

*African Research and Innovative Summit*

*Pre-General Conference Activity*

**1 – 2 June 2017**

**CONCEPT PAPER**

**INTRODUCTION**

Research and Innovation in Science, Education, Technology, Health and Agriculture are the driving wheels of every growing economy and also provide the basis for industrialization and sustainable development of society. For every country to develop and tap into all its resources, there is need to focus more on action and applied research with greater partnership between industries, educational institutions and major stakeholders such as governments and policy makers. In Africa, there seems to be a huge gap and disconnection between industries, education sector and policy makers. Industry players practically have little or no control in the training of graduates who end up on the labour market. Industry players also seem not to have any strong partnership with policy makers in formulating national policies for governance. Higher educational institutions are the hub of research outputs and drive the knowledge base of their economies, therefore, a disconnection between researchers and industry leads to stunted growth and development of their economies.

In Ghana and other parts of Africa, researchers, industries and governments work in isolation without any or little chains of engagement. There are few identified platforms created for the dissemination of innovations and research outcomes of the educational institutions with industry and policy makers.

The worrying trend in African Higher Education is the increase in “bookshelf” researchers. A lot of research works conducted in our higher educational institutions are shelved or archived and at best published in international journals for academic credits. What is the use of only publishing in an international journal a research work conducted to *improve methods of irrigation farming to boost tomatoes production in Damongo in the Northern Region of Ghana* if there has not been any debriefing process with the research constituents (tomato farmers in Damongo) for implementation and adoption of best practices. This is not in any way to discredit scholarly publishing but to promote research dissemination with appropriate constituents to solve challenges, improve local productivity and ensure optimum development. The idea of conducting any research or innovation is to solve an existing challenge and also contribute to knowledge, however, there seems to be so much focus on scholarly publishing than really sharing or implementing research outcomes at the local or national levels for sustainable development.

It is however astonishing, that despite our quest for scholarly publishing, Africa still stands at the bottom of almost every knowledge economic indicator. Its institutions contributed 0.7% to the world’s scientific literature in 2004 and 0.07% of global patent applications (World Bank Group, 2012). A generous, though arguable statistics puts the literature figure to 1.8% still minuscule in light of the continent’s massive social and economic needs.

Publishing research in Africa is all the more complex due to what is largely known as “volume-one-number-one syndrome”, where many journals barely live beyond their maiden issue due to a host of reasons. These include a shortage of publishable materials (manifestation of low-level research), sub-standard quality in content and appearance, irregular appearance, poor editorial capability and support, small community of academics, lack of funds, among others. These challenges diminish the contribution of research and its impact to development.

In solving this challenge from a modest approach, student researchers in African higher educational institutions must be given the necessary support to undertake quality and innovative research and platforms created for the sharing of the knowledge with stakeholders to promote national, continental and global development.

It is in this light the Association of African Universities through the Working Group on Higher Education of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (WGHE/ADEA) is creating the platform for student researchers to showcase their innovations and present their research outcomes in the areas of science, technology, education, health and agriculture with industry players and other stakeholders.

## **RATIONALE**

Education and for that matter, higher education, plays a critical role in delivering the knowledge and skills necessary for the social and economic development of society in the twenty-first century of which the African continent is not an exception. The rapidly growing African society and the associated development challenges progressively require the urgent need for building a robust and effective higher education system for the revitalization of its research and innovation capability in the continent.

Research is the powerhouse of knowledge creation and to be nationally relevant and globally competitive, there is the need for countries to increasingly strive to situate research and innovation at the centre of their developmental agenda.

The Research and Innovation Summit (RIS) for student researchers is part of the activities leading to the celebration of the Golden Jubilee and General Conference of the Association of African Universities (AAU).

The summit seeks to create a platform for students in the higher education community to share their research findings and innovations in the areas of science, technology, education, healthcare and agriculture with industry players, government officials and other stakeholders. The summit will also lead to the establishment of stronger linkage between industry and education for sustainable development.

### **Objectives**

The RIS seeks to:

1. Add value to the research culture of post-graduate studies in Africa.
2. Create the platform for disseminating research findings of students on the continent.
3. Create the platform for student researchers to interact with industry and create a synergy between industry and higher education.
4. Create awareness and visibility for AAU among the student fraternity in Africa.
5. Develop the capacity of graduate researchers in Africa for sustainable development.

**Target Participants:** This research conference will bring together graduate students and key industry players on the continent, as well as Government officials and other education stakeholders.

**Eligibility:** Post-graduate students who have undertaken research work in the areas of science, technology, agriculture, health and education are eligible to apply.

**Date:** The summit is scheduled to take place on 1 – 2 June 2017.

**Venue:** AAU Headquarters, Trinity Road, East Legon- Accra, Ghana.

## **HOW TO APPLY:**

1. Interested student researchers should send their abstracts electronically to <https://events.aau.org/aris/>
2. Submitted abstract will be reviewed by experts and successful candidates will be selected and notified.
3. For further enquiries, please call the following numbers for assistance:  
+233-302-774495/ 715588, +233-243298464 or email us via [kasam@aau.org](mailto:kasam@aau.org)

## **SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**

Interested presenters should submit their concept papers online latest by **19<sup>th</sup> May 2017** using the following link <https://events.aau.org/aris/>

## **STRUCTURE OF SUMMIT**

The summit will be in two folds. The first session on the first day will be an exhibition conference right after the formal opening where student researchers will exhibit their innovations/inventions in all specified areas. The second session on the second day will be the research presentations and all the 5 categories will be held concurrently. A total of 25 presentations will be made in all, at least 5 from each disciplinary category (Agriculture; Science; Technology; Health; and Education).