Association
of African Universities

AAU Strategic Plan
2003-2010

Accra, Ghana

ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

STRATEGIC PLAN
2003-2010

2003
Accra, Ghana

CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAU	Association of African Universities
AArU	Association of Arab Universities
ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
ADB	African Development Bank
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AU	African Union
AUF	Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie
CAMES	Conseil Africain et Malgache de l'Enseignement Supérieur
COREVIP	Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAU	International Association of Universities
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	Organization of African Unity
SADC	Southern African Development Community
Sida/SAREC	Swedish International Development Agency/Department for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries
SUMA	Senior University Management
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WGHE	Working Group on Higher Education
WTO	World Trade Organization

FOREWORD

This plan is the collective vision of the Association of African Universities. It seeks to transform the Association into a true association of choice for African higher education institutions as it will enable the Association to dynamically and effectively fulfill its core mission of networking higher education institutions in Africa in the pursuit of common objectives of achieving their main function of knowledge generation and dissemination and contribution to Africa's development. The plan is the result of an initiative taken by the Secretariat, with active involvement and support of the Executive Board and the Association's stakeholders. The plan was reviewed and endorsed by the Conference of Rectors, Vice Chancellors and Presidents (COREVIP) in March 2003. It is my hope that the active involvement of so many of our stakeholders will translate into support for its implementation. On behalf of the AAU, I wish to thank all stakeholders for making the preparation of this first Strategic Plan document possible. I would like to thank the staff of the Secretariat and all those who contributed in diverse ways to the preparation of the Plan, particularly the countries which hosted and facilitated the various meetings during the development stages of the Plan, namely, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Namibia and Mauritius.

I wish to make a special appeal to our governments, stakeholders, donors, and well-wishers, to provide the moral and material support that we need to realize the vision and goals articulated in the Plan.

President

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.   The Association of African Universities

The Association of African Universities (AAU), founded with an initial membership of 34 public universities on November 12, 1967 in Rabat, Morocco, serves as the apex organization and principal forum for consultation, exchange of information and cooperation among higher education institutions (HEIs) in Africa. The AAU, which has its headquarters in Accra, Ghana, has grown in membership to 177 as of November 2003.

In February 2001, the Association adopted the Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium at its 10th General Conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Following this and other developments on the continent, especially the establishment of the African Union (AU), and the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the AAU aspires to become a "catalyst for analytical thinking" for the continent's development, especially in higher education policy development and research.

COREVIP 2003

2.   State of Higher Education in Africa

African higher education has been at a critical juncture since the 1980s as a result of economic austerity and benign neglect in most countries. The inadequacy of funding combined with an enrolment explosion resulted in a reduction in the capacity of most African universities to provide for effective research and learning, and a general drop in the quality of higher education in Africa.

Over the period, global trends as well as political and other challenges at the national and continental levels have heightened the significance of knowledge and knowledge institutions in the stability and development of Africa. Further,

the current wave of democratization and continental self-reliance and cooperation have improved the environment for critical enquiry and brought to prominence the need for greater cooperation and self-reliance among African higher education institutions. Finally, African governments have re-focused on higher education, even as external donors 'rediscovered' it, while universities have responded to the challenges by a variety of innovations and coping strategies.

3.   The AAU's Role

Over the years the AAU has gained credibility among its member institutions, African governments, donor partners and the higher education community globally. It enjoys a unique capacity for convening the vast majority of the African higher education community to reflect and consult on key issues affecting education in Africa, and for promoting cooperation and collaboration among its member institutions.

A critical diagnosis of the mandate, functions and performance of the governance and management structures of the Association, undertaken as part of the strategic planning process, has provided an opportunity for members to review the Association's performance, the identification of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Among its strengths are the fact that its membership is diverse and truly continental – drawn from all parts of the continent, and from all the major language and educational traditions. This gives the Association a unique capacity to coordinate activities and network institutions at the continental level, as well as to help fashion a common vision for African higher education. In addition, it has demonstrated the institutional capacity for developing and managing programs and providing services to its members. Major weaknesses include the absence of a coherent strategy and long-term vision, a staff quality deficit, as well as over-dependence on external donors. The opportunities opened for the Association include increasing private sector involvement in higher education, developments in information and communication technologies for improved networking, the increasing recognition of the role of higher education in development, and the renewed drive for stronger regional cooperation. To realize these, the AAU needs to deal with the fact of its reduced international visibility and loss of the confidence of some key stakeholders, as well as high expectations and demands from other stakeholders, not matched by commensurate resource support.

Taking account of all these factors and the established regional and international

relationships, this Strategic Plan builds on the AAU's competitive advantage as the only continental body of higher education institutions in Africa to provide sustainable and effective support to member institutions in their role as knowledge institutions, and to promote collective initiatives and positions on matters of common policy interest.

Against this background, the VISION, MISSION, and GOALS of the Association have been formulated as follows:

4. Mission

The *Mission* of the AAU is to raise the quality of higher education in Africa and strengthen its contribution to African development by fostering collaboration among its member institutions; by providing support to their core functions of teaching, learning, research and community engagement; and by facilitating critical reflection on, and consensus-building around, issues affecting higher education and the development of Africa.

Signing of MOU with partners, 2003

5. Vision

Our *Vision* is to maintain the AAU as the representative voice of the African higher education community both within and outside Africa.

6. Core Values and Principles

We shall uphold the following *Values* and *Principles*, which shall inform all our strategies, programs and activities:

- Academic freedom;
- Respect diversity and the universality of knowledge;
- Accountability;
- Excellence in service and delivery.

7.   Goals

The main *Goals* of the AAU are:

i) Effective support for African higher education institutions in their core functions of teaching, learning, research and service to their communities;

ii) Enhanced impact of the African higher education community and its institutions on national, regional and global policy dialogue; and

iii) Efficient management of the AAU, with sound program implementation capacity and a secure resource base.

8.   Strategic Objectives

To achieve these goals the AAU has set itself the following eight *Strategic Objectives (SO)*:

SO-1:   Promote and facilitate networking, collaboration, and experience sharing in teaching, learning and research;

SO-2:   Improve leadership, institutional management and the policy environment of African higher education;

SO-3:   Empower AAU members to address developmental challenges, and become an effective voice in national, continental and global bodies;

SO-4:   Facilitate mutually beneficial interaction between member institutions and the external academic and other communities;

SO-5:   Provide effective representation of the African higher education community in regional and international affairs;

SO-6:   Improve the governance and organizational framework of the Association;

SO-7:   Raise the efficiency and effectiveness of Secretariat;

SO-8:   Provide the Secretariat with a secure and adequate resource base for the pursuit of Association goals.

9.   Implementation

Programs and activities under the Strategic Plan will be developed and implemented in a series of Rolling Plans to be monitored by the governing bodies of the Association. Given the relative decline in program development and delivery capacity of the Association in recent years, the immediate priority of the Strategic Plan is the intensification of the on-going process for the strengthening of governance and management, as well as program development and delivery capacity. The Plan is, therefore, to be implemented in two phases. The **first phase** (August 2003 - December 2004) will focus on the restructuring and strengthening of the Secretariat and the rationalization of the governance arrangements. The **second phase** (January 2005 – December 2010) will see the implementation of a full set of programs and activities developed in accordance with the Strategic Objectives and approved by the General Conference in February 2005.

10.   Transitional Measures

During **the first phase**, and as a transitional measure, the under-listed programs and activities will be implemented, with appropriate adjustments, in line with the indicated Objectives of the Plan:

- **Academic Mobility**: To foster inter-university co-operation through exchanges of staff and students;

- **Regional Networks for Training and Research**: To facilitate the establishment of regional networks on selected themes;

- **Establishment, Management and Dissemination of Information Resources on African HE**: to improve electronic access to the work of African graduate scholarship in and outside the continent;

- **ICT Policy Development**: To assist member institutions formulate and implement sound ICT policies;

- **Quality Assurance Initiative**: To help member institutions develop and implement systems of quality assurance;

- **Higher Education Research and Policy Coordination**: To strengthen the capacity of African institutions and individuals in higher education research and training, and to contribute to the improvement of higher education policy;

- **Leadership and Management Training for Senior University Leaders and Managers**: To provide leadership and management skills training for university leaders and managers;

- **Special Issues Workshops/Conferences**: To promote dissemination of research and policy material on higher education issues;

- **HIV/AIDS Awareness and Prevention**: To support member institutions to develop policies for the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS within their institutions, and contribute to social prevention and management;

- **Women in African Tertiary Institutions**: To sensitize and create awareness on gender issues within member institutions;

- **Studies on Special Issues**: To cater for studies of emerging issues, such as the implications of trans-border provision for African Higher Education;

- **Coordination of ADEA/WGHE**;

- **Information Exchange** through the AAU Website (www.aau.org), AAU Newsletter and other publications;

HIV/AIDS Toolkit

- **NEPAD Support Program and WTO/GATS Advocacy Campaign and Conference**;

- **Restructuring and Revitalization of AAU**: To improve governance and enhance staff qualifications and skills at the Secretariat; and

- **Resource Mobilization**: To develop and implement strategy for enhancing and diversifying sources of AAU funding.
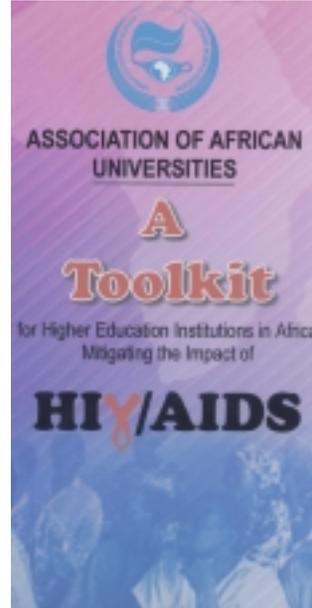
I. Background and Planning Process

The Association of African Universities (AAU) is the apex organization and principal forum for consultation, exchange of information and cooperation among higher education institutions in Africa. It is mandated by its Constitution to:

- Promote interchange and co-operation among universities in Africa;

- Collect, classify and disseminate information on higher education and research, particularly in Africa;

- Promote co-operation among universities in curriculum development and in the determination of equivalence of degrees;

- Encourage increased contacts between its members and the international academic world;

- Study and make known the educational and related needs of African universities and, as far as practicable, co-ordinate the means whereby those needs may be met;

- Encourage the development and wider use of African languages; and

- Organize, encourage and support seminars and conferences between African academics, administrators and others dealing with higher education in Africa.

The AAU was founded on November 12, 1967 in Rabat, Morocco, following the recommendations of the conference on "The Future of Higher Education in Africa" (Antananarivo, Madagascar, September 1962), held under the auspices of UNESCO, and the meeting of the heads of higher education institutions in Africa (Khartoum, Sudan, 1963). At the founding conference in Morocco, a constitution was adopted, an executive board elected, and officers appointed. The Association set up its headquarters in Accra, Ghana, and has since worked in three languages: English, French and Arabic.

Starting with a membership of 34 public universities, the Association has since grown into a body of 177 higher education institutions, public and private, drawn from 44 African countries. It provides a forum for reflection, consultation, networking, cooperation and collaboration on issues and activities of mutual interest. Over the years, this forum has facilitated a constant review of the Association's own performance and that of its member institutions.

Higher education has experienced serious setbacks in virtually all African countries, particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s when most African countries adopted structural adjustment programs that led to a contraction of public expenditure on social services. At the same time, until late in the 1990s, the World Bank and other donor agencies encouraged African governments to focus on basic education in preference to tertiary education and research. The inadequacy of funding had a negative impact on the development of tertiary institutions and research infrastructure, and adversely affected the conditions of service for university staff, contributing to the persistent brain drain.

At its 10th General Conference held in Nairobi in February 2001, the Association adopted the Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium, revisiting the catalytic role of higher education institutions in the generation, acquisition and application of knowledge and in the training of high-level knowledge workers. Following this, and in conformity with the Dakar "Declaration and Action Plan on Higher Education in Africa" (1998), the "World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century" (1999), the establishment of the African Union (AU), and the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the AAU aspires to play the strategic role of a "catalyst for analytical thinking" for the continent's development, especially in higher education policy development and research. In this context, the opportunities and needs of the continent provide the AAU and its member institutions with the impetus to redefine their mission, vision, role and strategies. This Strategic Plan, therefore, lays the basis for the Association to provide sustainable and effective support to member institutions in their role as the knowledge institutions of the continent, and for the elaboration of collective initiatives and positions on matters of common policy interest.

President Arap Moi at
10th General Conference, 2001

The development of this Strategic Plan began in 1999. After a lull, a Planning Committee was set up by the Executive Board of the Association in 2001 to bring the process to a conclusion. A draft Plan was presented at a special Board meeting convened in Sebha, Libya, in January 2002 with representatives from member institutions and the Secretariat in attendance. The outcome of this meeting formed the basis for a second draft that was presented at a regional

workshop held in Tripoli, Libya, in May 2002. This forum involved more representatives of member institutions, and produced yet another draft which was presented at the ordinary session of the Executive Board in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in July 2002. The final draft, after approval by the Board, was subsequently adopted by the Conference of Rectors, Vice Chancellors and Presidents (COREVIP), held in Mauritius in 2003, subject to a few amendments to be effected by the Board.

II. Introduction

1. The State of Higher Education in Africa

African higher education and its institutions are at a crossroads after two decades of economic austerity and benign neglect. Recent attempts at the national and continental levels to re-energize and empower the continent, coinciding with the dawn of a new Millennium, make this an opportune time for reflecting on new directions for policy and practice in African higher education. There are differences of culture and orientation among African higher education institutions according to their location in countries where Arabic, English, French or Portuguese are spoken. In recognition of this diversity the AAU is seeking deeper collaboration with sister organizations such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), Conseil Africain et Malgache de l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Association of Arab Universities (AArU), and the International Association of Universities (IAU).

Despite this diversity, and with notable exceptions, higher education in Africa has been characterized by:

- High expectations and demand from key stakeholders, not matched by commensurate resource support;

- A small number of universities per country;

- Low enrolment ratios at all levels, despite an enrolment explosion in the last 20 years that has stretched institutional facilities and capacities to breaking point;

- A small but rapidly increasing number of private universities;

- Low tertiary education expenditure per person, but very high relative to gross national product (GNP) per capita;

- Poor infrastructure, especially in relation to information and communication technologies, and consequent weak links among African HEIs on one hand, and with the global knowledge system, on the other;

- Ageing faculty, lack of incentives to attract younger staff and continued brain drain;

- Weak private sector support and undeveloped culture of private contributions to universities;

- Inadequate financial and logistical support from governments;

- Weak linkage between academia and the social and productive sectors of the economy; and

- Weak linkage with and provision of support to national and continental organizations.

2.   Challenges

2.1   *Global Trends*

Global trends are altering conditions and expectations of higher education systems throughout the world. These trends include the rise of the "knowledge society", the increase in the volume and pace of cross-border transactions, the explosion of new information and communication technologies, and the rapid growth and mobility of populations, especially skilled human resources. The central role of knowledge as a critical determinant of development and international competitiveness demands that African higher education institutions play an even more direct role in development than before. Partly in consequence, the quality of teaching and research and the effectiveness of their contribution to policy, production, management and social construction, as well as their cost-effectiveness, are matters of increasing public concern. At the same time, there is persistent pressure for higher education institutions to change from the elite systems of earlier times and open up to wider sections of society.

Globalization is increasing the gap between the rich and the poor, between internet-connected and isolated social groups within countries and across continents. Thus, while opening the door to a highly mobile, highly skilled international elite, globalization, at the same time, shuts out the less skilled and educated that remain locked up in poverty. The most visible symbols and facilitators of globalization have been the rapid development of information and

communication technologies (ICT) and the creation of planetary networks of knowledge generation and dissemination. Knowledge creation and management have become easier with computers, electronic mail and the Internet. Globalization, thus, presents opportunities as well as threats to Africa as to other regions.

The demand for admission into Africa's universities far exceeds their capacity to accommodate and provide for effective learning. Invariably, the largest share of financial resources is allocated to staff emoluments, leading to deteriorating infrastructure as a major obstacle to creating an appropriate learning environment. Besides, the gap between Africa and the industrialized countries in relation to R&D activity continues to grow. Disparities are even wider in relation to the transfer of knowledge to industry and society. In consequence, while knowledge-based societies are taking hold in other regions of the world, Africa continues to lag behind.

2.2 *Political Challenges*

The political climate within which higher education institutions operate in Africa remains a major challenge. Conflicts and wars have bred uncertainty, accelerated the brain drain and disrupted academic work. The continued existence of repressive military and civilian regimes in many countries of Africa, the restriction of freedom of expression, extensive political corruption, personal rule and non-accountability, all combined to constrain the generation, acquisition and application of information and knowledge and set back socio-economic development. This has impacted on African higher education institutions across the continent as sites for free and rigorous pursuit of knowledge and intellectual debate. At the same time the onset of the democratization process in a number of African countries have created a more conducive environment for debate and plurality of ideas and research. For its part, the transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) has prompted renewed hope and created a new framework for addressing the challenges facing Africa. Again, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with its insistence on self-directed development and peer review holds much promise. All these developments have brought to prominence the need for greater cooperation and self-reliance among African higher education institutions in such areas as training and research, academic and student exchanges and harmonized reforms of curricula. To the extent that higher education can play an effective role within the new AU and NEPAD frameworks, the AAU should act as a catalyst.

2.3   Social and Economic Challenges

Africa's population is projected to continue growing at just under 3 per cent a year over the first quarter of this century, while for the rest of the world, including some developing countries, growth rates are expected to decline steadily. That means continued expansion in Africa's youth population and the output of second-cycle institutions. The pressure for access to universities can, therefore, be expected to continue to mount. The situation is complicated by the coincident collapse of national economies -- especially since the late 1970s and 1980s -- and the fiscal austerity imposed by structural adjustment programs, leading to the deterioration in the material conditions and the morale of Africa's higher education institutions. This came at the time of greatest need, as the knowledge society took root elsewhere. By the mid- to late-1990s, it was clear that Africa's higher education institutions were in desperate need of revitalization and redirection. A flurry of reform measures was introduced, in most cases with loans from and under the policy guidance of the World Bank and the donor community. These reforms were characterized at the system level by a variety of measures and structural changes. The key drivers of the process were increased efficiency in the use of resources and the reduction in the unit cost of operation, diversification of funding sources, particularly through cost-recovery from students and their families, and increasing income-generating activities. Also significant was the greater focus on tailoring programs to labor market demand. In some instances, an increase in access to and diversification of the tertiary system, through encouragement of private and non-university provision, were important elements of the reform package. Parallel to economic liberalization has been the opening up of higher education to non-governmental agencies and the promotion of private higher education within the continent. Thus, private institutions can be expected to increase their share of student intake.

GATS Workshop, 2004

While governments are expected to match their renewed interest in higher education with higher levels of funding, the economic situation in many countries does not provide much hope for the foreseeable future. Innovative means of meeting the financial challenges are required, and some are already in

evidence. The AAU could provide leadership through research, information gathering and dissemination among higher education institutions in these new areas, and in training academic leadership to manage change and innovation.

2.4 Technological Challenges

While some higher education institutions, especially in the North and in South Africa, have made progress in adopting ICT to improve learning outcomes, in general, the continent is lagging behind in the global information and technology revolution. Beyond the deficiencies in national ICT provision and policy, higher education institutions that should be at the forefront of Africa's participation in the ICT revolution are, in most instances ill-prepared to play such a leadership role because of the inadequate development of their own information infrastructure. Africa's universities are thus poorly positioned - when compared with their counterparts in Europe, North America and other developing regions, such as East Asia - to take advantage of the global information economy and knowledge systems, and pioneer its expansion in their countries. The development and application of ICT in African higher education institutions therefore becomes crucial and urgent if the continent is to reduce the knowledge, technological, and economic gaps between itself and the rest of the world.

On a positive note, global trends in the application of ICT offer opportunities for transforming the several interconnected functions of universities in Africa. As noted above, higher education institutions in Africa are at different levels of ICT development and require different ICT development strategies. Identifying these different levels and their respective characteristics is a necessary step in establishing appropriate ICT strategies across the continent. For this purpose it is necessary to bring some focus to the critical steps that individual higher education institutions need to take in order to meet the ICT challenge and to harness synergies among themselves. The AAU can play a catalytic role in facilitating the adoption of ICT policies and helping to secure common services and networks among its members, such as greater access to bandwidth.

3. Diversity of Higher Education and AAU Membership

The AAU is currently an association of largely public universities. Many of the increasing number of private universities have joined the Association, or are seeking membership. While the AAU does not have to be a club of all higher education institutions in Africa, or even all the fully fledged universities, the

reality is that only 177 out of nearly 800 university and non-university tertiary institutions in Africa are members. Thus, the growing number and diversity of higher education institutions in Africa offer the opportunity for the AAU to expand its membership, set the pace for accountability and quality assurance, and enhanced membership services.

III. The Strategic Plan 2003-2010

1. Introduction

Since its establishment, the Association has steadily built up its reputation among its members, development partners and the higher education community globally. It currently enjoys a unique capacity for convening its members to reflect and consult on key issues affecting education in Africa and for coordinating activities and programs and promoting cooperation and collaboration among member institutions. In preparation for meeting the new challenges posed by global trends and developments in higher education in Africa, a critical diagnosis of the mandate, functions and performance of the governance and management structures of the Association was undertaken as part of the strategic planning process. The objective of the SWOT analysis was to ensure that the Association remained proactive on the issues affecting higher education in Africa. This process provided an opportunity for members to review the Association's performance, leading to identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) outlined below.

African University Day at UDS, 2003

2. SWOT Analysis
2.1   Strengths

The strengths of the Association lie in:

- Thirty-seven years of organizational experience as the only continental body of higher education institutions in Africa;

- A membership of 177 institutions in all parts of Africa, and from all the major language and education traditions, with growing numbers of new public and private tertiary institutions;

- Support from member institutions as reflected in their willingness to organize and host AAU events;

- Credibility with African governments, continental organizations including the AU and NEPAD, as well as local and international partners;

- Institutional capacity for developing and managing programs and providing membership services;

- Institutional networking capacity for gathering and disseminating higher education information across geographic, political, linguistic and cultural borders; and

- The demand for and impact of its programs and activities.

2.2   Weaknesses

Against these strengths, the Association has to meet the following internal challenges:

- To date, the absence of a coherent strategy and long-term vision;

- Lack of focus and coherence in program work;

- Inadequate staff capacity for delivering on the full mandate;

- Indifferent financial management and reporting to stakeholders;

- Outmoded corporate governance arrangements;

- Apathy on the part of some of the Association's members;

- Inadequate engagement with, and contribution to, continental and international efforts to solve critical problems facing education and development on the continent; and

- Over-dependence on external donors.

2.3   Opportunities

Within the plan period, the Association is committed to seizing the following opportunities:

- The immense social demand for higher education in Africa, and increasing private sector involvement, leading to a growing number of institutions eligible for AAU membership;

- Developments in information and communication technology for improved networking and more rapid response to changing circumstances;

- The positive drive by African governments for stronger regional collaboration and renewed recognition of the role of higher education in development;

- Formation of the African Union and the adoption of the New Program for Africa's Development (NEPAD), highlighting the special role of a continental body such as the Association, with members in all African countries, in coordinating analytical and intellectual support for these initiatives; and

- Renewed interest of Africa's development partners for higher education development in Africa.

2.4   Threats

In the context of developments in Africa and the globalized world, the following pose challenges to the Association and its member institutions:

- Reduced international visibility and confidence of several key stakeholders;

- Weak financial commitment of external partners; and

- High expectations and demand from key stakeholders, not matched by commensurate resource support.

3.   Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Goals

3.1   Our Mission

The Mission of the AAU is to raise the quality of higher education in Africa and strengthen its contribution to African development by fostering cooperation and collaboration among its member institutions; providing support to their core

functions of teaching, learning, research and community engagement; and facilitating critical reflection on, and consensus-building around, issues affecting higher education and the development of Africa.

3.2   Our Vision

Our Vision is to maintain the AAU as the representative voice of the African higher education community.

3.3   Our Core Values and Principles

We shall uphold the following *Values* and *Principles*, which shall inform all our strategies, programs and activities:

- *Academic freedom;*
- *Respect for diversity and the universality of knowledge;*
- *Accountability;*
- *Excellence in service delivery.*

3.4   Our Main Goals

The main *Goals* of the Strategic Plan are:

i)   Support for African higher education institutions in their core functions of teaching, learning, research and service to their communities;

ii) Enhanced impact of the African higher education community and its institutions on national, regional and global policy dialogue; and

iii) Efficient management of the AAU, with sound program implementation capacity and a secure resource base.

4.   Strategic Objectives

Eight *Strategic Objectives* will be advanced during the Plan period. This will be done through the development and implementation of programs and activities in the areas outlined below.

SO-1: *Promote and facilitate networking, collaboration, and experience-sharing in teaching, learning and research*

Program/Activity Areas

Graduation Ceremony of an IFP Fellow, 2002

i)   Promotion of academic mobility – student and staff fellowships and scholarships;

ii) Regional/sub-regional networks for research and teaching;

iii) Establishment, management and dissemination of information resources on HE in Africa;

iv) Facilitation of access to publications and database;

v)   Promotion of quality through sharing of best practice, in partnership with national, regional and international quality assurance (QA) bodies;

vi) Creation of networks of African HEIs in the use and application of ICTs, and negotiation for reduced cost electronic and other resources for HEIs in Africa;

vii) Identification of emerging HE issues (e.g., gender, peace and conflict, HIV/AIDS), and development and implementation of appropriate programs.

SO-2: *Improve leadership, institutional management, and the policy environment of African higher education*

Program/Activity Areas

i)   Coordination of research and dissemination of output on African higher education policy and management;

ii) Providing training in higher education leadership and management, in partnership with regional and national institutions;

iii) Providing consultancy services on higher education policy and management, strategic planning, program evaluation, etc.

SO-3: *Empower AAU members to address developmental challenges, and become an effective voice in national, continental and global bodies*

Program/Activity Areas

i) Convening of standing and ad hoc working parties, technical panels, expert committees, etc., on key issues;

ii) Organizing sensitization/training seminars, workshops, and consultative meetings on key issues, including policy analysis;

iii) Development of database on African expertise, and encouragement of technical consortia, etc.;

Higher Education Training Conference, 2004

iv) Support for linkage with social and productive sectors within country.

SO-4: *Facilitate mutually beneficial interaction between member institutions and the external academic and other communities*

Program/Activity Areas

i) Promotion of South/South and North/South collaboration and networking;

ii) Support for active participation by member institutions in international thematic and professional associations;

iii) Information exchange.

SO-5: *Provide effective representation of African HE community in regional and international affairs*

Program/Activity Areas

i) Active cooperation with AU, NEPAD, ECA and sub-regional bodies in policy development;

ii) Preparation, dissemination and advocacy of policy positions on key HE issues, including funding of higher education, the impact of WTO/GATS on African higher education, etc.;

iii) Development and implementation of AAU corporate marketing strategy.

SO-6: *Improve governance and organizational framework of the Association*

Program/Activity Areas

i) Regular updating of statutory documents and governance processes;

ii) Capacity-building of governing organs and improvement of contact with members;

iii) Development and application of indicators for assessing members' needs;

iv) Development and application of indicators for benchmarking Strategic Plan goal attainment.

SO-7: *Raise the efficiency and effectiveness of Secretariat*

Program/Activity Areas

i) Rationalization of establishment, organization and in-service development;

ii) Upgrading and regular updating of management systems, including financial management and staff skills;

iii) Enhancement of infrastructure and management information systems, including ICT;

iv) Reduction of administrative expenditure as a percentage of overall costs.

SO-8: *Provide the Secretariat with a secure and adequate resource base for pursuit of Association goals*

Program/Activity Areas

i) Development and implementation of a resource mobilization strategy, including membership subscription drive and recovery of arrears, and solicitation for financial support from African governments and enterprises;

ii) Establishment of an Endowment Fund.

IV. Implementation Strategy

Programs and activities under the Strategic Plan will be developed and implemented in a series of Rolling Plans. The implementation of each Plan will

be monitored annually, and adjusted as necessary by the Executive Board. Every other year the Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents (COREVIP) will receive and consider a report on Plan implementation.

Logical Framework

Goals	Strategic Objectives	Program/Activity Areas	Expected Outcome
Goal I: Support for African higher education institutions in their core functions - teaching, learning, research and service to their communities	1. Promote and facilitate *networking, collaboration,* and *experience-sharing* in teaching, learning and research	a) Promotion of academic mobility – student and staff fellowships and scholarships b) Regional/sub-regional networks for research and teaching c) Establishment, management and dissemination of information resources on HE in Africa d) Facilitation of access to publications and databases e) Promotion of quality through sharing of best practice, in partnership with national, regional and international quality assurance (QA) bodies f) Creation of networks of African HEIs in the use and application of ICTs, and negotiation for reduced cost of electronic and other resources for HEIs in Africa	Better pooling of staff and academic resources across institutions Improved access to information and educational resources for member institutions Enhanced educational quality Increased dissemination of African research output Improved policy environment, and more effective leadership of African HEIs Expansion of membership and more active participation in AAU activities Increased visibility of AAU in African HE activities
	2. Improve *leadership, institutional management,* and the *policy environment* of African higher education	a) Coordination of research and dissemination of output on African HE policy and management b) HE leadership and management training, in partnership with regional and national institutions c) Consultancy services on HE policy and management, strategic planning, program evaluation, etc.	

Goals	Strategic Objectives	Program/Activity Areas	Expected Outcome
Goal II: **Enhanced impact of the African higher education community and its institutions on national, regional and global policy dialogue**	3. Empower AAU members to address *developmental challenges*, and become an *effective voice* in national, continental and global bodies	a) Convening of standing & ad hoc working parties, technical panels, expert committees, etc. on key issues b) Sensitisation/training seminars, workshops, & consultative meetings on key issues, including policy analysis c) Development of database on African expertise, and encouragement of technical consortia, etc. d) Support for linkage with social and productive sectors within country e) Identification of emerging HE issues (e.g., gender, peace & conflict, HIV/AIDS), and development and implementation of appropriate programs	AAU recognised as the voice and source of information on African HE African expertise more widely recognised and used Productive links between AAU members and continental institutions, and with the international academic community Active presence of AAU members in regional and international affairs Increased visibility of AAU in African HE activities
	4. Facilitate *mutually beneficial interaction* between member institutions and the external academic and other communities	a) Promotion of South/South and North /South collaboration and networking b) Support for active participation by member institutions in international thematic and professional associations c) Coordination of ADEA/WGHE d) Information exchange	
	5. Provide *effective representation of the African HE community* in regional and international affairs	a) Active cooperation with AU, NEPAD, ECA and sub-regional bodies in policy development b) Preparation, dissemination and advocacy of policy positions on key HE issues, including funding of higher education, the impact of WTO/GATS on African higher education, etc. c) Development and implementation of AAU corporate marketing strategy	

Goals	Strategic Objectives	Program/Activity Areas	Expected Outcome
Goal III: **Efficient management of the AAU, with sound program implementation capacity and a secure resource base**	6. Improve the *governance and organisational framework* of the Association	a) Regular updating of statutory documents and governance processes b) Capacity-development of governing organs and improvement of contact with members c) Development and application of indicators for assessing members' needs d) Development & application of indicators for benchmarking Strategic Plan goal attainment	Effective governance structure and operation Well-resourced, well-equipped, well-run, and responsive Secretariat Stable and diversified funding base Improved service and support to members Increased visibility and relevance of Association to members and other stakeholders Expansion of membership and more active participation in AAU activities Regular payment of subscription by at least 80% of members
	7. Raise the *efficiency and effectiveness* of the Secretariat	a) Rationalisation of establishment, organisation, incentive structure and in-service development b) Upgrading and regular updating of management systems, including financial management, and staff skills c) Enhancement of infrastructure and management information systems, including ICT d) Reduction of administrative expenditure as percentage of overall costs	
	8. Provide the Secretariat with *secure and adequate resource base* for pursuit of Association goals	a) Development and implementation of resource mobilisation strategy, including membership subscription drive and recovery of arrears, solicitation for financial support from African governments and enterprises b) Establishment of an Endowment Fund	

VI.   Transitional Arrangements

Over the last few years, the Association has experienced a relative loss of momentum in its program work, and a loss of international visibility and the confidence of several key donor partners, resulting in declines in the levels of support for its programs and activities, as already noted. Factors accounting for this include the indifferent quality of the Core Program 2001-04 approved at the General Conference in 2001, reduced capacity for project development and promotion, as well as financial management. Weak corporate governance and leadership of the Association compounded the situation.

Against this background of relatively low implementation capacity, the *immediate priority* of the Strategic Plan is the restoration of effective governance and the strengthening of management, program development and delivery capacity. Reflecting this, the Plan will be implemented in two broad phases. The *first phase* (August 2003 – December 2004), marking the transition from the current to the new dispensation, will focus on the restructuring and strengthening of the Secretariat and rationalization of the governance arrangements. During this phase, the Secretariat will be reorganized into operational units and strengthened by the recruitment of a Director of Research and Programs, Head of Communications and Services and Head of Finance, to head the units. Together with the Secretary-General, these senior officers will supervise the development of a full portfolio of programs and activity plans in line with the Strategic Plan objectives for consideration and approval by the General Conference in January 2005. They will also facilitate the transition process from on-going programs and activities to full implementation of the Strategic Plan. The *second phase* (January 2005 – December 2010) will see the implementation of a full set of programs and activities developed in accordance with Plan objectives and to be approved by the General Conference in January 2005.

To that end, as a transitional measure, and to ensure continuity pending the development of new programs, the programs and activities listed below, which are on-going or under development, and which fit within the indicated Objectives, will be implemented with appropriate adjustments.

Transition Programs and Activities

SO-1	Operational Modality	Aim
Promote and facilitate networking, collaboration, and experience-sharing in teaching, learning and research	Fellowships and Scholarships	To enhance student mobility by granting fellowships and scholarships to support students from AAU member institutions who wish to study in an African university outside their country of citizenship or normal residence
	Staff Exchanges	To foster inter-university co-operation through exchange of staff for teaching, research, external examining, etc
	Regional Networks for Training and Research	To facilitate the establishment of regional networks on selected themes (e.g., accounting; human rights; peace and conflict; HIV/AIDS; and science and technology) as a means of promoting inter-university cooperation in graduate training and research
	Establishment, Management and Dissemination of Information Resources on African HE	To improve electronic access to the work of African graduate scholarship in and outside the continent
	ICT Policy Development	To assist member institutions formulate and implement sound ICT policies
	Quality Assurance Initiative	To help member institutions develop and implement systems of quality assurance

SO-2	Operational Modality	Aim
Improve leadership, institutional management, and the policy environment of African higher education	Higher Education Research and Policy Coordination	To strengthen the capacity of African institutions and individuals in higher education research and training, and to contribute to the improvement of higher education policy
	Leadership and Management Training for Senior University Leaders and Managers	To provide leadership and management skills training for university managers
	Special Issues Workshops and Conferences	To promote dissemination of research and policy material on higher education issues
SO-3	**Operational Modality**	**Aim**
Empower AAU members to address developmental challenges, and become an effective voice in national, continental and global bodies	HIV/AIDS Awareness and Prevention	To support members to develop HIV/AIDS policies; to mobilise and deploy the resources necessary to combat the spread of the epidemic in their institutions; and to assist their communities by conducting research, disseminating the results and taking part in national, regional and international HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives. Also sensitisation and training through other AAU activities such as COREVIP, SUMA and the specialised workshops for university leaders

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SO-4	**Operational Modality**	**Aim**
Facilitate mutually beneficial interaction between members and the external academic and other communities	Collaboration with International Agencies	To follow up on existing arrangements for collaboration (MOUs with UNESCO, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, etc.)
	Information Exchange	The AAU Newsletter carries news about African universities and articles on higher education in Africa; the Guide to Higher Education in Africa, which is published every two years, lists African higher education institutions, information about their principal officers and the programmes that they offer; Research Reports, reports on conferences, workshops and seminars conducted by the Association as well as Occasional Papers are published regularly and disseminated to members
	AAU Website (www.aau.org)	A rich Internet resource for all interested in higher education in Africa
	Coordination of WGHE/ADEA	To enhance networking, capacity building ,and innovation in higher education
	International Conferences on topical issues	To create awareness and facilitate experience and information-sharing

SO-5	Operational Modality	Aim
Provide effective representation of the African higher education community in regional and international affairs	NEPAD-support Programme	To give effect to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the AAU and NEPAD in 2003, by the joint-elaboration, fundraising, and implementation of programmes and activities that provide support to the NEPAD Programme of Action
SO-6	**Operational Modality**	**Aim**
Improve governance and organisational framework of the Association	Review of AAU Constitution and Bye-Laws	To give effect to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the AAU and NEPAD in 2003, by the joint-elaboration, fundraising, and implementation of programmes and activities that provide support to the NEPAD Programme of Action
SO-7	**Operational Modality**	**Aim**
Raise efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat	Restructuring of AAU Secretariat and enhancement of staff qualifications and skills	To enhance productivity and management capacity
	Upgrading of Financial Management system and skills	To ensure financial accountability, efficiency and control
	Modernisation of ICT Infrastructure and in-house skills	To improve in-house capacity for communication and programme support
	Cost-Reduction Measures	To cut administrative expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure

SO-8	Operational Modality	Aim
Provide the Secretariat with secure and adequate resource base for pursuit of Association goals	Resource Mobilisation Strategy	To enhance and diversify sources of AAU resource support – to be elaborated and implemented at start of Plan period