

# African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN)

## Executive Board Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2020

### Present

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. President   | - | Prof. Bertrand Mbatchi (CAMES, Burkina Faso)                 |
| 2. Vice-President  | - | Dr. Noel Saliu (NUC, Nigeria)                                |
| 3. Treasurer   | - | Prof. Ana Maria Nhampule (CNAQ, Mozambique)                  |
| 4. West Africa Representative                            | - | Prof. Lamine Gueye (ANAQ-Sup, Senegal)                       |
| 5. East Africa Representative<br>Kokuberwa Katunz-Mollel | - | Prof. Charles Kihampa, represented by Dr.<br>(TUC, Tanzania) |
| 6. Southern Africa Rep                                   | - | Prof. Victor Polaki (CHE, Lesotho)                           |
| 7. AAU<br>Prof. Jonathan Mba)                            | - | Prof. Etienne Ehile (AAU, Ghana, represented by              |
| 8. AfriQAN Coordinator                                   | - | Prof. Jonathan Mba (AfriQAN Secretariat, Ghana)              |

### Observers

- |                          |   |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Mr. Zakari Lire       | - | CAMES, Burkina Faso                    |
| 2. Mr. Assalih Jaghfir   | - | CAMES, Burkina Faso                    |
| 3. Ms. Gabrielle Hansen  | - | AfriQAN Secretariat, Ghana (Secretary) |
| 4. Ms. Alexandra Johnson | - | AAU Secretariat, Ghana                 |
| 5. Ms. Irene Adai        | - | AAU Secretariat, Ghana                 |

### Agenda

- Operational strategy for greater efficiency and inclusion of stakeholders;
- Positioning of AfriQAN in relation to the Continental Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation;
- AfriQAN Communication Strategy;
- Reflection on the Organisation of the AfriQAN General Assembly.

## **Opening**

The Virtual AfriQAN Executive Board Meeting started at 11am GMT with a welcome address by the President, Prof. Bertrand Mbatchi. He noted the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on everyone and everything in the world, but that in spite of this, life has to go on and things must be done differently. He stated that AfriQAN was formed by AAU in 2007 with support from The World Bank and UNESCO. His main concern is that there was need for a new direction for AfriQAN which does not seem to have enough flexibility for Francophones.

## **AfriQAN Membership and Communication Strategy**

Some Board members were not sure of AfriQAN membership, whether it was for Quality Assurance Agencies (QAAs) only or Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as well. The AfriQAN Coordinator explained that there were two levels of membership; a) QAAs as full members who pay a yearly membership fee of US\$1,000 and b) HEIs as associate members who pay a yearly membership fee of US\$500 as spelt out in the Constitution. AAU which hosts AfriQAN is a membership organization of HEIs in Africa, therefore it is not easy to have one institution being a member of AAU and also AfriQAN.

The AfriQAN Coordinator had shared a flyer in English and French with the President for his approval so these could be disseminated as part of membership drive. He added that AfriQAN will also try to send regular communication to members, possibly quarterly to keep them informed on AfriQAN and other general QA activities in Africa. There was a suggestion to have regular meetings, which members agreed would be helpful.

There was discussion on whether to make HEIs full members to increase membership or keep them as Associate members since they are regulated by QAAs. It was agreed that to make HEIs full members, this would need to be amended in the constitution and approved by the General Assembly. General opinion was to keep them on the different levels as one regulates the other. The fact also came out that since not all countries in Africa have QAAs, the number of AfriQAN

membership cannot increase that easily. It was agreed to include National Quality Assurance Regulators, like the ministries and other stakeholders who deal with quality assurance in the country.

AfriQAN Coordinator explained that initially when there was funding from UNESCO and World Bank, different activities (including training workshops; staff exchange missions; support for institutional evaluation; and annual conferences) were held that brought together existing and emerging agencies but due to lack of funding, it is difficult to support quality assurance activities.

### **AfriQAN in relation to the Continental Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation**

The AfriQAN President presented the situation of African Union Commission (AUC) forming a Continental Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation and wondered if AfriQAN cannot be a major actor in this agency.

The AfriQAN Coordinator informed the meeting that he and the AAU Secretary-General were at the meeting at African Union Commission (AUC) in Addis Ababa when this issue was raised and a presentation was made to show that the objectives of this Continental Agency are the same as those of AfriQAN except that AfriQAN did not have the political will but when resourced, all activities outlined for the Continental Agency can be performed by AfriQAN.

The President confirmed the fact that at another meeting in Dakar, this issue was raised and it is clear that AfriQAN can perform this role but only needs funding. He further stated that as AAU was hosting AfriQAN, it would be important to show that these are two different entities and that AfriQAN could stand on its own.

Members agreed that AUC should resource AfriQAN to carry out this role instead of forming another agency as this will help also improve AfriQAN membership.

It was noted that AAU is currently running the Harmonisation of African Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Project which is linked to the Continental Agency. One of the key outputs of the HAQAA Project is to provide a feasibility study for the Continental Agency and take important steps towards its set up (defining mandate, consulting stakeholders, drafting statutes and collaborating with the AUC to this effect).

Though AAU has written to AUC to allow AfriQAN carry out the role of the Continental Agency, no response has been received yet. Members are therefore encouraged to lobby as much as they can for AfriQAN to be upgraded to be the Continental Agency.

### **AfriQAN General Assembly**

The Coordinator explained that the General Assembly could not hold in 2019 due to lack of funding. European Union (EU) has over the years been funding the International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa (ICQAHEA) which is organized by AfriQAN, AAU and Guni-Africa. Through this funding, AfriQAN is able to support Executive Board Members and some AfriQAN members in good standing to attend the Conference which also hosts the AfriQAN Assembly. Unfortunately, EU supported AAU's Conference of Rectors, Vice Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities (COREVIP) last July 2019 and could therefore not support ICQAHEA in October 2019. Members were informed about this and unfortunately, only ANAQ-SUP and NUC were at the General Assembly so it could not hold since there was no quorum.

Due to COVID-19, it was agreed that this year's General Assembly should be held virtually, and it was agreed that the General Assembly should be held on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 beginning by 11.00am GMT.

### **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS**

1. Full membership should be maintained for QAAs and associate membership for HEIs.

2. Invite National Quality Assurance Agencies (NQAAs, other regulatory units eg. QA units in Ministries etc.) to join AfriQAN.
3. QAAs are encouraged to support activities of AfriQAN, eg. Support emerging QAAs.
4. Have regular virtual meetings, eg. Every 3 months or as appropriate.
5. Find aggressive ways of generating funds to support AfriQAN.
6. The President and AAU Secretary General will work on a strategy for an AfriQAN Newsletter in English and French).
7. President should be Included AfriQAN in the lobbying process for AfriQAN to be the Continental Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa.
8. All Board members should also be engaged in the lobbying process for AfriQAN to be the Continental Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa, where possible.
9. AfriQAN should be disassociated from AAU to prove that AfriQAN is a separate entity.
10. Send out outstanding membership fees invoices to members that owe.
11. Send notice for next General Assembly which will be virtual to be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2020
12. Start preparations for next General Assembly
13. Share minutes of the meeting.

The meeting ended at 1:40pm GMT.