

**NUFU PROGRAMME CONFERENCE**  
**INCREASING THE IMPACT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**INSTITUTIONS IN DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES**  
**11-13 FEBRUARY, 2009, LILONGWE, MALAWI**

*Resolutions*

**Introduction**

The third NUFU Programme Conference was held from 11-13 February, 2009 at SUNBIRD Hotel, Lilongwe, Malawi. This was consistent with the tradition in the NUFU Programme to organize a conference in the South in every programme period. Goals and objectives for the conferences have varied, but the conferences have often provided inputs for the further development of the NUFU Programme. The last conference of this kind was held in Kampala, Uganda in November 2004. This conference generated a set of resolutions that will input into the development of the next NUFU phase. The Conference **objectives** were **three-fold**:

- i. To focus on international development trends in higher education and research - and reflect on how these affect higher education institutions, particularly in the South.
- ii. To reflect on how to increase the impact of higher education and research through South – South - North institutional partnerships.
- iii. To discuss future strategies for institutional cooperation South – South - North, with particular focus on Norwegian initiatives beyond 2011.

The Conference was attended by various groups which included:

- i. Institutional leadership in Norway and in the South
- ii. Research directors, directors of Offices for International Relations etc – from Norway and the South
- iii. Other staff members at HE institutions involved in the implementation of the NUFU Programme
- iv. Government representatives from selected countries in the South (Southern and Eastern Africa)
- v. Association of Africa and European Universities
- vi. Representatives from NORAD, the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions
- vii. The NUFU Programme Board

- viii. Representatives from the SIU board
- ix. Representatives from SIU's administration

140 participants drawn from Norway, Africa and Asia participated in the Conference. The Conference was opened by the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hon Dr George Chabonda, MP. His Excellency, the Norwegian Ambassador to Malawi, Mr Bjorn Johannesen made remarks which were preceded by the Head of Department, NORAD and Chairs of SIU and NUFU Boards. The VC of UNIMA, Prof Zimani D. Kadzamira welcomed participants to the Conference.

Several papers were presented on various issues to enhance the relevance and quality of education and research in HEIs to inform greater impact in development processes. Four working groups were constituted to address the key thematic issues which will input into the next phase of NUFU Programme.

The Norwegian Government is committed to supporting development processes in developing countries based on individual country policies. This would contribute to improved human welfare and livelihoods. The role of NUFU is catalyzing this change through facilitating universities playing their responsibilities cannot be overemphasized. The Universities need therefore to be committed to the following principles:

1. young researchers being developed and incentivised to contribute to sustainable implementation of education and research
2. university leadership supporting full participation of female academics and researchers in education, research and leadership
3. open access to information and knowledge supportive of education and research
4. transparency and accountability to achieve good governance

## **Resolutions**

The Participants agreed to:

1. Increase access and enrolment at doctoral levels
2. Increase access to and use of ICT in HE and research
3. Stem the brain drain by increasing opportunities for young researchers
4. Close the gender gap in academia

It is worth noting that the fourth component is cross-cutting and should be seen to permeate in all the others.

The specific resolutions under each of the four thematic areas are provided as follows:

**A. Educating researchers for the future-revision of PhD education**

Africa and Asia continue to train academics and researchers at doctoral level. However, there are huge age and gender gaps between the senior and young academics. The problem is exacerbated by poor retention systems, brain drain, declining research funding and facilities and heavy teaching work load. In order to increase participation and contribution of HE and research, it is resolved that:

1. Governments and HEI should create conditions for a productive research culture. This will ensure a balance between teaching and research and that research is linked to national and societal priorities.
2. HEIs and NUFU should increased funding for doctoral studies and introduce a 3-year research and one year of learning and thus a 4-year fellowship
3. Applied Research should include a practical component being carried out in and based on community needs
4. Universities in Asia and Africa and Norway should consider giving PhD candidates the option to choose between a Monograph and article based PhD theses.
5. NUFU and universities in the North should strengthen and enhance the joint supervision systems
6. PhD programmes should include coursework component to enhance knowledge content and skills in the areas of specialization.
7. Enhance the capacity and capability of young researchers in resource mobilization (student, Supervision, Research Proposal development, Writing/communication and management, publishing)

**B. Increasing access to and use of ICT in HE and research**

Africa has been isolated from the dramatic technological advances, particularly with respect to ICT, for a long time. There is compelling evidence that ICT has provided access to knowledge in a multiplicity of ways that has enabled cultures who have access to ICT to make dramatic intellectual advances. ICT also enables cultures to develop highly sophisticated management competence in a relatively short time. ICT is also a extremely powerful tool for e/learning, a tool that not only sets students on a path of self instruction, but equally reaches out to a far greater number of thereby increasing access to higher education.

With ICT, Africa can transcend its history of technological isolation rapidly and have its students competing with the best in the world, within a relatively short time. It is resolved that:

1. NUFU/NORAD continues and supports infrastructure development and human capital development (infrastructure development, exploiting the open source software, each project to provide for easy access to information, e-learning resource materials)
2. Heads of HEI (VCs and Rectors) and Governments should allocate appropriate investment funds (Investment partners providing technical assistance including enhancing human capital, Encouraging Visiting Professors)
3. Governments should create enabling environment in ICT and attracting additional investment from cooperating partners and the corporate world
4. HEIs should participate in Manual/Toolkit development for enhancing excellent ICT services (e-learning and distance education)

### **C. Stemming the brain drain by increasing opportunities for young researchers**

Africa and Asia continue to suffer from brain drain of highly qualified young academics and researchers. This is despite the huge investment by national governments and investment partners. This problem continues to be exacerbated by a combination of both push and pull factors. Important drivers include un-conducive conditions at home for quality research and attractive employment opportunities and packages in the Diaspora. To stem further brain drain, it is resolved that:

1. NUFU provides increased support for South-South-North Cooperation for more proactive staff exchange, post doctoral programs, and establishment of regional Research Centres and integration of Young researchers shall be an integral part of the whole framework.
2. Enhance the capacity and capability of young researchers in resource mobilization (student, Supervision, Research Proposal development, Writing and management, publishing)
3. Provide additional funding for accessing information and knowledge-through online journals, e-books
4. HEIs and NUFU institute and support mentorship Skills programs and encouragement of twinning programs between senior and young scholars ensuring greater female participation
5. HEIs create an enabling environment for young researchers to contribute fully to the institutional goals and aspirations. Universities should immediately examine how research is organized and develop systems to integrating and supporting the young academics and researchers.
6. Governments/HEIs and NUFU/NORAD should ensure that young researchers at home institutions are provided with good retention incentives but also institute measures to engage and benefit from those in the Diaspora

#### **D. Closing the gender gap in academia**

Female participation in HE and research in Africa and Asia remains very limited. The role of women in enhancing impact of HE and research is well recognized and as such practical measures and conducive environment at our universities must be created. Senior Managers should ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all processes and activities of the institutions; this is prerequisite for achieving gender balance. To this end, it is resolved that

1. PhD training must take into account the special situation of women as care takers/family persons – extend the PhD periods from 3 to 4 years
2. Female researchers involved in partnerships must be given special attention as regards support/career development, training related to publishing/research
3. NUFU budget allocation for the project programme to be enlarged to min. NOK 5 mill to enhance female participation and networking-creating 'special funding' for recruiting women should be considered.
4. HEIs should establish regular performance assessment in order to assess impact of gender mainstreaming.

**Resolution Committee**

**Dated 13 February, 2009**