

# **EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA:**

## **OPERATIONAL PARAMETERS AND IMPLICATIONS TO RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN EAST AFRICA**

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# **PRESENTATION OUTLINE**

- ▶ **What a Common Higher Education Area entails**
- ▶ **Why Common Higher Education Areas exist**
- ▶ **Common Higher Education Areas in existence**
- ▶ **Emergence of the East African Community (EAC) Common Higher Education Area**
- ▶ **Pillars of the EAC Common Higher Education Area**
- ▶ **Implications of the EAC Common Higher Education Area**
- ▶ **Conclusion**

## **WHAT A COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ENTAILS**

**A Common Higher Education Area designates a geographic region where higher education systems are based on comparable, compatible, coherent and harmonised frameworks accepted in the region as providing objective basis for mutual recognition of the systems and qualifications attained in the region's individual states as well as from overseas, for the countries to effectively collaborate as a common market**

**This is the destination for the East African Community (EAC), as it is highlighted in this presentation**

## **WHY COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREAS EXIST**

**Factors prompting existence of Common higher areas:**

- ▶ Institutionalisation of regional higher education systems by a common framework, i.e. a regional qualifications framework, etc.**
- ▶ Institutionalisation of regional mobility of students, staff, programmes, institutions, labour, etc.**
- ▶ Need for mutual recognition of higher education systems and professional qualifications across the geographic region**

## **WHY COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREAS EXIST...**

- Benchmarking for quality assurance and enhancement for comparability and compatibility of education systems in the geographic region**
- Need for mutual recognition of higher education systems and professional qualifications across the geographic region**
- Establishment of common regional institutions/socio-economic systems, e.g. common market set up in the EAC**

# **SOME COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREAS**

- **European Higher Education Area (under the Bologna Process)**
- **Higher Education Area of the ASEAN region (South East Asian Economic Community)**
- **Asia-Pacific Higher Education Area**
- **Latin American Common Higher Education Area under MERCOSUR (Latin American Economic Community)**
- **Higher Education Space of the Caribbean Community**
- **Higher Education Space of the Gulf Cooperation Council**

# **EMERGENCE OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

- **The development of Common Higher Education Areas is an outcome of the emergence of regional economic communities such as EAC, as higher education is seen as a vital intellectual resource for economic growth and expansion of the knowledge economy across borders and for success of the region in the global socio-economic settings driven by regional cooperation, collaboration and free movement of goods, services, and people**



# **EMERGENCE OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...**

- **Therefore, the declaration of the EAC Common Higher Education Area is a follow up to the coming into force in July 2010 of the Protocol for the Establishment of the EAC Common Market, whose operational set up among others, is based on putting in place provisions for eased mobility of learners and labour across the EAC Partner State, and this can effectively be facilitated by the EAC operating as a Common Higher Education Area**



## **EMERGENCE OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...**

- **Thus, Ministers responsible for Higher Education in the EAC Partner States on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011 while contemplating on the need to mandate the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) to carry out regional accreditation of universities in East Africa, decided that EAC should first be declared a Common Higher Education Area**

# **PILLARS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

- **From 2006, UCEA has been developing a harmonised quality assurance system in East Africa as one of the critical entry points for mutual recognition and collaboration in higher education among EAC Partner States**

# **PILLARS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...**

- **IUCEA has also developed a regional quality assurance policy framework (Principles and Guidelines in Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa) and a regional qualifications framework for higher education (East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education)**

# **PILLARS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...**

- **Also, since 2011 IUCEA has been developing generic benchmarks for academic programmes as reference points for harmonisation of curricula in universities in East Africa**



## **PILLARS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...**

**These developments have culminated into EAC being declared a Common Higher Education Area, a declaration that was made by the EAC Heads of State during their Summit held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

# PILLARS OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...

- 1. Regional Quality Assurance System, consisting of three operational instruments and a regional network, namely:**



# PILLARS OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...

- **Policy framework: Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa**
- **Quality Assurance Handbook: Quality assessment instruments published in five (four) volumes, which are now in use across East Africa**
- **Benchmarks for academic programmes: development continues**
- **East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network: Meets annually to, among others, deliberate on regional and global trends in quality assurance**

# PILLARS OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...

- 2. East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education:** A generic instrument onto which the national qualifications frameworks of the EAC countries would be anchored for the purpose of facilitating comparability, compatibility and synchronization of education and training systems in the region, and as a platform to facilitate mutual recognition of the qualifications attained in and outside EAC

# **THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA SUPPORTING FRAMEWORK ...**

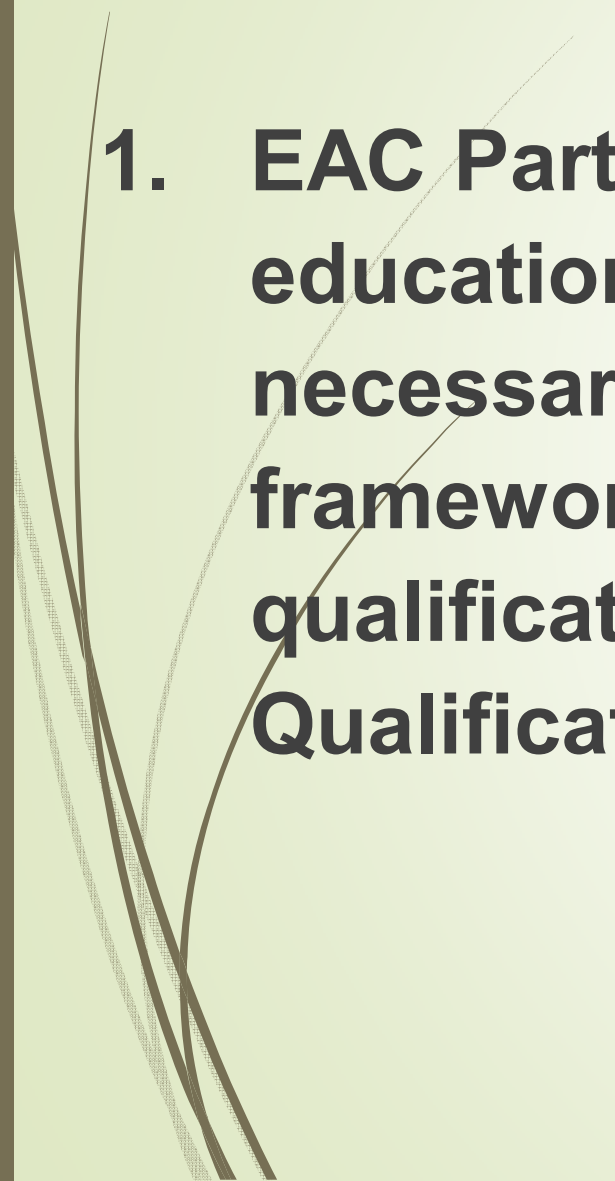
- 1. National and institutional systems as the building blocks**
- 2. Common conceptual understanding of the Higher Education harmonization goals and tools**
- 3. Acceptability and ownership at:**
  - (a) Higher Education Institutional level**
  - (b) National level (Commissions/Councils for Higher/University Education up to Government levels)**
  - (c) Regional (EAC) level**

## **THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA SUPPORTING FRAMEWORK ...**

- 4. Non-prescriptiveness in its adoption – Institutionalization of the system through “speaking the same language but in different ways that accommodate national/institutional diversities”, hence maintaining creativity and competitiveness**
- 5. Aspiration for internationalization for the region’s international recognition and legitimacy**
- 6. Sustainability, based on quality culture, human resources, networking, technical expertise, funding ...**



# **IMPLICATIONS OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

- 1. EAC Partner States to harmonise their national higher education systems by aligning them (but not necessarily making them identical) to the regional framework, including alignment of the national qualifications frameworks to the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education**
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## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...**

- 2. EAC to establish a regional accreditation system based on the regional higher education harmonisation framework now operational in the Partner States, hence strengthening the current system of mutual recognition of accreditation decisions by individual Partner States**

**This will provide formal legitimacy to the current regional accreditation system through mutual recognition of accreditation decisions in each individual country**



# **IMPLICATIONS OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...**

- 3. EAC through IUCEA to lay ground for operationalisation of the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in all aspects indicated in the Framework document**
- 4. EAC to strengthen the administrative arrangements for coordination and monitoring and evaluation of the attainment of operational milestones**

# IMPLICATIONS OF THE EAC COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA ...

5. **Universities to harmonise their operational systems by aligning them to the EAC framework, including their internal quality assurance and credit systems, curricula, qualifications descriptors, and **research operational frameworks**, for them to support cross-border engagements within the context of the EAC Common Higher Education Area**

## **CONCLUSION**

- 1. Transformation into a Common Higher Education Area is a continuous process guided by the Declaration and commitment by the Partner States as made on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, for which attainment of milestones needs to be continuously monitored, documented and disseminated**

## **CONCLUSION ...**

- 2. A Common Higher Education Area does not exist without people, and certain people can act on behalf of a nation and the region as the Common Higher Education Area, and their collective efforts will influence policy development in the individual countries and up to the entire EAC region.**
- 3. Therefore, continuous dialogue, sensitisation and advocacy are essential for the success of this regional initiative of EAC**



**Thank you  
for your attention**