qualitative gaps are then documented. The same process is implemented for all the variables in the model. At the end of the gap analysis, which is undertaken by a technical committee in the university, using relevant data from the target and home institutions, a gap-analysis report should be prepared under such headings as facilities (human and material), quality of teaching, quality of research, community service, efficiency of governance and management, and funding.

- *Develop Action Plan to Close Gaps*

An Action Plan is prepared to close the gaps revealed by the gap analysis and filtered through different layers of the university governance – Department, College, Senate, Management, Council and Board of Trustees. The Plan should embody activities to be implemented to ensure that observed gaps are closed; the phasing of such activities; who should take responsibility for implementing each activity; timeline; estimate of cost for each activity to be implemented; sources of funds; key monitoring and performance indicators; risk factors to avert; and evaluation. The Plan should be shred with leadership of the target programmes/institution as the case may be.

- *Mobilisation of Resources*

The university takes steps to mobilise human and financial resources to implement the Plan. A broad spectrum of funding sources should be explored such as from the proprietor, internally generated and from development partners.

- *Implement the Plan*

The university implements the Action Plan for progressing to world-class status after mobilising take-off funds. As the plan is progressively implemented, it is anticipated that more funds will come in. Waiting to secure all needed funds before kicking off the implementation process may lead to delay in implementation or the inability of the university to get the implementation process off the ground. An Implementation Committee to oversee the process at this stage is advised.

- *Monitoring and Evaluation*

How well is the implementation progressing? What are the emerging challenges to successful implementation? What lessons are being learned as implementation progresses? These are some of the questions which the monitoring and evaluation phase of implementing the plan will answer. A Monitoring and Evaluation Committee is important where persons from the world-class university are given roles. In this case it is also advisable to bring one person or two from a world-class university to be part of the membership of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee of any university in Nigeria in the Development of World-Class

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Programme. The findings of the monitoring and evaluation could cause the university to begin the intervention all over again and the circle restarts.

XV. The Progress Made by Nigerian Universities in Attaining World-Class Status

From Year 2000 to date, the Nigerian university system has eased slowly into a recovery mode. Success stories are chalked up for it in a number of fronts. Within the last 12 years, funding especially to Federal universities has taken a huge leap. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) injected more money into public university system than it had done in the past. The Science and Technology Education Post-Basic (STEP-B) funding had some impact in improving facilities and building human and institutional capacities. More admission spaces have been provided with more universities licensed to operate thus easing, albeit in a little way, the problem of access. The National Open University of Nigeria added an open and distance learning perspective to enhancing access.

Further, staff salaries took an upward swing as a spin-off of the 2009 strike action by university staff unions. As a result of the relentless and fearless monitoring and accreditation by the National Universities Commission, over 80% of academic programmes in the system now have full accreditation. By way of external validation, recent graduates of Nigerian Universities are in the top 5% of postgraduate classes in Europe, North America, and Asia. At international conferences, the contributions of Nigerian scholars are valued on account of their quality. In spite of these silver linings, the dark clouds of poor-quality input, process and output still rage. The pace of the recovery process needs to quicken.

Bemoaning the past and sulking over the present will not clear the layer of plague occluding the shine of quality in the Nigerian university system. The profitable path to tread is to gallop to the future, pulling down obstacles to progress. The Golden Fleece to be sought is how Nigerian universities can be the model for Africa and a towering giant in the world, producing nationally relevant and globally competitive graduates. Several pathways can be described for achieving this goal and rising above the ashes of the sordid past.

A strong positive link has been established between the quality of student intake and the quality of graduates in an educational system. If quality of processing is held constant, the resultant of admitting poor quality secondary school leavers into the university system are graduates whose quality has a high chance of being compromised. Hence, to shoot for five-star quality from the present one-star, the admission process through the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination Board (UTME) and post-UTME, in Nigeria should move a notch or two higher in stringency. The universities should cream off the best from the large army of half-baked secondary school leavers. Those "left behind" should be worked through remedial programmes outside the university to spare them better for university education. Re-introduction of the Higher School Certificate (HSC) could pull the magic. On the quantity front, enrolling beyond programme carrying capacity is a recipe for poor quality products. National University Commission, Nigeria, should continue to apply sanctions to breaches of carrying capacity.

Over 90% of graduates spotted as "poor quality" are from over-enrolled programmes in satellite campuses, sandwich programmes and affiliations of colleges of education with universities. Since these arrangements are in place, mainly as cash cows, for commerce rather than for scholarship, proprietors should improve allocative mechanism of funding so that Vice-Chancellors who are driven by income shortfall, especially to pay salaries, by engaging in back-racketeering in over-enrolled into satellite campuses and sandwich programme can adopt a less quality-depressing methodology for their internally generated revenue.

A measure of global ranking of universities is the proportion of foreign students (the diversity factor). In 2018, only 0.1% of the total enrolment in Nigeria universities was made up of foreign students. Efforts should be invested to make the Nigerian university environment attractive to foreign students, which should be done in other nations in Africa. Conducive teaching or learning environment, good hostel facilities, high quality staff, secure campus with no cult activities and stability of academic calendar are some of the attractions that system can offer foreign students, in Nigeria and other African nations.

Staff quality and quantity is another area of improving international competitiveness and the quality of graduates. With the ever-increasing number of universities, there is an urgent need to put in place an Accelerated Teacher Development Project to ensure that teacher production keeps pace with system expansion, especially in Africa. The goal should be annual production of at least, 1,500 local and foreign trained quality PhD holders in the next 20 years.

A high proportion of foreign teacher content should also be sought. Today, the system has a mere 2.9% foreign staff content. The goal should be to achieve at least 10% by 2025, (Okebukola, 2019). Attractive salaries, conducive environment for teaching and research, excellent housing, and non-threatening external environment, will encourage foreign staff. These conditions will also slow down internal and external brain drain of staff. It will encourage Nigerians and the Africans as a whole, both at home and in the Diaspora to come back home to offer services to foster transfer of skills.

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The quality of teachers is also key to enhancing global ranking and promote the production of quality graduates. Quality staff translate to quality research, giving conducive research environment. In turn, quality research results in high scores in international research citations and elevation on the global ranking of the university. There is need to continue to build research capacity of African Scholars through national and international training and collaboration with researchers from reputable universities all over the world. Insistence on the PhD as a minimum for a Lecture Grade II position in Niger, for example, will be a lever for stimulating the research culture. The Nigeria context, and Africa as a whole, demands such a radical posture if we are to rise rapidly to eminence in the area of high-level scholarship. It is worth noting that, a number of countries in Africa and outside Africa are eyeing the Nigeria model for adoption.

XVI. The Rasheed Revitalisation Plan

There have been efforts of the National Universities Commission (NUC), led by Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed as the Executive Secretary to revitalise the Nigerian University System, and move many universities towards world-class status. This is encapsulated in the Rasheed Revitalisation Plan. This is also similar to the Marshall Plan of 1947. After the Second World War, Europe was in ruins. America was desirous of helping the revitalisation of the region and President Harry Truman appointed the then Secretary of State, George Marshall to develop a workable plan. Officially known as the European Recovery Programme (ERP), the Marshall Plan was intended to rebuild the economies and spirits if Western Europe, primarily. Marshall was convinced the key to restoration of political stability lay in the revitalisation of national economies. From 1948 through 1952, European economies grew at an unprecedented rate. Trade relations led to the formation of the North Atlantic Alliance. Economic prosperity led by coal and steel industries helped to shape what we know now as the European Union. The Rasheed Blueprint 2018-2023 has similar logic as the Marshall Plan.

To some background to the Rasheed Plan, in 2016, the Buhari led Administration made a commitment to reverse the decline in university education. The pace of efforts in this direction achieved by previous administrations will have to be quickened. The Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu directed the new Executive Secretary, Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed to work within the Ministerial Strategic Plan 2016-2019 to begin the process of developing a Blueprint for rapid revitalisation of university education in Nigeria. By January 2019, the National Universities Commission (NUC) Strategic Advisory Committee was inaugurated by the Executive Secretary with the development of the draft Blueprint a one of its Term of Reference.

The development of the draft Blueprint by the Strategic Advisory Committee was proposed on an extensive multi-stakeholder base. Inputs were sought from students, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, Vice-Chancellors, Chairpersons of Council, and a miscellany of other stakeholders. A three-pronged approach was used for data gathering. First, was to determine and rank the challenges facing the system at this time. Second was to seek practical and sustainable solutions to the challengers. Third, was to put costs to the solutions and propose how such monies will be sourced and prudentially utilised.

The key challenges facing the system that stakeholders uncovered and ranked are:

1. Inadequacies in facilities for teaching, learning and research.
2. Inadequate funding.
3. Deficit in teacher quality and quantity (including quality of professors).
4. Governance deficits (including stemming the tide of strikes).
5. Depressed quality of graduates.
6. Inadequacies in access.
7. Deficiencies in research and postgraduate training
8. Academic corruption and other social vices
9. Regulation by national Universities Commission (NUC) and professional bodies.
10. Promoting ICT-driven universities.
11. Fostering Skills Development and Entrepreneurship.
12. Gender issues.

On the basis of the foregoing challenges and within the framework of the Ministerial Strategic Plan, 2016-2019, the Strategy Advisory Committee agreed with stakeholders on the following strategic goals for 2019-2023:

1. By 2023, access to university education should have increased by a factor of 20% over 2018 figures.
2. By 2018, the curriculum of Nigerian universities should be rated among the best three in Africa in terms of its relevance to producing nationally and regionally relevant graduates who are high-level human resources for delivering on Africa's Vision of African Union Agenda 2063 and addressing the global SDGs.
3. By 2023, at least 30% of facilities for teaching, learning and research should have been upgraded to meet international standards and maintained thereafter.
4. By 2023, the gap in the number of teachers needed in the Nigerian university system and those in post should have been reduced from 30% to 20%.
5. By 2023, the quality of graduates from Nigerian universities should be improved by at least 20% as

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captured in feedback from employers and users of products of the system.

6. By 2023, scholars in Nigerian universities should be among the top three in productivity as measured by national and global productivity standards and reflected in relevance to solving Nigeria's socio-economic challenges.
7. By 2020, a sustainable funding model should have been approved at all levels and implemented via appropriate instruments of federal and state government. This is still in progress.

It has also been revealed that, most of the baseline data from which to measure progress are in place and the achievability of the goals is promising.

XVII. Conclusion

The concept of the "world-class university" has been described and the distance between the world-class universities and the African Universities, using Nigerian University system as a case study, has been assessed. The gap analysis has shown that, access, quality, management, governance, staffing, facilities, research, and curriculum delivery are some of the areas that need urgent attention. The pathways to clearing the obstacles to attaining world-class status have also been prescribed, as well as the roles of private universities in national and regional development. Suggestions have also been made as how to some private universities, especially in Nigeria can attain world-class status in the shortest possible time.

It should also be noted that, in the case of Nigerian University or higher education systems, the 71-yaer old is a mere toddler when viewed against the age of universities in Europe, North America, and Asia, that are top on the league table of universities. While the oldest university in Nigeria, the University of Ibadan was established in 1948, Bologna was established in 1088, Oxford in 1096 and Harvard in 1636. In spite of the relatively young age of the system, it can be deduced that, the system can still rise to the top at an accelerated pace as young universities in Asia and Australia have done.

There is need for political commitment towards this accelerated development. For example, according to Digital Learning Network, 2008, the Prime Minister of India announced establishment of 14 world-class universities in the 11th five-year plan between 2007 and 2012. Likewise, in 2007, Pakistan announced its ambitious US$4.3 billion project to create nine world-class engineering universities in collaboration with European universities, with 50% of its academics and administrators coming from Europe, according to University World News, 2009.

The World Bank Report released by Jamil Salmi in 2009 points out that, "becoming a member of the exclusive group of world-class universities is not achieved by self-declaration; rather, elite status is conferred by the outside world on the basis of international recognition". In building world-class universities in Africa there is need to leverage four complementary sets of factors: (a). a high concentration of talent (staff and students); (b). abundant resources to offer a rich learning environment and to conduct advanced research; (c). favourable governance features that encourage strategic vision, innovation, and flexibility and that enable institutions to make decisions and to manage resources without being encumbered by bureaucracy; and (d). sustained financial support, with an appropriate mix of accountability and autonomy. African universities should appropriately benchmark themselves with the best in the world and strive to work towards quality improvement. Our universities in Africa also need to recognise that achieving world-class standards requires a strong commitment to global best practices adapted to the local context. There is also a need to launch a World-Class University Project at country levels, which is believed can make one university at country levels emerge among the world's top 100 and with the African Universities producing a steady stream of nationally and continentally relevant and globally competitive graduates.

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