



East African Community Common Higher Education Area



DECLARATION BY HEADS OF STATE OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY PARTNER STATES ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY INTO A COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

We, the Heads of State of the East African Community Partner States, wishing to accomplish the objective of harmonization of higher education and training systems in the East African Community ("EAC") by establishing a common frame of reference to facilitate comparability, compatibility and mutual recognition of higher education and training systems and the qualifications attained within the EAC Partner States, based on shared views on quality, criteria, standards and learning outcomes, for promoting student and labour mobility in the EAC;

Recalling that the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community in Article 102 provides that the Partner States agree to undertake concerted measures to foster co-operation in education and training within the Community and among others to harmonise curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education and training institutions in the Partner States through the joint action of their relevant national bodies charged with the preparation of such curricula;

Affirming the growing importance of knowledge as a key factor for social and human growth as alluded by the Dakar Declaration on Education for All, 2000, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, 2000, the Commission on Social Dimensions of Globalization, 2004, of which the EAC Partner States are signatories;

Recognizing that higher education, including research, is the leading pillar in creating a knowledge society and knowledge driven economy; and **Having reviewed** the progress so far made towards that objective, in particular, the development and adoption by the national commissions/councils for university/higher education and higher education institutions in all the Partner States of:

- (a) Regional Quality Assurance Framework, based on four operational tools:
 - (i) A policy framework, titled Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa;
 - (ii) Regional quality assurance instruments contained in the Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education covering internal quality assurance at programme level, external quality assurance at programme level, institutional quality assurance, and implementation of a quality assurance system;
 - (iii) Benchmarks for academic programmes; and
 - (iv) East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network, which promotes the development of quality culture in East Africa; and
- (b) East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (2015) as a human resources development instrument guiding the higher education and training systems, and as a reference tool in facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications attained in and outside the EAC Partner States;
- (c) Staff Mobility Framework (2014) to enhance sharing of the existing human resources in higher education within the Community and encouraging staff mobility; and
- (d) Students Mobility Policy (2015) to facilitate free movement of students within the Community; and

Noting that the achievements so far recorded require to be consolidated to ultimately evolve into a unified higher education system;

We hereby affirm our commitment and undertaking to accomplish that objective by transforming the EAC into a **Common Higher Education Area**.

WHEREFORE, we the Heads of State of the EAC Partner States **DO HEREBY DECLARE** the EAC a **Common Higher Education Area** whereby the national higher education and training systems shall operate and be guided by the common regional framework under which curricula, examinations and certification as well as academic and professional qualifications, and the quality of the educational and training output in higher education will be harmonised.

We proffer that the Common Higher Education Area will facilitate and enable the mobility of students and teachers and promote the free movement of labour, people and services as envisioned under the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community signed in 1999 and the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market in 2010.

We acknowledge and commend the good work so far done by the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), through the mandate given to it by its Act of 2009 (section 4 (2)) as a strategic institution of the EAC for the implementation of the objective to attain a fully harmonized and integrated higher education and training system in the EAC.

Consequently, we entrust and task the Council of Ministers with the responsibility of coordinating the operationalization of the Common Higher Education Area and IUCEA to provide the necessary technical support.

We hereby pledge to the people in the EAC our resolve as herein DECLARED at Dar es Salaam, the United Republic of Tanzania on this 20th day of May, in the year Two Thousand and Seventeen as duly attested by our respective signatures hereunder.

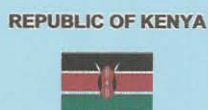

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