
**STRENGTHENING THE VIABILITY OF
THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY IN THE
1990s AND BEYOND**



**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Public Administration, Human Resources and
Social Development Division**



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Senior Policy Workshop Organized by ECA's Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division within the framework of the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa Regional Project (SAPAM) in collaboration with the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the University of Swaziland.

**Ezulwini Sun Hotel, Ezulwini Valley
Kingdom of Swaziland
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I BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

A senior policy workshop on the theme: **"Strengthening the Viability of the African University in the 1990s and Beyond"** was held at the Ezulwini Sun Hotel, Ezulwini Valley, Swaziland, from 25 to 29 May 1992. The workshop was organized by the Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, (ECA) within the framework of the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management (SAPAM) Regional Project in collaboration with the University of Swaziland and the Association of African Universities (AAU). It was attended by thirty participants, including ministers and vice ministers, from the governments of Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe; senior university administrators; and representatives of international organizations. A list of participants appears in Annex IV of this report.

This workshop was an important sequel to the Senior Policy Workshop held in Accra in December 1991 devoted to the theme of **"Mobilization and Management of Financial Resources in African Universities"** which was organized by ECA within the framework of SAPAM in collaboration with AAU. The workshop helped to highlight the magnitude and seriousness of the financial crisis facing African universities. The discussions at the Accra workshop revealed that there were other closely interlinked problems that needed to be addressed in order to relieve African universities from the many problems confronting them. Among these issues were those relating to staff retention; the need to ease the financial burden of an already overstretched capacity of public universities by examining a possible role of private universities; and the need for a realistic cost recovery schemes appropriate for Africa.

This workshop, was convened in response to the increasing concern that has been expressed with regard to the three aforementioned areas. The objectives of the workshop were:

1. To examine the problems pertaining to staff retention in the universities and to propose measures for coping with the rising exodus of teaching and research staff.

2. To explore the role private universities can play in meeting the demands for higher education in light of the overstretched capacities of public universities which have come under financial pressure as a result of austerity measures taken by their respective governments. And additionally, to examine the lessons that can be learnt from the few private universities that exist in some African countries, and the role private universities will play in the 1990s and beyond.
3. To assess the potentials and limits of cost recovery schemes in the light of the financial constraints by governments.

The workshop was officially opened by His Highness Prince Khuzulwandle, the Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Swaziland. Welcoming statements were made by Dr. Sadig Rasheed, Chief, Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division of ECA, Prof. L.P. Makhubu, Vice Chancellor of the University of Swaziland and Dr. A.M. Satti, Director of Programmes and Cooperation of Association of African Universities (AAU).

Dr. Rasheed welcomed the participants on behalf of Mr. Issa B. Y. Diallo, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. He also expressed the appreciation of the organizers of the workshop to His Highness Prince Khuzulwandle, the Honourable Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Swaziland for kindly agreeing to officially open the workshop. He thanked the other co-sponsors of the workshop, AAU and the University of Swaziland, for their cooperation. He particularly thanked the leadership of the University of Swaziland for the excellent arrangements they had made for hosting the meeting and the Government of Swaziland for their warm reception and hospitality.

Dr. Rasheed declared that the African University was in a state of crisis. Its relevance, effectiveness, contribution to society and development and its very survival are coming increasingly into question. He elaborated on the relevance of the sub themes of the workshop viz. staff retention, the role and viability of the private university and cost recovery schemes for African universities.

Dr. Rasheed contested views advanced in some circles that developing countries, in particular Africa, need not put much emphasis on higher education, especially university education, since its comparative social rate of returns are much lower than the primary and secondary education. The major implication of this perspective is that African countries should devote less and less of their public expenditures to university education. However, such erroneous policy stance fails to acknowledge the important role of the university as a training ground for teachers needed at the primary and secondary levels of education. This policy underestimates the key role of universities as centres of development - related research in all areas of development; and minimizes the importance of the link between indigenous human resource and the indigenization of the development process. He emphasized that the task of supporting and revitalizing the African university is paramount to national development. This calls for a strategy to promote dialogue between the key players, noting that this workshop was a medium for such dialogue with a view to mobilizing resources and sustaining support for African universities.

Dr. Rasheed called on the participants to reflect seriously on such questions as: what practical measures can be put in place for coping with the exodus of staff and to retain staff of universities in the face of dwindling financial outlays from governments? How can the policy environment for academic freedom be made more hospitable? Is the private university a viable option? What conditions need to be met for the establishment of private universities? What should be the nature of the regulatory role of governments in relation to private universities? What type of cost sharing schemes will work in Africa? What are the potential and

limits of such schemes? What are the lessons of experience in African countries where cost recovery schemes have been implemented?

Prof. Lydia P. Makhubu, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Swaziland welcomed the participants of the workshop and paid special tribute to the ECA and AAU for their past and present efforts in organizing workshops that examined issues of critical importance to universities.

Prof. Makhubu indicated that universities in Africa are now faced with new and grave situations as a result of multiple development problems facing the continent. She expressed hope that this workshop will provide the forum for reflecting on the new situation and for redefining the mandate and activities of universities, not because universities have failed but because new challenges and opportunities have arisen. She emphasized that the new situation calls for a review of previous financial arrangements with the institutions and for new relationships to be developed with governments and donors.

Professor Makhubu cautioned against undermining the traditional activities of the universities such as teaching and research in the search for alternative income generating and financing mechanisms.

In his statement, Dr. A. M. Satti of the AAU listed the number of challenges facing African universities and argued that the African university will be abandoned by its constituency unless it effectively deals with the challenges. He cautioned against outright dismissal of the value of private higher education on grounds of its inaccessibility to those who cannot afford it. He suggested that we look at it and attempt to understand its mode of operation, and its financial and internal efficiency.

Dr. Satti said that the brain drain was a serious problem currently being faced by the African universities. He observed that the majority of the universities suffer from high staff attrition,

basically caused by an unattractive package of emoluments and living conditions. He indicated, however, that the problem is not severe in some southern African subregion and Francophone universities where the salaries are reasonable even by international standards.

Dr. Satti concluded by welcoming the participants on behalf of the Secretary-General of AAU and thanked ECA/SAPAM and the University of Swaziland for organizing the workshop.

In his opening address, the Honourable Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Swaziland, Prince Khuzulwandle welcomed the participants, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to the Kingdom of Swaziland. He expressed satisfaction that the key players in higher education were deliberating as partners and not as the adversaries which many people believe them to be. He called on all parties to bring to bear their collective wisdom on the enormous challenges that face education in general and higher education in particular. In spite of the economic problems that often lead to budgetary curtailment, the demand for education has continued to rise. The Minister stressed the need for educated and enlightened leadership to manage emerging social and political trends in an increasingly complex and interdependent world and to recognize the apparent crucial role universities have to play in Africa's development.

Prince Khuzulwandle told the participants that African governments are hard pressed to evolve balanced views which acknowledge the essential role of universities, while justifying the heavy expenditures at this difficult period of tight fiscal control. He called upon the participants to provide objective assessment of the situation and make recommendations which will appeal to all concerned.

Prince Khuzulwandle urged the participants to address seriously the problems of brain drain in the universities, erosion of teaching and research, the over-populated classrooms and residences and come up with viable solutions. He also called on

the participants to consider seriously the sensitive topic of cost-sharing and come up with recommendations which will offer governments a way forward without causing undue hardships to the majority of those who genuinely need help.

After the formal opening, the workshop continued for four days in plenary and working group sessions. The deliberation of the plenary and working groups were facilitated by a number of background papers and university briefs on staff retention, the experience of the private university in Africa and cost-recovery schemes. The papers presented are listed in Annex III.

The discussions were organized around the sub-themes of staff retention, the role and viability of the private university in Africa and cost-recovery schemes. The summary of discussions, observations and recommendations are presented in the sections that follow.

II STAFF RETENTION

Most African universities suffer in varying degrees from the problems of staff retention. The only exceptions are probably universities in Francophone countries and few others in the Southern African region. In various countries, the university used to enjoy a high status proportionate with the high value of its worth in national affairs. Over the years, that status has been eroded by several factors which have had an adverse effect on the universities' capacity to retain its staff, particularly the academic staff. The discussions revealed that the problem of high level of staff attrition in African universities was due to both internal and external factors. Among the internal factors were: unremunerative salaries; insufficient fringe benefits, and lack of job satisfaction.

Salaries

In many cases, salaries of university staff in Africa have fallen drastically in real value on account of inflation. In many countries, the effect of devaluation has been so severe that staff find it difficult to sustain themselves without supplementation from sources other than regular income. In countries experiencing acute shortage of foreign exchange, universities have the added problem that expatriate staff cannot remit part of their earnings to their home countries to service mortgages, insurances, and other commitments.

The issue of pay was described as the most important factor in the retention of staff. Evidence confirmed this. The few universities that did not experience loss of staff - in particular academic staff - tend to be those that offered relatively high salaries and comprehensive incentive packages. For example, at the University of Côte d'Ivoire and the University of Botswana, where academic staff were adequately compensated, staff attrition was not a problem. On the contrary, they have attracted a large number of expatriate staff. At the same time, other universities, such as University of Swaziland and the National University of Lesotho with relatively fewer problems of staff attrition at present expressed the

fear that potential exodus southwards - to the Republic of South Africa - might occur in the future (after black majority rule is established) because of high pay package offered by South African universities. High pay also explains the high exodus of Sudanese academics to the Gulf region.

Lack of Job Satisfaction

Due to their underfunding, many universities find it difficult to purchase equipment for teaching and research, to acquire journals and periodicals in the various disciplines, and to provide adequate space for teaching and research. It is frustrating for academicians to work under these circumstances. Without adequate research, the staff cannot publish and this contributes to the decline of the academic standards as well as their promotion prospects.

Fringe benefits

Some universities have no schemes for institutional housing, housing loans to enable staff to build their own houses, loans to assist staff to purchase vehicles, assistance with medical care and the costs of children's education. Even where such schemes exist, they are not always adequately maintained or increased to meet demand.

On the other hand, the external factors identified include weak national economies; political instability; and excessive political interference in university affairs. While it was accepted that, governments as the owners of universities, would be expected to show interest in the activities of universities, the legislative acts or decrees that established various African universities have vested certain functionaries with so much powers which were often misused, especially when the state functionaries exercising such powers have a hostile attitude towards the universities. In some countries, the positions of university visitor or chancellor is conferred on the head of state; which meant that several critical decisions have to be referred to him for approval. Similarly,

decisions relating to appointment of dean and promotion of professors are exercised singly by the minister of education or in conjunction with university council or senate. These intrusive roles assigned to state functionaries have adversely affected the recruitment and retention of top notch academics in many universities - and have reduced the autonomy of the university.

Moreover, political instability has also led to exodus of many academics from their countries. Persecution, harassment or perceived potential threats to their lives, as a result of the cycle of violence, have made many academics to flee their countries.

Participants noted that the problem of staff attrition showed in various forms: resigning to take jobs in other areas within the national economy; exodus to other African and non-African countries; accepting political appointments within the country (the so-called "**loss to politics**" cases); staying away for a prolonged period on different types of leave (e.g. sabbatical leave, leave of absence and study leave). Staff losses at the University of Dar-es-Salaam defined as those who did not return after study/sabbatical leave were for 1984, 24% of all lecturers and 10% for all categories of staff. At the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, the exodus of academic staff has risen from twelve in 1987 to seventy eight in 1991. A closely related problem was that some universities have experienced sharp decline in the number of post graduates recruited under post graduate scheme for appointment to teaching staff. At the University of Ghana, Legon, the number of such recruitments have fallen from one hundred twelve in 1977 to nineteen in the 1989/90. Participants observed that these figures should be read with caution, since they did not convey the total picture on the staffing situation in these universities. Another important manifestation of staff attrition identified was high vacancy rate on the academic staff. Presently, this was as high as about 38% at the Makerere University in Uganda, 35% at the University of Zimbabwe; and 40% at the University of Khartoum, Sudan.

Some participants were of the opinion that the exodus of university academic staff to the private or parastatal sector of the

national economy should not be put on the same level as exodus to foreign countries. Other participants argued that exodus to countries within a sub-region or other African countries should not necessarily be characterized as a problem. Rather, this may be viewed as intra-regional **"labour mobility"** which can enhance regional and subregional cooperation. However, other participants argued that the loss of staff to countries within a sub-region creates as much problem as the loss of staff to countries outside the region. The result is that the teaching workload increases in the university from which there is high exodus of staff.

Some participants observed that the experience of their universities showed that the main concern is with the adverse consequences of staff attrition. These include:

- increased workloads
- lowering of academic and research standards
- loss of university reputation
- inability of university departments to deliver timely services; and
- producing lower calibre graduates which has negative effects on the economy.

On the other hand, staff attrition was viewed by some participants as providing an opportunity for reinvigorating the staff; if such attrition led to departure of so-called **"deadwoods"**. This view was discounted by several participants who argued that staff attrition frequently led to the exodus of the best and brightest for whom there was always a great demand outside the university. Viewed from these perspectives, staff attrition was always a **"zero-sum game"** for the universities losing the staff. Their losses have a detrimental impact on the standards of research and teaching, while benefiting those institutions and organizations attracting the **"lost staff"**.

III THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

The discussion on the place of the private university in Africa began with the examination of questions such as: What are the reasons that have prompted the establishment of private universities in Africa? What are the constraints to establishing them? Are private universities breaking new grounds? Should private universities be subsidized by governments? What should be the nature of the regulatory role of government in relation to these universities? Have private universities succeeded in Africa?

Factors that have prompted the establishment of private universities were identified as:

- increasing demand for higher education evident in the large number of qualified students who cannot gain admission to existing public universities.
- reducing of public expenditure in tertiary education which has curtailed expansion of existing public universities.
- training more skilled manpower to plug the gap created by brain drain abroad.
- fostering greater institutional response to changing market conditions.
- providing national alternatives to study abroad.

There are many constraints in establishing private universities. One of these is the insistence of many governments to be the sole provider of tertiary education. Many participants wondered why some African governments could allow private initiative at the primary and secondary levels of education while restricting private initiative at the tertiary level. Government policy towards establishment of private university, in some countries, such as Nigeria, has oscillated between allowing private universities

in the 2nd republic 1979-1983, to banning them during most part of the military regime 1984-1991 and permitting their establishment again by the same military regime early in 1992.

A second constraint to establishing private universities is the huge financial outlay involved. Few individuals possess the resources needed to establish private universities. As a result, most private universities in Africa tend to be owned by religious or community groups. This is the case in virtually all nine countries in Africa where private universities now exist: Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zaire and Zimbabwe. Kenya has eleven private universities at present, and this could rise to fifteen by the end of 1992. Over 80% of these are owned by religious groups.

Participants grappled with the question of assessing the relevance of the private university. Two viewpoints emerged. One viewpoint was that the private university can only be deemed relevant if it broke new grounds - that is creating new disciplines of study and areas of research. By this criteria, new private universities that merely duplicate courses taught in existing universities can hardly be deemed relevant. Ahfad University College for Women in Omdurman, Sudan was cited as one example of a private university that met this criteria of breaking new ground, in that it provided courses of instructions in many areas that existing universities did not offer. Other participants argued that the relevance of the private university should not be assessed solely by the criteria of breaking new grounds. But as playing an important role if it admitted those qualified students that are unable to gain admission in existing universities within their countries.

As regards subsidizing education in the private university, some participants took the view that government need not grant subsidies to students in private universities, if doing so would imply producing more graduates beyond projected national manpower needs in particular disciplines. Some participants found two problems with this approach. The first is that the approach

assumes that national manpower needs are static. On the contrary, these needs are very dynamic. For example, a sudden burst of economic activity might increase demand for manpower in particular disciplines far in excess of whatever projections governments might have made in their national plans. This would argue for government extending equal amounts of subsidy to students in public or private universities.

Another related reason for extending equal subsidy (also referred as per capita grant) to students in private and public universities derives from the idea that education, like health, belongs to the category of economic goods called "**merit goods**." These are goods the consumption of which is generally viewed as having positive effect on social and economic welfare of society, such that unless they are subsidized, they would be underconsumed to the detriment of society. Thus, if governments subsidized students in the public universities to the exclusion of those in private universities, there would be an under consumption of university education by some well deserving students.

Considerations of equity, in particular the fact that citizens whose children go to private universities pay taxes, like those in public universities, were given as additional reasons why government should give **per capita grants** to students in private universities. Some participants were of the opinion that expanding present universities is a preferable option to establishing new private universities. Economies of scale was cited as a major benefit to be derived from expansion as against new establishment. However, the option of expansion would appear unattractive to countries with small populations except in instance where the private university ventures into new areas. In countries with large populations, where existing universities have reached limits of physical expansion and student intakes, the need for new universities either private or public is real.

With regards to whether private universities in Africa have succeeded, participants took the view that sample case studies presented were an insufficient basis for generalization. Sample

case studies focused on the Ahfad University College for Women in Omdurman, Sudan and the Omdurman Ahlia University as well as the experience reviewed in Kenya in the World Bank's paper **"Private Initiatives and Traditions of State Control in Higher Education in Sub-Sahara Africa"**. Still, some participants said there were important lessons and benefits from the few existing universities. Private universities would stimulate competition among existing universities in areas ranging from quality of teaching research; salary structures and cost of education. For instance, it was revealed that cost per student at the Ahfad University for Women in Sudan was approximately one-fifth to one-sixth of those at public universities in Sudan. Moreover, what was termed as the **"colonial"** management structures inherited by government universities made their administration costly. By contrast, the leaner-management structure of some private universities made cost of their administration less expensive.

There was broad agreement that African governments have an important role in regulating the activities of private universities in their countries. As a first measure, these governments should establish a regulatory authority, which preferably should be financed solely by government. Complete financing of such regulatory authority by government would forestall the possibility of divided loyalty, among staff of such agency, if such regulatory bodies are financed in part or whole by the private universities.

Governments' regulation should not be intrusive. On the contrary, governments should limit themselves to: accrediting the universities; monitoring financial status of universities; approving courses offered; conducting periodic inspection and evaluation of their capacity for teaching and research to ensure that private universities meet the approved national standards.

At the end of the debate it was generally agreed that the establishment of private universities in Africa should be encouraged.

IV COST RECOVERY SCHEMES

The term cost recovery schemes was used at the workshop to refer to a broad range of arrangements used by the University authorities in Africa to make students pay for part of cost of their education or to generate extra incomes. Thus, cost recovery schemes were defined as including:-

- Cost-sharing arrangements which made students pay for part of their educational cost.
- Loan schemes granted to students, in so far as this imposed an obligation on students to contribute to payment of their university education.
- Renting out university facilities e.g. conference halls to outside users.
- University-based consultancy arrangements
- Cost reduction through improved management system.

Participants noted that the Impetus to introduce various cost recovery schemes requiring students to partially contribute to their education has arisen from reduction of financial outlays by African governments to their universities - due to the economic crisis that has confronted African countries. They observed that the World Bank which has supervised economic reform programmes in many African countries has also encouraged the governments to implement cost recovery programmes. This policy stance stems partly from the Bank's view that the comparative social rate return for tertiary education is lower than primary and secondary education and also because World Bank argues that students contribution to full cost fees of university education in Africa is very low, estimated at 13%. The low cost of students contribution to university education was confirmed in a study by Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme

(ESAURP) presented to the workshop, which found that for every dollar of university recurrent expenditure, 60¢ was directly related to students, who contributed only 8¢. The same study also found that cost recovery schemes directed at students earned about 5% of total university recurrent expenditure. These findings are contained in a paper presented to the workshop titled **"University Cost Recovery Schemes"** by T. L. Maliyamkono.

In addition, a study of the loan scheme at the University of Ghana, Legon, **The Students Loans Scheme: Two decades of Experiences** by Akilagpa Sawyerr, presented to the workshop reported that the conversion of governments grant to a loan as contribution towards living expenses of students in tertiary institutions amounted to only 0.11% of total government expenditure in higher education. At the same time, loan granted to students covered only .136% (1989); .143% (1990) and 0.08% (1991) of the total unit per cost for student in these years.

At the Obafemi Awolowo University total revenue generated from all cost recovery schemes from students and municipal charges were as a percentage of recurrent grant from government 5% (1986/87), 4.8% (1987/88), 4% (1988/89), 1.9% (1989/90 and 3.5% (1990/91). Similarly, at the University of Malawi, where a students loan scheme is in operation, it was reported that loans account for only 3% of total cost of university education. These findings confirm the position that government continues to bear the major burden of providing resources for university education.

Participants took the view that governments should not be made to believe that cost recovery schemes would relieve them of their responsibility for higher education. Indeed, participants noted that, in several industrialized democracies, governments continue to provide major share of educational funding either through loan or grant or a combination of both. This recognition that governments would continue to have major funding role for university education points to the need for serious dialogue between governments and universities about devising long term financing arrangements for these institutions. Such arrangements

should incorporate funding from government and private sector - which are major users of university products - the graduates. Other avenues that need to be explored include tapping resources from non-governmental organization and private sector.

Participants also noted that most universities still have not been able to get rid of funding and management responsibilities of activities which are ancillary to teaching such as student board and lodging. This is an area in which the university has the least expertise and can be contracted to private business. Relieving the university of such ancillary activities could help the university to concentrate on its main mission of teaching and research; however, the participants recognized the sensitive nature of the problem. Participants also noted that in some cases where universities or governments attempted to relieve themselves of direct responsibility for ancillary activities, strong and sometimes violent resistance has occurred from militant student movements. Nevertheless, it should be possible to convince the students that contracting such services to the private sector would not affect the quality of the service to be rendered.

V RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The participants offered many suggestions regarding staff retention, cost recovery schemes and the role and viability of private universities in Africa in the 1990s and beyond. These recommendations are organized around the sub-themes of the workshop..

Staff Retention

The gravity of the situation regarding staff retention currently facing African universities has convinced the participants that urgent action is required to further arrest deterioration and enable the universities to strike a healthy balance between the pull and push effects as it relates to staff retention. To achieve results, participants recommend that:

- The remuneration package for university staff should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is competitive and attractive.
- The use of non-taxable fringe benefits should be explored to supplement salaries.
- University budgets should reflect adequately the size and operations of universities.
- The government and the universities should endeavour to create a conducive atmosphere for staff motivation, research output and teaching.
- As pillars of learning, universities have the potential and the responsibility to contribute to debates or national issues. Governments should realize that competing views could enrich policy outputs and thus, be tolerant to differing views.

- Government can foster staff retention in the universities by using the reservoir of expertise available in their universities to formulate and implement national policies and programmes.
- Government can prevent unnecessary confrontations by resorting to meaningful dialogue with the universities on mutual interest.
- The internal management of the university should be left to the university and its governing bodies. This perspective reflects the recognition that one of the reasons for staff dissatisfaction and cause for attrition is government interference in the internal governance of the university.
- There is room for improving the governance and management of the universities and this requires the universities to take appropriate action in this regard.
- Universities should be assisted to purchase up to date equipment for research and teaching.
- Work ethics and maintenance/culture of university academics have to be improved so as to derive maximum benefits from whatever available teaching and research facilities the universities may have.
- African universities should maintain good statistical data banks on all university matters including staff retention and attrition trends.

The Role and Viability of the Private University

- Participants observed that the establishment of private universities should depend on the size of the

economy; the size of the country, and implications it will have for employment.

- Participants recommended that in small economies, the private university should be encouraged to move into specialized areas where the public universities may not be involved.
- In situations where the need for private universities is established, the state should set in motion the machinery for deliberately encouraging the establishment of private universities. Perks such as tax incentives could be used in this regard.
- Private universities should be accredited by the appropriate governmental bodies and their progress should be monitored to ensure that they observe the spirit of the charter and maintain their academic standards.
- The mounting pressure on public universities may drive some countries to encourage the establishment of private universities. The experiences of some African countries that have open private universities could provide a useful lessons to those who may venture into this area. Therefore participants recommend that a comprehensive study of experiences of private universities in African countries be undertaken by AAU, ECA and other relevant institutions.

Cost Recovery Schemes

Participants noted the inability of the state to bear the entire cost of higher education in the face of the economic crisis being experienced by many African countries and agreed that carefully designed cost recovery strategies should be introduced to share the responsibility of higher education with the state. Such a

strategy should include university management improvement systems, cost-sharing, student contribution and income generating activities. In conclusion, the participants made the following recommendations:

- Universities should strive to improve their management practices in a manner that would ensure effective utilization of resources. Initiatives which could contribute to saving resources include: privatizing labour intensive administration where this was legally and practically feasible; automating or using new labour-saving technologies; and introducing computer-based management information systems for accounting and general record keeping.

With regard to cost-sharing arrangements participants recommended as follows:

- Appropriate recovery arrangement could be found for those who are able to contribute through other means. Recovery of student loans and other schemes of cost sharing could be improved through the use of properly conceived and acceptable schemes such as national service programmes, social security schemes (where they exist) and banks, etc.
- The proportion of fees that are recoverable should take into account the economic conditions and should be reviewed at regular intervals.

With regard to income generating activities, the participants recommend that the following measures be taken to ensure the successful launching or implementation of income generating activities.

- Seed money should be set aside for income generating activities.
- Community goodwill should be harnessed to attract donations. Universities should also solicit financial support from their alumni by launching alumni appeal funds. Success in private funding will require the universities to cultivate their alumni and maintain up-to-date information on them.
- Universities could be involved in big or small business as a means of generating income. But the participants agreed that small-scale businesses be targeted at the initial stage.
- Income-generating activities should be managed as independent self-accounting units.
- The target customers for income-generating activities should not include only students, as these do not necessarily represent a large and viable market.
- For consultancies, local markets should be targeted in view of the high competition in the international consultancy market. The other advantage of targeting the local market is that it would foster the much needed links with the private sector.
- Governments should create an enabling environment by removing existing obstacles to cost recovery schemes.

ECA/SAPAM's Future Activities in the Area of Strengthening the African University

The participants offered the following suggestions regarding policy issues that ECA/SAPAM should address in its future activities in the area of higher education:

- Assisting African universities to respond to emerging challenges in the 1990s and beyond.
- Facilitating standardization of data bases by the university which can be shared among African universities, deserve a study.
- Making a feasibility study of income generating activities that are realistic for the universities.
- Undertaking follow-up studies on the viability of private university in Africa.
- Improving management skills of university administration.
- Conducting studies on graduate labour market.
- Strengthening the university fiscal policies, particularly as it relates to cost and budgetary controls.

The participants expressed their appreciation to ECA/SAPAM for organizing the Mbabane Workshop as a follow-up to the Accra Workshop on Mobilization and Management of Financial Resources In African Universities.

The participants thanked the organizers and co-sponsors of the workshop and urged them to ensure the widest possible distribution of the report to African governments, universities and international organizations.

ANNEX I

Text of Opening Statements by:

Dr. Sadig Rasheed, Chief, Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division, Economic Commission for Africa

Dr. A.M. Satti, Director of Programmes and Cooperation, Association of African Universities

Professor Lydia P. Makhubu, Vice Chancellor, University of Swaziland

Prince Khuzulwandle, Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Swaziland

Statement by Dr. Sadig Rasheed

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of Mr. Issa B.Y. Diallo, U.N. Assistant Secretary-General and Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, and on my own behalf, to this Senior Policy Workshop on "Strengthening the Viability of the African University in the 1990s and Beyond".

I wish, at the outset, to express the deep appreciation of the organizers of the workshop to Prince Khuzulwandle, Honourable Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Swaziland who has kindly agreed to officially open this workshop. It is with great pleasure that ECA has held this workshop in Swaziland, as we recall with fondness the second ECA/AAU Conference of Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Presidents of African Institutions of Higher Learning, which was held in Mbabane in 1985 to discuss the Response of Africa's Institutions to the deteriorating socio-economic situation on the continent.

As you already know, this workshop has been organized by ECA's Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division within the framework of the Special Action Programme in Administration and Management in African Regional Project (SAPAM), in collaboration with the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the University of Swaziland. I would like, therefore, to take advantage of this opportunity to thank the AAU and the University of Swaziland for their cooperation in making the holding of this workshop possible. I wish, in particular, to convey the appreciation of the participants to both Professor Lydia P. Makhubu, the Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Glen Magagula of the University of Swaziland and their staff for the excellent arrangements they have made for hosting this workshop. The fact that all participants from outside Swaziland already feel at home is a tribute both to the excellent arrangements by the University of Swaziland and the generous hospitality of the government and people of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

A little over five months ago, the ECA in collaboration with the AAU, organized a Senior Policy Workshop in Accra, Ghana devoted to the theme of Resource Mobilization and Financing of African Universities. That workshop, the report of which has been published - and distributed to all participants - here, and the present workshop represent key links in the chain of ECA's activities designed to restore and reinforce the vitality of the African University. Last month, the 7th meeting of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee of Ten of ECA's Conference of Ministers Responsible for Human Resources Planning, Development and Utilization has focused its deliberations on the theme: "Resource Mobilization and Utilization in Africa's Institutions of Higher Learning". ECA/AAU Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of African Institutions of Higher Learning deals regularly with issues related to higher education and development. The 1993 Session of the Conference will have as its theme: **"Survival of African Universities in the 1990s and Beyond"**. The African University is in a state of siege. Its relevance, effectiveness, contributions to society and development and, I dare say, its very survival are coming increasingly into question and are at stake.

This, then, is the background to devoting this workshop to the theme of **"Strengthening the Viability of the African University in the 1990s and Beyond"**. Under this broad rubric, three main policy issues will be discussed: staff retention, cost recovery schemes and the place of private universities in Africa. Briefly, let me sketch an overview of each sub-theme.

The question of staff retention is one of the major problems confronting African universities today. Hardly any African university is immune from the high rate of turnover of its academic staff. The common causes of this trend include poor salaries and conditions of service that do not reflect the harsh cost of living; inadequate teaching and research facilities; erosion of academic freedom; subordination of teaching and research to political concerns; and the lure of more remunerative jobs elsewhere, and lack of conducive political environment.

Many a university in Africa has introduced cost recovery schemes. This is traceable to reduced financial outlays to higher education by African governments, in itself the result of the economic crisis, and the increasing cost of higher education. Consequently, the pressure on universities and governments to devise measures for cost sharing in university education has grown. One policy option that has become appealing is the cost recovery schemes. The challenge here is to devise schemes that enable qualified but poor students to gain access to university education, while ensuring that students would contribute to the cost of their education.

On the other hand, the argument in favour of private universities springs from at least three reasons. Firstly, existing universities, virtually all of which are supported by government, are unable to absorb the large number of students who qualify for admission. Secondly, those students whose demand for university education is currently not met in African universities tend to go abroad, mostly to non-African countries at a cost which African countries can ill afford. This suggests that there is scope for more universities. Given that financial constraints preclude governments from establishing more state-sponsored universities, the option of the private university deserves to be explored. Thirdly, there seems to be a contradiction between the current practice where most African governments retain the role of the sole provider of university education, on the one hand, and their equally obvious claim that they cannot commit more resources to university education, on the other hand. Resolving the policy dilemma between limited government financing and limited places in government-sponsored universities seems to point in the direction of relaxing restrictions on the establishment of private universities. While equity considerations might arise in this case, the complimentary role of the private university - in light of the emerging challenges and the overstretched capacity of the state-sponsored university in Africa - needs to be explored more seriously.

This brief review shows that there are several common elements that inter-connect the three sub-themes. The first is that all three policy issues require collaboration between universities and the governments. Second, significant policy changes will be needed on the part of universities, government or both for any of the issues to be addressed. Third; progress on any of the issues will require devising financing arrangements that would enable the universities to efficiently play their role in society.

Views are being advanced in some circles, to the effect that developing countries, in particular Africa, need not put much emphasis on higher education, especially university education, since its comparative social rate of returns are much lower than the secondary and primary education. A major implication of this perspective is that African countries should devote less and less of their public expenditures to university education. This is an erroneous policy stance that ignores many realities. For example, such policy fails to acknowledge the important role of the university as a training ground for teachers needed in secondary and primary levels of education; it underestimates the key role of universities as centres of development-related research in fields ranging from economics to environment; and natural resources to nationality issues; it minimizes the importance of the link between indigenous human resource and the indigenization of the development process.

If we are lulled into believing that university education matters little; then we must ask the question: how will African countries acquire the high level manpower and "think" and "expertise tanks" needed for various aspects of national development and the transformation of the African economies? Unless Africa's institutions of higher learning are properly nurtured, oriented, supported and revitalized Africa's future and its place among the community of nations in the twenty first century will be greatly compromised. All this leads me to one central conviction: the strengthening of the African university must become a compelling public policy concern. The task of supporting and revitalizing the African university is paramount to national

development. As such, it requires a carefully thought-out strategy, which governments, the universities, the private sector and the whole community must play their part.

An important starting point for developing that strategy is to promote dialogue between the key players. This workshop is precisely a vehicle for such dialogue with a view to mobilizing resources and sustaining support for African universities. To facilitate the discussions at this workshop, some papers have been commissioned which will be presented under the various sub-themes. The World Bank has also submitted a paper focussing on one of the sub-themes, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to our colleagues in the World Bank for their collaboration. Papers have also been prepared by various universities reflecting their experiences in dealing with the policy issues relating to the sub-themes.

I encourage participants to make deep reflections on such questions as: What practical measures can be put in place for coping with the exodus of staff and to retain staff of universities in the face of dwindling financial outlays from governments? How can the policy environment for academic freedom be made hospitable? Is the private university a viable option? What conditions need to be met for the establishment of private universities? What should be the nature of the regulatory role of governments in relation to private universities? What type of cost sharing schemes will work in Africa? What are the potential and limits of such schemes? What are the lessons of experience in African countries where cost recovery schemes have been implemented. These are some of the issues that participants should grapple with.

The presence of some ministers in charge of higher education, vice-chancellors, and senior university administrators and managers in the workshop can only reinforce my belief that out of these discussions will emerge important suggestions and

practical recommendations for dealing with the policy issues that we are seized with. These will, in turn, be widely disseminated to ensure that they will be of benefit to all those who are dealing with these "burning" issues.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Statement by Dr. A.M. Satti

The challenges facing the African university in this decade and beyond are many. These are challenges of cost effectiveness and efficiency; of raising funds to finance the different operations and running costs of the university, maintenance and development to meet the aspirations of their nations; challenges of relevance and marketability; and of keeping abreast with Science and Technology and being at the frontier of knowledge by maintaining sound Research and Development work.

Where does the African University stand in the midst of all these dreams and ambitions? Are they really achievable goals and objectives and if so what is the strategy to attain them.

It is common knowledge now that university education is expensive and will be beyond the reach of many if it was to be provided at cost. Governments in Africa, the main providers of financial support to the university, are no more capable of providing the kind of support that they used to give before. In fact, the support is dwindling year after year. Looking at the study recently carried out by the Association of African Universities (AAU) on a sample of nine representative universities, one is appalled to see the deterioration that has taken place in almost all aspects of university endeavour and which has been the norm and not the exception during the decade of the 80s. Subvention from government which is the main source of income to the university as indicated earlier has been greatly reduced and can hardly meet personal emoluments of the staff and personnel of the institution let alone research and development for which funding has been drastically cut.

The African University is in crisis and must rectify the situation, otherwise, it will be abandoned by its constituency who will go somewhere else to look for an alternative university education. We should beware of this and do something about it. We need to take a revolutionary approach to face the crisis. It is no more possible for the beneficiaries of this type of education not

to make a contribution to the funding. Sooner or later they have to pay back for it in one way or the other. The workshop held in Accra in December 1991 by ECA - SAPAM and AAU addressed such issues of university financing and reviewed many types of schemes adopted by various countries - developing countries included - where students are made to contribute financially while scholarships are provided to those who deserve them on academic merit.

The other extreme is private higher education which is now coming up on the continent. Before dismissing it out-right as being available only to the well to do, I suggest that we look at it and try to understand its mode of operation and financial and internal efficiency, if any, to learn from it. Whether we like it or not, private university is becoming a reality and as such we have to deal with it.

The theme of this meeting which is: **"Strengthening the Viability of the African University In the 1990s and Beyond"** is most relevant. A key plank to strengthening the viability of the African university is the basic question of Staff Retention, which is also being addressed by this workshop. Brain drain is another name which is given to it and depends on many factors basic among them is the aspect of personal emoluments i.e., salaries, allowances etc. as well as reasonable living conditions. Without pre-empting the AAU paper on this topic which was not available to me when I prepared these observations, I can reasonably say that there are broadly three categories of salaries paid by universities in Africa:

1. Reasonable salaries even by international standards: these are paid by some of the countries with strong economies in the Southern African sub-region as well as some of the universities in the Francophone area.

2. Reasonable salaries by local standards: where university staff are among the highest paid in their countries.
3. Low salaries which are not even enough for meeting basic needs of life leading many academics to have a second job in the "second economy" make ends meet.

On behalf of the AAU and the Secretary-General, I would like to welcome you to this important meeting and thank the SAPAM programme of ECA for financially making it possible for it to take place as well as the university of Swaziland for hosting it and for their hospitality.

I wish you successful deliberations.

Statement by Prof. Lydia P. Makhúbu

On behalf of the University of Swaziland, I am honoured to welcome you to the **Workshop on Strengthening the Viability of the African University In the 1990's and Beyond**. I wish to pay special tribute to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Association of African Universities (AAU), organizers and co-sponsors of this Workshop. Over the years, these two organizations have arranged similar workshops for African Universities to examine collectively those issues of critical importance to their attempts to serve their countries and the continent. The academic and administrative guidelines which emanated from these meetings have formed a solid foundation for the work of our universities for close to three decades. This has emphasized the fact that, inspite of the great diversity that exists among our countries, there are sufficient common factors to justify meetings such as the one that the Hon. Minister will open today. To small and young institutions like ours, these meetings are important as we strive to take our place among the older academic giants, and to offer our humble contributions to the mainstream of continental educational development.

We are honoured indeed to have the opportunity to co-sponsor this workshop and to welcome you as your hosts.

I have referred to earlier meetings on the role of universities in Africa, held in the 1960's and 1970's. These meetings took place at a very special period in the history of the continent. One might even say that our countries were facing a manpower crisis with many countries having less than ten graduates of any kind after independence. In examining and planning the role of universities, then, an optimistic outlook was adopted, perhaps because it was a period of optimism. The financial arrangements for student fees, allowances, staff development and staff salaries, and the funding of research which were put in place were all appropriate for that period. Our universities grew to become highly respected institutions both at home and abroad because they were fulfilling the mandate of the time. We are now faced with new and

grave situations as a result of the multiple development problems facing this continent. It seems to me that a workshop such as this one should become a forum for reflecting on the new situation and for adjusting the mandate and activities of universities, not because universities have failed but because new challenges and opportunities have arisen. The new situation calls for a review of previous financial arrangements within the institutions and for new relationships with governments and donors. We have entered a new phase in history. It is however my hope, Ladies and Gentlemen, that as we reflect upon the new challenges and as we search for alternative income generating and financing mechanisms, the traditional activities of universities i.e. teaching and research will forever be kept in full view. While in developed countries other organizations and institutions are actively involved in training, research and development in many African countries universities may still constitute the main centres for research thought and the generation of new knowledge. Income generation and conserving resources should never be allowed to undermine these traditional functions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been clearing ground for the Honourable Minister of Education to welcome you to the Kingdom. Thank you for your attention.

Statement by Prince Khuzulwandle

On behalf of His Majesty's Government, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Kingdom of Swaziland and to the workshop on **"STRENGTHENING THE VIABILITY OF THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY IN THE 1990'S AND BEYOND"**. Looking at the list of participants, I am impressed with the level of representation of governments and universities at this meeting, a sign that, at least, the key players in higher education are deliberating as partners and not as the adversaries which many people believe them to be.

These joint reflections on the direction that university education should take, by governments, educational institutions, the private sector and donors is long overdue in Africa. The stakes are very high for all. All parties should bring to bear their collective wisdom on the massive challenges that face education in general and higher education in particular.

The economic problems of our countries are well-known. We are facing severe budgetary constraints at a time when society's demand for education is escalating and education is seen as a right to which all children are entitled. Most governments have accepted the principle of universal education although many see this in the context of primary rather than higher education. The reality, however, is that society aspires beyond the primary level and hence the influx of candidates seeking admission to universities already packed to capacity. The consequences of manifold academic and administrative problems are well known to you. The reality, also, is that our countries desperately need high-level manpower to interpret global economic trends, which have far-reaching effects on our fragile economies, and to deal with those factors which have precipitated the economic decline of the past few years. We need educated and enlightened leadership to manage emerging social and political trends in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. Without exaggeration, one can say that universities have a very crucial role to play in African development.

On the other hand, African governments are hard-pressed to evolve balanced views which acknowledge the essential role of universities, while justifying the heavy investments at this difficult period of tight fiscal control. Your workshop and others like it have a responsibility to provide objective assessments of the situation and to make recommendations which will appeal to all concerned.

The brain drain which many universities are experiencing, the erosion of teaching and research, the over-populated classrooms and residences all undermine the contribution that we expect universities to make. But solutions must be found. It is my hope that this workshop will address very seriously the sensitive topic of cost sharing and come out with recommendations which will offer governments a way forward without causing undue hardships to the majority of those who genuinely need help.

I look forward to seeing the results of your deliberations. But I hope that while you are here in Swaziland you will be able to take time off to see something of the beauty of our country. Do enjoy your stay with us.

Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to Swaziland.

Thank you.

ANNEX II

**Programme of the Senior Policy Workshop on the Theme
"Strengthening the Viability the African University in the 1990s
and Beyond"
(Ezulwini Valley, Near Mbabane, Swaziland)**

Sunday May 24, 1992**Arrival of Participants****Monday May 25, 1992****09:00 - 10:00****Registration****10:30 - 12:30****Opening Session**

- Welcoming statement by Professor Lydia P. Makhubu, Vice Chancellor, University of Swaziland.
- Welcoming Statement by Dr. Sadig Rasheed, Chief, Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division, ECA.
- Welcoming Statement by Dr. A. M. Satti, Director of Programmes and Cooperation, Association of African Universities.
- Opening address by His Highness, Prince Khuzulwandle, Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

12:30 - 14:30**Lunch Break**

14:30 - 16:00

Session I: Staff Retention

Staff Retention In African Universities

Staff retention at selected African Universities
by Association of African Universities

Staff retention in the Eastern and Southern
Africa Region by Eastern and Southern
African Universities Research Programme by
Prof. Maliyamkono

16:00 - 16:15

Coffee Break

16:15 - 18:30

Discussion

Tuesday May 26, 1992

09:00 - 10:30

**Session II: The Private University in
Africa and Its Role in the 1990s and
Beyond**

"The Role and Viability of the Private
University in Africa: Lessons from the
Sudan" paper by Prof. Abdel Rahman Abu
Zaid.

"Private Initiative and Traditions of State
Control In Higher Education in Sub-Saharan
Africa", paper by the World Bank.

"The Private University in Africa: the
Experience of Ahfad Women's College",
paper by Dr. Gasim Badri

10:30 - 10:45

Coffee Break

10:45 - 13:00

Discussion

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch Break

14:30 - 16:30 Session III: Cost Recovery Schemes

- "Cost Recovery Schemes: The Experiences of Universities in Eastern and Southern Africa", paper by Prof. Maliyamkono
- Presentation of Country Experiences

16:30 - 16:45 Coffee Break

16:45 - 18:30 Discussion

Wednesday May 27, 1992

09:00 - 10:30 Working Groups

10:30 - 10:45 Coffee Break

10:45 - 13:00 Working Groups

13:00 - 14:30 Lunch Break

14:30 - 16:00 Working Groups

16:00 - 16:15 Coffee Break

16:15 - 18:00 Working Groups

Thursday May 28, 1992

09:00 - 10:30 Preparation of the Reports of the Working Group

10:30 - 10:45 Coffee Break

10:45 - 13:00 Report Preparation Continues

- 13:00 - 14:30 Lunch Break
- 14:30 - 16:30 Presentation and Consideration of the
Reports of the Working Group meetings.
- 16:30 - 16:45 Coffee Break
- 16:45 - 18:00 Discussion on Group Reports

Friday May 29, 1992

- 09:00 - 14:00 Excursion/free for participants
- 16:00 - 19:00 Consideration and Adoption of the
Report of the Workshop.
- 19:00 - 19:30 Closure of Workshop

Saturday May 30, 1992

Departure of Participants

ANNEX III

List of Papers

1. Sawyerr, Akilagpa, The Student Loans Scheme: Two Decades of Experience in Ghana.
2. Molokomme. A. Lesiba, Staff Retention at Selected African Universities.
3. Maliyamkono T.L., University Cost Recovery Schemes.
4. Abu Zayd, A., The Private Universities in Africa: What Lessons and Role in the 1990s and Beyond.
5. Badri, Gasim, The Private University in Africa: The Experience of Ahfad University College for Women.
6. Eiseman, Thomas, Private Initiatives and Traditions of State Control in Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. World Bank Working Paper.
7. Papers reflecting university-specific experiences were presented by:
 - University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
 - University of Ghana
 - University of Khartoum, Sudan
 - University of Malawi
 - University of Nairobi, Kenya
 - University of Swaziland
 - University of Zimbabwe
 - Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia
 - Makerere University, Uganda
 - National University of Lesotho
 - Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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SAPAM Publications*

1. *Entrepreneurship Development in Africa: Proceedings of a Senior Policy Seminar on an Enabling Environment for Enhancing Entrepreneurship in the Private and Public Sectors in Africa.*
2. *Improving the Performance of Public Enterprises in Africa: Report of a Senior Policy workshop.*
3. *Mobilizing the Informal Sector and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) for African Economic Recovery and Development: Policy and Management Issues.*
4. *Improving the Performance of Public Enterprise Management in Africa: Lessons from Country Experiences.*
5. *Ethics and Accountability in African Public Services.*
6. *Improving Productivity in African Public Services.*
7. *Mobilization and Management of Financial Resources in African Universities.*

* The above publications are available in English. Requests for further information about SAPAM programmes and publications should be addressed to:

The Chief
Public Administration, Human Resources and Social
Development Division,
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P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Fax No. (251) (1) 514416

SAPAM

SAPAM stands for the Special Action Programme for Administration and Management in Africa. **SAPAM** is a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-funded Regional project being executed by the UN Economic Commission for Africa. **SAPAM** operates under the aegis of the Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Africa.

SAPAM Regional Project began operation in March 1990 and has the following objectives:

- To collect, review, evaluate and disseminate information on a regular basis on the status of development, administration and finance in Africa (e.g. size and trends in public sector employment, budget impact, progress in decentralization and administrative reform).
- To improve efficiency and accountability in the public service through regional seminars and workshops for senior policy makers and managers in critical areas of development administration (administrative reform, public service, efficiency and productivity, human and financial resources management).
- To examine public enterprise management performance issues through case studies and to establish guidelines for the assessment of public enterprise structure, productivity and efficiency.
- To assess the role of university based administrative management training units and institutes to design development oriented training of public administration and management programmes for policy analysis and research and to facilitate TCDS arrangements between institutions, for more relevant content and structure of training programmes.
- To establish a dialogue with professional association (e.g. accountants, economists, administrators) for assessing new concepts and approaches to administration and management.

The main vehicles for fulfilling these objectives will be seminars, workshops and conferences which will involve participation by senior policy makers in African governments, universities, public enterprises and the private sector. Technical publications embodying the findings and recommendations of the various studies envisaged in the project will be issued and circulated to managers and organizations in the African public and private sectors.