

African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN)

Annual General Assembly

Thursday, 21st September 2017

Accra, Ghana

The AfriQAN General Assembly opened at 9.00am with opening remarks by the AfriQAN President, Prof. Chiedu Mafiana, who welcomed all AfriQAN members as well as observers to the gathering. He informed members that the draft programme had already been circulated by email and hoped all members received it.

The Coordinator of AfriQAN, Prof. Jonathan Mba, was happy that the General Assembly was being held in Accra. He emphasized that it was a meeting for AfriQAN members but observers were welcomed, except that they could not contribute to the discussions. He stated that some activities had been undertaken by AfriQAN, though not many of them due to lack of funding. Unfortunately, even for the current ICQAHEA and General Assembly, the usual funding from European Commission was not available to support participants. AfriQAN has however survived on the little membership fees and it is the hope that these funds will increase so that more activities could be undertaken.

The Secretary General of AAU, Prof. Etienne Ehile, in his remarks emphasized the fact that AAU has supported AfriQAN since its inception and will continue to do so. He said he raised the issue of membership fee payment during the AfriQAN meeting in Namibia in 2016 and stressed again that given donor fatigue in supporting African institutions, AfriQAN members would have to continue to work hard to pay their subscriptions. He thanked Dr. Olin Oedekoven of Peregrine Academic Services for his continued financial support to AfriQAN and quality assurance activities. Some donor partners, he said, were also struggling to survive. He ended with the proverb "Heaven helps those who help themselves".

The President of AfriQAN, Prof. Mafiana, in presenting the minutes of the 2016 meeting, thanked AAU Secretariat for agreeing to host the 9th ICQAHEA at a short notice when the initial host backed out at the last minute. He also thanked the Government of the Republic of Ghana through the AAU for the magnificent Secretariat that it had built for AAU. He hoped staff would enjoy working in such a spacious environment. He continued by showing his gratitude to AAU who agreed to host AfriQAN Secretariat when it had nothing and has provided space and funds to keep it running until the little subscriptions started coming in. He hoped AAU will consider making its Secretariat the permanent host of ICQAHEA.

He was happy that the first two days of ICQAHEA yielded good discussions and encouraged AfriQAN members to carry through what they preached. He said that Africa must champion discipline everywhere. He reminded members that it was agreed in

2012/2013 that all Quality Assurance Agencies should pay US\$1,000 each as annual membership fees, whilst higher education institutions should pay US\$500 each. These dues when paid regularly would help in implementing activities of AfriQAN, such as staff exchange between agencies, peer review of Quality Assurance Agencies (QAAs), institutional reviews, etc. He gave an example of the Council for Higher Education of Lesotho which benefitted from the peer review of its agency during the current period. AfriQAN supported the process by paying for the air tickets of the two experts who did the review. He also mentioned the organization of the Quality Assurance for Higher Education Leaders (QAHEL) Workshop, which took place in May 2017 in Lagos, Nigeria. It was fee-paying and as members were not used to paying for their participation in activities, the turnout was low.

Comments

The member from ANAQ-Sup, Senegal speaking on behalf of all members of CAMES, thanked AfriQAN for what it is doing to improve quality assurance in Africa despite all the difficulties that it was facing. He however, was not happy that as an Executive Board Member of AfriQAN, he has never been invited to any meeting of the Board to enable him also pass on information to other francophone members in the West African sub-region. He continued by saying that a newsletter with information on QA activities could help answer questions being asked him as the West African representative on AfriQAN Board. According to him, QA in Anglophone countries is doing well but that is not the case in the francophone setting where a lot of support is needed for countries with potentials to understand quality assurance issues.

He suggested organising capacity building activities to support the improvement of quality assurance in francophone countries. He stated that there are quite a number of African QA experts and documents that can be put at the disposal of members. Also, African QA Experts can be used to do some work for international organizations to help bring in some funding. He also mentioned that to encourage agencies and universities to join AfriQAN, they need to know what benefits they could get by being members.

Member from CNAQ, Mozambique in her submission, stated that Namibia benefited from hosting the 8th ICQAHEA as it brought visibility to the Agency and suggested that hosting of ICQAHEA should be rotated among QAAs.

Member from TCU, Tanzania, in his comments, gave an example of IUCEA, Uganda hosting most of the quality assurance meetings at their headquarters in order to reduce cost and seconded the idea that AAU should be made the permanent host of ICQAHEA.

Dr. Oedekoven, on his part, said his organization was very happy to be able to support AfriQAN and promote quality assurance in Africa. He hoped for a continued collaboration.

In response to the comments, the AfriQAN Coordinator suggested that since lack of funds did not permit the holding of AfriQAN Board meetings, virtual means like skype

could be used to hold the meetings. Once activities begin, regular information and newsletters will come out to announce these activities. He mentioned the case of a planned workshop in Mozambique but response rate was very low due to the fact that it was fee-paying. Concerning AAU being the permanent host of ICQAHEA, he suggested that hosting should be rotated but AAU will always be available to host if any difficulties were encountered elsewhere. He also added that AfriQAN has been writing proposals and concept notes for funding, but unfortunately, African Union and UNESCO do not have funds at the moment to support quality assurance activities.

Dr. Biodun Saliu moved for the minutes of the previous meeting (Namibia 2016) to be accepted and this was seconded by Mr. Mocks Shivute.

Matters Arising

The AfriQAN Coordinator reported that 50 participants registered to attend the QAHEL Workshop in May 2017, but finally, only 18 attended citing National Universities Commission (NUC) accreditation at the same period as the main reason for the low attendance locally. AfriQAN supported CHE, Lesotho to be peer reviewed and the report of the Experts has been accepted by the Council of CHE. No Staff Exchange took place due to lack of funding but it is hoped that this would be undertaken in 2018. He encouraged quality assurance agencies to undergo peer review and attend the next QAHEL. Regional representatives on the board are being encouraged to sensitize institutions in their regions to join AfriQAN.

Payments

NUC would look into the non-payment of the subscription for the year. Other suggestions were that since CAMES is made up of about 19 member countries, it should pay more than the US\$1,000 that other agencies were paying. It was explained that CAMES had problems with its membership and they need to be sensitized about the benefits of joining AfriQAN, then membership fees payment of AfriQAN will also improve.

Members complained that the QAHEL registration fee was too high, and that it would be ideal to localize some of the workshops, per country. AfriQAN Coordinator promised that the fees would be revised but participants should know that it is the same fees that would be used to take care of resource persons, conference package, logistics and other workshop materials.

The Work Plan and budget for 2018 was presented by the AfriQAN Coordinator. Member from ANAQ-Sup said he did not see sensitization workshops and skype meetings in the budget. It was agreed that the new Executive Board of AfriQAN could further discuss this. Draft budget was moved for approval by Dr. Biodun Saliu and was seconded by member from CNAQ, Prof. Ana Nhampule.

Election of AfriQAN Executive Board

The following members were elected to serve on the AfriQAN Executive Board for the next two years (2017-2019):

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| 1. CAMES, Burkina Faso | - | President |
| 2. NUC, Nigeria | - | Vice President |
| 3. CNAQ, Mozambique | - | Treasurer |
| 4. TCU, Tanzania | - | East African Representative |
| 5. CHE, Lesotho | - | Southern African Representative |
| 6. ANAQ-SUP, Senegal | - | West African Representative |

No representative of Central and Northern African regions were represented. It was suggested to write to agencies in these regions for nominations.

Closing

The outgoing President, Prof. Chiedu Mafiana, thanked AAU and Peregrine Academic Services for their support to the conference. He also thanked the keynote speaker, Prof. Nimi Briggs, for his brilliant presentation, stressing that quality assurance is key to whatever one does in education and other sectors as well. He congratulated CAMES for being elected as President and urged the new board to work on implementing the work plan for the year 2018.

The newly elected President of AfriQAN, Prof. Bertrand Mbatchi, thanked everyone for electing CAMES to the presidency. He promised to use this opportunity to promote quality assurance in Africa to become a global affair, have a re-awakening attitude and be competitive on the international arena. He thanked the out-going President for his kind words and hoped that they would all work together for the good of quality assurance and AfriQAN.

He declared the AfriQAN General Assembly closed at 10.30am.