



INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA

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Office of the Executive Secretary



Remarks

Innovation week Tanzania

Arusha, May 18th 2021

- Representative of the Director General Commission of Science and Technology in the United Republic of Tanzania
- Mr. Mike Falke, GIZ, Country Director
- The Vice Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology, Arusha, Prof. Emmanuel J. Luoga
- Members of the academia attending the present workshop
- Members of the Business world in the region
- Innovators connected from throughout the 6 member states of the EAC
- All protocol observed

My name is Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive secretary , IUCEA and I am honored to be part of this workshop hosted by GIZ in the framework of the Innovation week in the United Republic of Tanzania.

IUCEA is in particular interested on the topic of the day: “Innovation Stories of East Africa: A Journey Through the East African Community’s Digital Innovation Ecosystem”.

Let me start by briefly introducing IUCEA to the distinguished participants.

IUCEA is a 51 year old regional academic institution enacted since 2009 by East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)

In May 2017 in Dar es salaam, a common higher education area (20th May 2017) was declared by Heads of State and IUCEA charged with the responsibility of coordinating its operationalization as contribution to the implementation of EAC Common Market Protocol.

Our vision is to become an exemplary Common Higher Education Area for a prosperous and sustainable East African Community. Our core mission being to encourage and develop mutually beneficial collaboration between Member Universities and between them and Governments and other organizations, both public and private.

Currently, IUCEA is coordinating more than 130 member universities within 6 partners states of the EAC both public and Private.

IUCEA is also coordinating the many centers of the Excellence with in the EAC region and beyond.

One of these centers of excellence which is a success story in the EAC region is the Centre of Excellence for ICT in East Africa (CENIT@EA) based at Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology, in Arusha. This center was established thanks to the support of BMZ, together with its implementation partners, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and (GIZ) and IUCEA is one of the implementing partner since 2017.

Through this digital transformation project, CENIT@EA offers a market driven Master's Programme in "Embedded and Mobile Systems" (EMoS) for young tech enthusiasts in the EAC. The Embedded and Mobile Systems is an innovative Programme developed by an East African-German academic consortium led by University of Oldenburg and Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology.

The Second phase of the project of which agreement were signed yesterday will support the project titled Digital Skills for an Innovative East African Industry" (dSkills@EA). The project aims to expand the Embedded and Mobile Systems Programme and trainings in digital skills and will strengthen innovation transfer from universities to the market, support the ideation phase of young innovators in the EAC and connect them to the existing *innovation ecosystem support structure through a regional innovation network* and online platforms.

Ladies and gentlemen,

If today, digitalization is a great opportunity, Innovation is not an option but a must to take advantage of the many digital opportunities to support business and improve the livelihood of the people in the community.

The purpose of innovation is to come up with new ideas and technologies that increase productivity and generate greater output with the same input whereas "Innovation itself is the creation, development and implementation of a new product, process or service, with the aim of improving efficiency, effectiveness or competitive advantage."

The role of university is very critical in the whole process of Digital transformation which is expected to provide a valuable opportunity for core business functions, such as finance and HR, etc. to move away from manual

processes and automate key areas like payroll, enabling leaders to focus on wider business opportunities.

Digital innovation refers to the application of digital technology to solve existing business problems.

In today's evolving marketplace, many businesses recognize that they need to transform, innovate, and adopt new technology in order to stay competitive. It's all about technology, data, process, and organizational change and Universities have a key role to play here.

At the height of the pandemic, universities and companies were forced to innovate - and do so quickly - to continue operations and serve customers. There is a need to anticipate continuously and generational change must change our business behavior keeping in mind that from where we are now, resilience-building technology is the most important.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In May 2019, IUCEA has established regional incubation centers through Eastern and Southern Africa Centers of Excellence (ACEII) funded by the World Bank. The regional incubation centers are helping to build important linkages between academia and industry. Four these incubation centers were awarded US\$250,000 each as seed funds to establish regional incubation centers for Eastern and Southern Africa. IUCEA financed the establishment of 4 incubation centers as follows:

1. Incubation Center for Data Driven Innovation for Food and Nutritional Security at the Nelson Mandela Africa Institutions of Science and Technology, Arusha, Republic of Tanzania;
2. Incubation Center for Manufacturing and Business at Moi University, Republic of Kenya;
3. Incubation Center of Energy and Sustainable Development at the University of Rwanda, Republic of Rwanda; and
4. Incubation Center for Traditional Medicines and Biopharmaceuticals, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Republic of Uganda.

We believe that the some on innovations from your respective countries will find their way in these incubation center hence mutual cooperation for sustainability will be attained

Distinguished participants

Knowledge and experience sharing is the best way to remain up to date.

I am confident that this workshop will contribute towards identifying best practices in digital entrepreneurship and increase awareness of the role of Universities in a sustainable innovation ecosystems as well as fostering the need for collaboration with both public and private sector.

We are expecting the exchange of holistic and modest experiences of innovators. We are expecting the exchange of holistic and modest experiences of innovators. I believe we will all benefit from the regional exchange of knowledge . As we are participating in this workshop today, I would like us all to reflect on how we can capitalize of the digital innovation to meet the needs of the east Africa community. .

While heading to the conclusion of my remarks, I would like to take this opportunity to thank again the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has committed 4,2 Million euros to the East African Community.

My great appreciation to the organisers of this workshop for the success of this virtual workshop and for allowing me to deliver these few brief remarks at the official opening.

I wish you fruitful deliberations not only in innovation stories of the East Africa but also fostering lasting collaboration to learn from best practices which will strengthen innovation transfer and economic development of the global at large.

Thank you

Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY