

African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 22nd September 2016

The AfriQAN General Assembly opened at 9.30am with opening remarks by the AfriQAN Coordinator, Prof. Jonathan Mba, who welcomed all AfriQAN members as well as observers to the gathering. He emphasized that it was a meeting for AfriQAN members but observers were welcomed, except that they could not contribute to the discussion.

Goodwill messages were read by Prof. Etienne Ehile, the AAU Secretary General; Dr. Yohannes Wodentensae, the African Union Education Specialist; and Dr. Olin Oedekoven of Peregrine Academic Services, whose organization partly funded the meeting. Prof. Ehile reiterated the fact that it has become a tradition to take advantage of ICQAHEA to organize AfriQAN General Assemblies or General Meetings. Due to the current lack of funds, AfriQAN was unable to run many activities. He stated that the HAQAA Initiative now has a component on workshops, which could be utilized for AfriQAN activities. In his goodwill message, Dr. Wodentensae stressed the fact that African Union will continue to support AfriQAN and would like to see AfriQAN grow into a big Network by engaging all the Quality Assurance Agencies since AfriQAN is expected to play a major role in the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF). African Union, he said, was involved in the launch of the Network in 2009 in Ghana and as a continental body, AU will support, inspire and push AfriQAN to emerge as a strong body for all QAAs in Africa. He hoped that next year, there will be a lot of success stories to tell about PAQAF, HAQAA and AfriQAN. Dr. Oedekoven of Peregrine Academic Services in his message stated that they are involved with AfriQAN because they want to make a difference in African higher education and that the role of AfriQAN was critical to promoting quality assurance in African higher education. He said, students' participation in the conference would help promote quality in Africa as best practices are followed.

The Vice-President of AfriQAN, Prof. Bertrand Mbatchi, on behalf of CAMES and the President of AfriQAN, Prof. Chiedu Mafiana, who could not attend the meeting due to other official engagements, welcomed all distinguished participants and partners who have been supporting quality assurance issues in Africa.

The proposed agenda was moved for acceptance by Mr.. Mocks Shivute and was seconded by Dr. Evelyn Garwe. The Vice-President then officially opened the AfriQAN Annual General Meeting.

The minutes of the Abuja 2015 General Assembly was presented and the following comments were made:

- Reword the sentence on drafting of Addis Ababa convention.
- NCHE, Namibia and CHE Lesotho had paid 2015 membership fees.
- Put countries of members who had paid where that was missing.

After these comments were noted, Mr. Shivute moved for the minutes to be adopted, and this was seconded by Prof. Mbatchi.

The 2015-2016 report was presented by the AfriQAN Coordinator who encouraged members to pay up their membership dues to enable the Secretariat plan workshops and staff exchange activities as it used to do. He stressed the fact that AfriQAN membership fees was set up to help support activities of AfriQAN due to financial constraints since funds from UNESCO/GIQAC ended. The total funds available in AfriQAN account was US\$26,000. He pleaded with members to meet up with their financial obligations and encouraged both Quality Assurance Agencies and Higher Education Institutions to join AfriQAN.

The following workplan was presented as the activities for 2017:

1. QAHEL Workshop: The Quality Assurance for Higher Education Leaders (QAHEL) Workshop series is expected to sensitize the vice chancellors, rectors, and presidents of African higher education institutions with respect to promoting quality culture on campus. The CEOs of African quality assurance agencies will also be encouraged to attend.
2. QAHEP Workshop: The Quality Assurance for Higher Education Personnel (QAHEP) Workshop series is expected to strengthen the skills of the quality assurance staff of African higher education institutions to enable them deliver effectively and efficiently their functions as quality assurance personnel.
3. Staff Exchange: This activity seeks to empower quality assurance staff of emerging quality assurance agencies on the continent with the skills and knowledge needed to run their outfits by spending time with more established regulatory bodies.
4. Peer Review: In other to assure quality and promote international competitiveness on quality assurance, national quality assurance agencies will be peer reviewed voluntarily by internationally renowned quality assurance experts. The results will be published for the benefit of other agencies.

Many institutions showed interest in joining the network and defaulting members promised to pay up their subscriptions.

Participants present wanted to know how to become members and what benefits were available for members. It was explained that an institution or QAA becomes a member of AfriQAN upon payment of membership fees which is US\$500 for HEIs and US\$1,000 for QAAs. Members enjoy sponsorship to QA events like the ICQAHEA and participation in AfriQAN organized activities.

Members wondered if there would not be conflict of activities if regional networks organize similar activities as AfriQAN. AfriQAN as the continental body encourages regional bodies to organize activities in the sub-region and invite AfriQAN to such activities as observers. AfriQAN has actually been trying to encourage regional networks to help in the sharing of information and experiences and improve quality culture on the continent. For example, AfriQAN was part of the establishment of SAQAN (Southern African Quality Assurance Network).

As to how the “Peer Review” activity is run, participants were informed that if a country (QAA) makes a request to be peer reviewed it has funds, AfriQAN would mobilise the experts and pay for the economy air fares of the experts, while the QAA requesting such services would pay for service fees.

Participants observed that the major challenge facing AfriQAN now was funding, so there was a suggestion to concentrate on mobilizing membership and encourage payment of fees. The National Universities Commission of Nigeria has been doing this among the Nigerian higher education institutions and this accounts for the large number of Nigerian participants.

The Vice-President officially closed the AfriQAN meeting at 10.35am.

AfriQAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA, 22nd SEPTEMBER, 2016

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