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A Tribute to Madam Minister

I had always known Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili as Madam Due Process and later; a woman as Solid as the Rock at the helm of affairs in the then Ministry of Solid Minerals and Development. The reform activities were at their peak with Madam Minister passionately driving them, when I assumed office as Executive Secretary, NUC. Madam Minister's unique approach involved consultation, consensus building and team work; all necessary ingredients for any successful reform agenda.

As a reform-minded fellow, I easily became one of her Twelve Apostles but I neither betrayed nor denied her. I had frequent interactions with Madam Minister with the attendant expanded responsibilities.

During the course of these interactions, she demonstrated outstanding intellect, resourcefulness, amazing capacity and energy for work which she brought to bear on the successful implementation of programmes too numerous to mention.

Madam Minister is a person who shows profound interest and exhibits great passion in whatever she believes in with sincerity of purpose and honesty of intention. She believes in herself and believes in others.

Education now has hope and we can dream dreams that someday the Nigerian child will not be at a disadvantage in the global environment. Thanks to Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili, a catalyst of change, an orator, a pragmatist, a loving wife and mother, with a deep sense of humour.



Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili
Minister of Education

Great things happen when Oby mixes with people. Unforgettable, that is what you are. We will hold your dreams for Education.

God bless and keep you.



Professor Julius A. Okojie
Executive Secretary, NUC

AAU Holds Leadership Development Workshop (LEDEV)

*T*he Association of African Universities (AAU) has announced the launch of a Leadership Development Workshop (LEDEV) series. This is a follow-up to the Association's highly successful Senior University Management Workshop (SUMA) series, which ran from 1992 to 2002. The series forms part of the AAU Capacity Development Project for the Revitalization of African Higher Education Institutions (AAU-CADRE), funded by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).

The broad aim of LEDEV is to enhance the leadership skills of university leaders, particularly in the promotion of innovation and the management of change. This will be achieved through intensive participant interaction over carefully selected case studies and other material and lead lectures in a process facilitated by eminent Resources Persons.

LEDEV is intended for:

- Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, Presidents and Principals
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Rectors and Vice-Presidents,
- Directors of Institutes, Deans of Faculties
- Members of University Councils
- Heads and Deputy Heads of Higher Education Regulatory Agencies

The first Workshop, which will be in English, is planned for August 13 – 20, 2007. It will be hosted by the University of Namibia, in Windhoek, Namibia.

Previous SUMA workshops were held in Harare, Zimbabwe (1991); Bujumbura, Burundi (1992); Arusha, Tanzania (1994); Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire (1995); Cape Town, South Africa

(1997), Abuja, Nigeria (1999); Gaborone, Botswana (2000); Cairo, Egypt (2001) and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (2002).

The main themes of LEDEV will be selected from the following:

- Financial Management: resource mobilization and allocation; financial analysis, reporting and performance monitoring
- Institutional Culture, Gender and Change
- Conflict Management and Resolution
- Quality Assurance
- University leadership and the fight against HIV/AIDS
- ICT and Research and Education Networking

Interested participants are to indicate on their application forms the topics they would like emphasized in the finalization of the curriculum. Participants will be eligible for funding to undertake an attachment programme at a high-performing higher education institution.

To ensure effective interaction and exchange, the number of participants is limited to a maximum of 30, selected on the principle of “first come, first served”. However, preference will be given to persons holding the positions listed below, in universities and equivalent institutions:

Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, President
Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Deputy Rector/Vice-President,
Dean/Director

New Vice-Chancellors, Rectors and Presidents will find this workshop particularly helpful and will be given special preference.

Registration Fee

A Registration fee of US\$500.00 is payable on registration for instruction, workshop facilities and material, tea/coffee, light lunch, etc. Registration cannot be confirmed until receipt of the registration fee is acknowledged by the AAU. If paid before June 30, 2007, the fee is reduced to US\$425.00. All other expenses – travel, accommodation, subsistence, etc – are to be borne by participants.

Funds are available for a subsidy for participants on the basis of proven need.

To register please complete the online form at <http://www.aau.org/ledev/register.php>.

For additional information please contact:

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Higher Education for Human and Social Development. Editorial line for the forthcoming GUNI Higher Education in the World Report

Next year's Report will look into the role of higher education and higher education institutions and their contribution to human and social development in the context of globalization. This is a particularly important subject for GUNI, not only because it has a direct bearing on its commitment to the agreements undertaken in the Action Plan of the 1998 International Conference on Higher Education in Paris, but also because it is the backdrop to a reappraisal of the role of higher education in the world and to an analysis of its impact on economies, politics, societies, cultures and human development. We wish to provide a space for debate, proposals and analysis with regard to the role of knowledge in our society, in which we consider what knowledge for what society and how universities define their role in this regard.

This editorial line is the starting point on a journey of reflection involving over 40 authors who have different areas of expertise, approaches and backgrounds.

The role of higher education (HE) in today's world is immense, complex, and vital. A wide range of challenges and possibilities are emerging, with political, economic and social implications. Perhaps most significant are the challenges associated with shifting perspectives on knowledge itself, which are influencing strongly the role and the responsibility of the university in society.



The **role of higher education institutions** (HEIs) has been seen to change over time from preservers of culturally revered forms of knowledge, through producers of skilled labour associated with a manpower planning approach, to a more recent perception as agents of social change and development.

The most explicit role they have been allocated is the production of highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic needs. But during periods of social transformation – which may certainly have at their heart far-reaching changes in the economy – universities may play no less an important role in helping to build new institutions of civil society, in encouraging and facilitating new cultural values, and in training and socialising members of new social elites (1).

Social Responsibility of Higher Education

As centres of training and knowledge production as well as transmission, HEIs are well positioned to link **the local and the global**. This gives them considerable access to and influence over change processes in many societies, and may enhance their potential to contribute to human and social development. They are therefore called upon to play a **fundamental role in building society**.

Higher education is responsible for training the professionals who, in the course of their careers, attain the **positions of greatest responsibility** and power in society and the labour market. The decisions of professionals throughout the world, trained in universities, can make a decisive contribution to the way life develops on this planet. This decision-making can take place through approaches that are either positive or negative for the global progress of humankind and societies, in both developed and developing countries. Higher education, therefore, plays a decisive and fundamental role in terms of the teaching content, values and skills it incorporates.

The implications for education of the main trends in information and knowledge are enormous. From a *knowledge society* perspective, education will play a vital role in the sharing, application and creation of knowledge in a globalizing world. Higher education and universities in particular will, it is claimed, “fuel the driving forces of the **transformation towards a global knowledge society**” and have “a certain capacity to steer and eventually to correct the direction of trends within globalization” (2).

In other cases, however, HEIs may be perceived as purveyors of information and propagators of knowledge that fit within existing paradigms, these paradigms themselves having become unreliable and open to question. Universities, whose existence is justified in terms of their contribution to learning, may become weighed down by inertia, unable to learn themselves, or to support the learning of others.

As HEIs are institutions responsible for creating and spreading knowledge, and thus contributing to solutions to global problems, the **relationship between scientific research and political decision-making** needs to be explored and analysed. The role of science and technology to serve political decision-making for the collective well-being is a neglected subject that higher education should also address.

Where is Development Heading?

An overarching trend is that of globalisation, and the move towards a global economy, accompanied by a political transition from national to international organisations. Such movement is leading to an increasing debate over the **notion of development**, which now is in a state of constant flux. Hotly debated over decades, and with origins in the field of biology, development has been equated by many with global economic growth which would result in all peoples of the world achieving economic parity with those living in the “developed” nations. Over time, “human development” has, however, acquired more complex meanings. The UNDP states:

Human development is about much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value. And it is thus about much more than economic growth, which is only a means - if a very important one - of enlarging people's choices...Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities —the range of things that people can do or be in life. The most basic capabilities for human development are to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community. Without these, many choices are simply not available, and many opportunities in life remain inaccessible (UNDP website, accessed 2006).

Voices are now being raised, some from within the universities themselves, warning that the models that have guided development on Earth over the last century are now **exhausted**. Concepts are appearing that appeal to the need to rethink the current development paradigm and our **collective social values**. The incorporation of new contents that can equip people with new tools more suited to the context in which they carry out their professions is unavoidable. Proposing individual and collective responsibility in professional decision-

making within new global ethical paradigms will be a subject for the immediate future. **Higher-education policies cannot remain distant from such an urgent demand.**

Such a **shift in paradigm**, reflected in policies, is a laudable goal, and a number of well-known global frameworks and initiatives aim to support its achievement, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Kyoto Protocol, Education for All, Food for All, the UNESCO Decade for Sustainable Development. These frameworks do not provide a guarantee of positive change, however, as evidenced by slow progress, or an absence of it, towards some of the targets enshrined within them. Progress is complicated by a wide range of variables that influence the process of human development, regardless of the goals and targets that are set.

The Challenge Facing Higher Education

If universities and HEIs are to support processes of human development and positive social change, in addition to continuing their role as generators of knowledge, then **we need to go beyond narrow conceptions of knowledge**. There is a need for a real **engagement** between universities and society, and this engagement may well extend far beyond national boundaries. The nature of such engagement is one that needs to be debated and deliberated intensively, drawing on real examples, practices and experiences. There is a need also to understand the role that universities will play through this engagement, particularly in the ways that they engage with citizens – both individuals and collectives. This may be achieved in part by the **forging of new relationships by universities and the emergence of networks** that ensure a relevance of higher education “for the promotion of a healthy social and political climate within a country along with economic and cultural development” (3).

We therefore accept that **universities can play an active role** in debate and public and private action by generating responses to the transformations in our societies from an innovative perspective. **This is a crucial moment to revisit the role of higher education, starting with the present and the past, to project visions for the future.**

GUNI Editorial Team

Higher Education in the World Series

April 2007

Notes

(1) Brennan J. and Y. Lebeau (2002), *The role of universities in the transformation of societies. An international research project*, paper presented at the CHER 15th Annual Conference, 5-7 September 2002, Vienna, Austria.

(2) Van Damme, D. (2002), *Outlooks for the International Higher Education Community in Constructing the Global Knowledge Society*. Paper presented at the First Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education. UNESCO, Paris. 17-18 October 2002

(3) UNESCO (2005), *Towards Knowledge Societies*. Paris: UNESCO

Source: "GUNI" <newsletter@guni-rmies.net>

NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION



Refund of Post-UME Screening Fees

- 1.0 The National Universities Commission (NUC) had in an earlier advertorial informed the universities of the following Government policies on the Post-UME screening exercise:
 - a. The screening exercise should not involve the administration of any formal text or examination;
 - b. It should be at no cost to parents and their wards;
 - c. For those who had concluded the exercise, all fees collected in respect of the exercise must be refunded to candidates
 - d. A comprehensive report on the post UME screening exercise must be forwarded to the Executive Secretary National Universities Commission, Abuja.
- 2.0 NUC has received the reports from only a few universities
- 3.0 To reassure all stakeholders of Government's concern on the matter, the Minister of Education has further directed that the issue of refund of the post-UME fees be addressed soonest.
- 4.0 Consequently, the NUC invites all candidates that paid any fee for the post-UME screening exercise to visit the NUC website (www.nucnigeria.info) within two (2) weeks from the date of this advertisement to provide the relevant information that will be collated and cross-checked with the universities submissions/reports before such refunds can be made.
- 5.0 Candidates should log on to the NUC site and click on the link to the post-UME refunds on the top right side of the banner on the home page.

SIGNED
PROFESSOR JULIUS A. OKOJIE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Happy Workers' Day

Monday Bulletin wishes all staff of the National Universities Commission a happy Workers' Day. We should seize the opportunity of this year's May Day to renew our commitment to excellent service to our motherland. Happy May Day!

Best wishes for the week.