

CONSTITUTION OF THE AFRICAN
QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK
(AfriQAN)

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CONSTITUTION AFRICAN QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK (AfriQAN)

PREAMBLE

Quality in higher education has become a matter of great concern globally. Countries have come to realize that the quality of educational provision by higher education institutions is important in providing highly skilled human resources that will drive economic growth in countries and regions towards sustainable development.

In response to this realization, several African countries came together for the purpose of establishing a strong link among its quality assurance organizations to enable them to address the challenges of higher education in Africa. This led the Association of African Universities (AAU), during the UNESCO conference on quality assurance in higher education held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 2007, to launch the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) as an official platform for the cooperation of African quality assurance organizations.

In April 2009, AAU organized a stakeholder's workshop in Dodowa, Ghana, which came up with a declaration, the "Dodowa Declaration" that emphasized the importance of the network to foster collaboration and linkage among the quality assurance bodies within Africa. Accordingly, an interim AfriQAN committee was elected whose efforts led to the development of a draft AfriQAN constitution.

In order to formalize the Network, we the founding members of AfriQAN, having met at the first general meeting in Accra, Ghana, from 25th to 27th November 2009, do hereby adopt this Constitution as the Constitution of the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) - 2009.

DEFINITIONS:

In this Constitution, unless the context otherwise requires:

- "Network" means the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN)
- "Member" means Full Member or Associate Member.
- "Higher education" means post-secondary education.
- "Quality Assurance body" means organization working in the area of quality assurance in higher education.

ARTICLE 1: NAME OF THE NETWORK

There is hereby established an organization to be Known as African Quality Assurance Network. Its name shall be abbreviated as AfriQAN.

ARTICLE 2 : ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NETWORK

1. The Organization of African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) (hereinafter referred to as “the Network”) is hereby established as a nonprofit organization and shall operate and be governed by the provisions of this Constitution.
2. It shall be a body corporate registered with the Registrar-General’s Department.
3. The provisions of this constitution shall be in accordance with the laws of Ghana
4. The headquarters of the network shall be located in Accra – Ghana

ARTICLE 3: MISSION STATEMENT

The Network is committed to the assurance and enhancement of quality higher education in Africa through strengthening the work of quality assurance bodies and other associated organizations with similar objectives.

ARTICLE 4: OBJECTS OF THE NETWORK

The objects of the Network are to:

- a) Promote a culture of quality assurance in higher education in Africa
- b) Foster collaboration and linkages among quality assurance bodies within Africa;
- c) Advance good practice in the enhancement and maintenance of quality higher education in Africa;
- d) Collaborate with quality assurance bodies in Africa in capacity building;
- e) Facilitate research into the practice of quality assurance in higher education for purposes of improving the quality of higher education in Africa;
- f) Provide advice and expertise for the development of new national and sub regional quality assurance bodies in Africa;
- g) Assist members of the Network to articulate standards of institutions operating in member countries;

- h) Foster harmonization of standards for quality assurance across countries in Africa
- i) Facilitate international recognition of qualifications to enhance mobility of staff and students in Africa; and
- j) Promote the interests of Africa in other networks and international organizations with related focus.

ARTICLE 5: FUNCTIONS OF THE NETWORK

The Network in pursuit of its objects under Article 4, shall:

- a) support the development of quality assurance bodies through capacity building, seminars, workshops and conferences;
- b) disseminate information through newsletters, journals, books and other documents, in print and electronic forms;
- c) participate and collaborates in research projects;
- d) conduct other activities as specified by the General Assembly or the Board;
- e) mobilizes resources;
- f) develop and maintain a data base of quality assurance bodies and experts; and
- g) create and maintain a website.

ARTICLE 6: MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be open to organizations interested in furthering the objects of the Network.

a) Categories of membership

The Network shall admit Members under the following categories:

- i. Full Members
- ii. Associate Members

i. Full Members

Full members shall be:

- i National, sub-regional and regional organizations responsible for assuring the quality of higher education in Africa;

- ii Other organizations which meet the conditions for membership as decided by General Assembly, from time to time and are legally recognized by the country of origin.

ii. Associate Members

Associate members shall be:

- i Institutions of higher education in Africa which are committed to enhance the quality provision of education and are in good standing with relevant quality assurance systems.

b) Procedure for membership

The procedure for membership shall be as follows:

- i. Organizations interested in becoming members shall complete an application form;
- ii. the Secretariat shall verify that the application for membership complies with the specified conditions, in respect of the category of membership being applied for and make recommendations to the Board;
- iii. the Board shall approve the recommendation by a simple majority vote, and present to the General Assembly for ratification.
- iv. the Secretariat shall communicate to the applying organization, the decision on the status of the application;
- v. If the application is approved, the applying organization shall fulfill requirements for membership.

c) Privileges and responsibilities of Members

- i. Full and Associate Members shall enjoy the rights, privileges and services provided by the Network to its Members;
- ii. Only Full Members are involved in the administration and governance of the Network;
- iii. Associate Members may attend the Annual General Assembly of the Network but shall not have the right to vote;

- iv. All members shall abide by the provisions of the Constitution, pay their dues and participate in the activities of the Network.

d) Cessation of membership

Membership shall end by resignation, termination or dissolution of the Organization according to the provisions of the rules and regulations adopted by the General Assembly

ARTICLE 7: OBSERVERS

The Network shall accord observer status to:

- i Organizations from within and outside Africa;
- ii Institutions with a major interest in higher education in Africa.

ARTICLE 8: RESOURCES OF THE NETWORK

A- Funds of the Network

The funds of the Network shall include but not limited to the following:

- a) Monies derived from membership subscription and dues;
- b) Donations, including grants and physical assets;
- c) Monies approved by the General Assembly;
- d) Monies realized in line with the objects of the Network such as:
 - i. Income generating activities
 - ii. Fund raising activities
- e) Any other resources which would assist the Network to realize its objects.

B- Membership fees

The General Assembly shall determine membership fees (subscriptions and dues) to be paid by members. Currently, the membership fees are US\$1,000 per Quality Assurance Agency per annum and US\$500 per Higher Education Institution per annum.

C- Assets

- i. The Network shall acquire and receive movable and immovable assets including gifts and intellectual properties which shall be used solely for the furtherance of its objects;
- ii. The Secretariat shall take custody of the assets of the Network and shall be accountable to the General Assembly.

D- Accounts

- a) There shall be bank accounts opened in the name of AfriQAN, with a reputable financial institution and whose signatories shall be determined by the Executive Board;
- b) The Network shall keep books of account and proper records related to them and in the form approved by the General Assembly.
- c) The manual of rules and procedures shall be approved by the General assembly and guide the financial operations of the Network
- d) The financial year of the Network is from first January to thirty first December.

E- Audit

The annual accounts shall be audited by an external auditor and published annually in the annual report. The external auditor shall be appointed by the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 9: ORGANS OF THE NETWORK

The organs of the Network shall be:

- The General Assembly
- The Executive Board
- The Secretariat

ARTICLE 10: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A- Status of the General Assembly

1. The General Assembly shall be the highest decision making organ of the Network
2. The General Assembly shall consist of Full Members and Associate Members. Each member shall be represented by the Chief Executive Officer or his/her representative.

B- Responsibilities and procedures of the General Assembly

1. The general assembly shall be vested with governance of the Network and shall be responsible for:
 - a) Election of Executive Board members;
 - b) Consideration and adoption of reports from the executive Board;
 - c) Approval of the annual financial statement and audit reports of the Network;
 - d) Adoption of the annual fees and any other contributions to be paid by Members;
 - e) Appointment of the external auditors
 - f) Decisions necessary for the efficient operation of the Network;
 - g) Decisions on the recommendations of the Executive Board regarding any Member who contravenes the Constitution.
2. The General Assembly shall meet once every two years at regular session. Special meetings of the General Assembly may be convened to address urgent matters.
3. Notices of regular meetings shall be given at least twenty-one days before the meeting.
4. The quorum of a meeting of the General Assembly shall be one third of full Members of the Network.
5. For an electronic meeting two-thirds of the Full Members shall constitute a quorum.
6. Full Members shall be entitled to vote by proxy at annual General Assembly.
7. The President shall chair meetings of the General Assembly and in his/her absence the Vice-President shall preside.
8. A member from among the General Assembly shall be elected to chair the General Assembly in the absence of both the President and the Vice-President.
9. Each member of the General Assembly shall have one vote.
10. Decisions of the General Assembly shall be adopted by a simple majority of Members voting.
11. Amendments to the Constitution of the Network shall require a two-thirds majority of Full Members.
12. Notice for amendment of the constitution shall be given at least twenty-one days prior to a scheduled meeting of the General Assembly.
13. The Network's strategic plans, annual plans and budgets shall be approved by the General Assembly.

C- Annual report

The executive Board shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly during its regular session for approval

ARTICLE 11: THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A- Status, composition and responsibilities of the Executive Board

1. The Executive Board shall be the executive arm of the Network.
2. The Executive Board shall be composed of:
 - i The President;
 - ii The Vice President;
 - iii The Treasurer;
 - iv Five other members representing the five sub-regions of Africa (West, Central, Eastern, Northern, Southern) elected by the General Assembly;
 - v The Secretary General of the Association of African Universities; and
 - vi The African Union Commission and two members co-opted by the Elected Members.
3. The members of the Executive Board listed i - iv above shall be elected by the General Assembly.
4. Members of the Executive Board shall not be paid a salary.
5. The Executive Board shall be responsible for implementing the strategic plan, the annual plans and the policies as approved by the General Assembly.
6. Other responsibilities of the Executive Board shall include:
 - a) Advancing the Network's objects as provided in the Constitution;
 - b) Implementing the decisions of the General Assembly;
 - c) Preparing the Manual of rules and procedures for adoption by the General Assembly
 - d) Approving the proposal for observers status
 - e) Developing the Network's strategic plan, annual plans and budgets for approval by the General Assembly.

B- Duties of the Executive Board members

1. **The President shall:**

- a) Coordinate the activities of the Network;
- b) Guide the Network and the Members towards meeting its constitutional aims and objects;
- c) Chair the General Assembly and the Executive Board meetings;
- d) Represent the Network as its spokesperson and the point of contact for all contracts on general matters of the Network;
- e) Facilitate the drawing up and implementation of the strategic plan and any other development plans;
- f) Represent the Network in the event of any legal suit or dispute;
- g) Be the accounting officer of the Network.
- h) Undertake any other functions as directed by the General assembly

2. The Vice-President shall:

- a) Deputize for the President
- b) Support and assist in the performance of the President's functions;
- c) Monitor and report on activities of project groups and committees;
- d) Perform any other functions as determined by the Board or delegated by the President;

3. The Treasurer shall:

- a) Chair the finance committee
- b) Oversee the handling of the finances of the Network and keeping of up-to-date records of accounts;
- c) Monitor the implementation of the budget of the Network prepared by the Secretariat, approved and ratified by the Executive Board and the General Assembly respectively;
- d) Undertake any other responsibility as assigned by the Board

4. Other members of the Executive Board shall:

- a) be responsible for promoting the object of the Network in their respective sub-regions;
- b) Undertake any other responsibility as assigned by the Board.

C- Committees

The Executive Board may establish committees for the furtherance of the objects of the Network.

D- Tenure of office of members of the board

1. An Executive Board Member shall hold office for a period of two years and may be eligible for re-election for another term only;

2. An Executive Board Member may resign at anytime from office in writing addressed to the President and in the case of the President, to the Vice President;
3. A person shall cease to be a member of the Executive Board when his/her organization ceases to be a full member of the Network or when he/she leaves the employment of the organization;
4. Where a member of the Executive Board ceases to be a member for any reason, his/her organization shall nominate a representative to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of the Executive Board;
5. Not more than two members of the Executive Board shall be from the same country.

ARTICLE 12: THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat of the Network shall be domiciled at the Association of African Universities (AAU) in Accra – Ghana

The Secretariat shall be headed by the AfriQAN Coordinator, and set up by the Secretary General of AAU in consultation with the network's Executive Board.

Responsibilities of the AfriQAN Coordinator:

The AfriQAN Coordinator shall:

- a) Manage the Secretariat and supervise the personnel
- b) Facilitate the efficient operation of the General Assembly formal decision making and reporting processes;
- c) Collect dues and subscriptions fees on behalf of the Network
- d) Attend meetings of the Executive Board and the General assembly, record and keep the certified minutes of all meetings;
- e) Prepare annual reports and annual plans to be presented to the Executive Board and the General Assembly;
- f) Arrange for the Network's publication in print and on the Website;
- g) Collect, organize and distribute to Members of the Executive Board and the General Assembly relevant information and documents for the purpose of meetings;
- h) Prepare the budget and operation plans for the Network and administer the implementation;
- i) Perform any other functions determined by the Executive Board or by the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 13: DISPUTE RESOLUTION

1. A dispute over the interpretation of any provision in this Constitution shall be resolved by a two-thirds majority of all Full Members at a session of the General Assembly.

2. Any dispute or difference arising between the Network and a Member or between one Member and another in connection with or arising out of any of the provisions of this Constitution shall be resolved by consultation and negotiation.
3. In the event that no agreement is reached within thirty (30) days after a Member has notified the Executive Board of the dispute, a Member shall have the right to have such dispute or difference settled through arbitration. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final.

ARTICLE 14: AMENDMENTS

1. This Constitution shall not be amended unless a written notice of a proposed amendment is first given to Full Members at least ninety days prior to the session of the General Assembly where the amendment is to be considered.
2. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of Full Members present at the session where the amendment is presented;

ARTICLE 15: DISSOLUTION OF THE NETWORK

The Network shall be dissolved by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority of its Full Membership. Notice of the meeting of the resolution shall be given to all members at least 180 days before the meeting. At the General Assembly meeting when the dissolution is approved, the distribution of assets shall be undertaken after satisfactory disposal any debt or liability. Any remaining assets shall be transferred to the Association of African Universities.

ARTICLE 16: TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Approval of the Constitution

1. This Constitution shall be approved at the first meeting of the Founding Members following the inauguration of the Network.
2. The founding Executive Board of the Network shall be elected at the first meeting of the Founding Members following the adoption of the Constitution.

Adopted this twenty seventh day of November two thousand and nine in Accra – Ghana

The founding members:

1. Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU)
Dar es Salaam - TANZANIA
Represented by: Prof. Mayunga H. H. NKUNYA
Executive Secretary

2. Crawford University Igbesa,
Ogun State - NIGERIA
Represented by: Prof. Peter OKEBUKOLA
Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council

3. National Authority for Quality Assurance
and Accreditation of Education (NAAQAAE)
Cairo – EGYPT
Represented by: Prof. Dr. Hamdy Ahmad NASSAR

4. National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)
Windhoek - NAMIBIA
Represented by: Mr. Stanley Mutumba SIMATAA
Executive Director

5. Education et Recherche auprès de
la communauté économique des pays
des grands lacs (CEPGL,)
Kigali - RWANDA
Represented by: Prof. Honorine NTAHOBAVUKA
Directeur chargé de Programme

6. Oficina de Coodination Tecnica de RIACES
City of Buenos Aires – ARGENTINA
Represented by: Mr. Leandro HABERFELD

7. The Association of Arab Universities (AARU)
Jubeyha - JORDAN
Represented by: Prof. Faisal Abdalla ELHAG
Assistant Secretary General

8. The World Bank
Washington D.C. - USA
Represented by: Ms. Petra RIGHETTI

9. Commission for Higher Education (CHE)
Nairobi - KENYA
Represented by: Prof. Everett M. STANDA
Commission Secretary

- 10 The Inter-University Council of
East Africa (IUCEA)
Kampala - UGANDA
Represented by : Prof. Moses GOLOLA
Deputy Executive Secretary

- 11 National Universities Commission
Abuja - NIGERIA
Represented by: Prof. Chiedu Felix MAFIANA
Director Executive Secretary's Office

- 12 Université du Burundi
Bujumbura - BURUNDI
Represented by : Prof. Gaston HAKIZA
Recteur de l'Université du Burundi

- 13 Direction de l'Enseignement Supérieur
Dakar - SENEGAL
Represented by : Mr. Abdou Lahate CISSE
Chef de Division Coopération

- 14 CAMES
Ouagadougou - BURKINA FASO
Represented by : M. Zakari LIRE
Documentaliste

- 15 National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)
Kampala - UGANDA
Represented by: Mr. George EBINE
Higher Education Officer – ICT & DOC

- 16 Direction de l'Enseignement Supérieur
Antananarivo - MADAGASCAR
Represented by : Mr. Ranaivomahasetra RAJAOARISOA
Chef de Service des Institutions Supérieures

- 17 Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sport
Bissau - GUINEA BISSAU

Represented by: Dr. Mario NOSOLINE
Inspector General of Education

- 18 Tertiary Education Council
Gaborone - BOTSWANA
Represented by: Dr. Felix Rex O'mara
Director Quality Assurance and Regulation
- 19 Quality Assurance and Research
Development Agency (QAARDAN)
Lagos – NIGERIA
Represented by: Ms. Theresa Udumaga OKAFOR
Director
- 20 ACDE Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency
National Open University of Nigeria,
Lagos - NIGERIA
Represented by: Dr. Rotimi OGIDAN
- 21 Ministry of Education,
Freetown - SIERRA LEONE
Represented by : Ms. Musu GORVIE
Deputy Director, Higher Education,
- 22 UEM/CNAQ
Maputo - MOZAMBIQUE
Represented by: Prof. Eduardo J. SITOE
Assistant Professor & National Chair
- 23 National Accreditation Board (NAB)
Accra - GHANA
Represented by: Mr. Richard ADJEI
Senior Assistant Secretary
- 24 Association of African Universities
Accra - GHANA
Represented by: Miss Adwoa SEY
Project Officer, Quality Assurance