ASSURING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN AFRICA BY 2020:
Prioritizing Action, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships
April 1–3, 2004, Kampala, Uganda

SUMMARY NOTE

Parallel Session: **Implementing Action in Key Areas: Building Human Capacity**

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Title: **How to Improve Quality of and Access to Higher Education in Africa**

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Introduction
- The need for HE for national development.
- The state of HE in Africa.

Access to higher education
- Poverty status — many people cannot afford the financial demands for HE, and because of household poverty, HE has high opportunity cost for many people (the households cannot afford the foregone income during the period of studies) — provide scholarships for needy and bright students.
- HIV/AIDS — reducing the pool of students that can be admitted and teachers in the HE institutions — target secondary schools and universities for HIV/AIDS education and control programs.
- Low availability of HE institutions — national policy on education not to relegate HE to the background.
- Enrollment skewed towards males — affirmative action for females needed.
- Inability of the handicapped persons to pursue HE because of physical access of facilities — all buildings to be made handicapped accessible.
- Low enrollments in the sciences — demystify science and provide facilities (laboratories and equipment for science education).
- Low enrollments in postgraduate programs — expansion in graduate programs needed to assist in undergraduate teaching and examining and faculty research. A pool of graduate students can serve as supply point for new faculty to replace the ageing faculty.
- Distance education — to ease the pressure on facilities and enable people to study at remote places and at their own pace.
- Encourage the establishment of private HE institutions to ease the pressure on public institutions.
- Set up a web site that is maintained from time to time and provides information about the institution for prospective applicants.

Quality of Higher Education
- Increasing enrollment without commensurate increase in resources puts pressure on available facilities — expand facilities so that the institutions can admit more candidates. Opening more institutions may not help since there may not be enough teachers for all of them. Uphold high level of quality in existing institutions before establishing new ones.

- Falling government subvention in real terms — Diversify funding sources to include:
  - Individuals and firms,
  - Student's fees (supported by scholarships),
  - Attract foreign students who may pay higher fees than local students,
  - International donor agencies,
  - Compete for research grants, and
  - Expand internally generated funds by the institution.
- Concentrate on core business of HE.
- Implement cost reducing measures (in procurement and use of resources) and institute prudent financial management strategies.
- Pursue transparency in the admission process guided by laid down procedures.
- Provide conducive teaching and learning environment:
  - Spacious lecture halls with appropriate teaching aids,
  - Availability of ICT, and
  - Libraries with adequate collections in paper and electronic mode and possibility of accessing from a remote location.
- Revise curricula to meet changing needs of society and national priorities (put emphasis on science and technology for national development).
- Carry out research to bring out innovations and also to improve curricula and delivery.
- Science and technology programs must have adequate theory and practical components and be problem solving to be useful to society.
- Pursue an aggressive faculty recruitment drive and institute measures for retention of faculty (improve the conditions of service for faculty and create avenues for career progression).
- Institute capacity building (faculty development) for academic staff. Faculty who train abroad should go through sandwich programs to increase the return rate from advanced countries.
- Maintain integrity in the examination process.
- Seek cooperation among African HE institutions — for example, cooperative Master of Arts program in Economics under the auspices of the AERC; continent-wide Master of Arts program in Economic Policy Management sponsored by the African Capacity-Building Foundation.

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