The Quality Assurance of Higher Education: Approaches and Dimensions – Interaction of Different Levels (National, Regional, Continental)

Prof Mike Kuria
Chief Executive Officer/ Commission Secretary

COMMISSION FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

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Order of Presentation

- What is the role of an external accreditation agency

- Who has played that role in Africa

- Kenyan example

- East African Example

- Challenges

- Possible innovations

External Quality Assurance: Definitions

- **UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization):**

  "External quality assurance is a process whereby an external body evaluates the operations of an institution or program to ==ascertain whether it meets agreed standards a==nd to ==encourage improvement== where necessary." *[UNESCO].*

- **European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA):**

  "EQA refers to all evaluations conducted by external organizations, such as accreditation agencies or governmental bodies, aimed at ==validating the quality assurance processes of institutions.=="

  [ENQA, 2015. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)].

- **African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA):**

  "External quality assurance involves an independent review of higher education institutions or programs by external bodies ==to ensure adherence to predefined standards and guidelines==, **often linked to regional or national objectives**."

  [African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA)].

External Quality Assurance Agencies in Africa

- Not all 54 countries of Africa have EQA Agencies

- National Commissions and Councis for Higher/University Education

- Ministries responsible for University/Higher/Education

- Professional Bodies (Engineering, medical councils, legal councils etc)

- International accrediting bodies eg WASC or AQAS

EXTERNAL QA AGENCIES IN THE EAC

	COUNTRY	EXTERNAL QA AGENCY
1.	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Permanent Commission for Higher Education and Universities
2.	Republic of Burundi	National Commission for Higher Education
3.	Republic of Kenya	Commission for University Education
4.	Republic of Rwanda	Higher Education Council
5.	Federal Republic of Somalia	Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education (MoECHE)
6.	Republic of South Sudan	National Council for Higher Education
7.	Republic of Uganda	National Council for Higher Education
8.	United Republic of Tanzania	Tanzania Commission for Universities

THE KENYAN EXPERIENCE

KENYA HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Establishment as the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) (1985):

The CHE was established under the Universities Act (Cap 210B) to oversee the orderly development of higher education in Kenya.

Its primary roles included accrediting private universities, advising the government on higher education policy, and ensuring quality standards in university education.

2. Initial Functions of CHE:

1. Accreditation and quality assurance of private universities.
2. Developing and reviewing higher education policies.
3. Regulating academic programs in private universities to ensure relevance and quality.
4. Advising on the establishment of new universities.

1. Established by the Universities Act (2012) revised 2020

2. Section 5 stipulates the functions of the Commission

Summary: regulate university education by:
   a) Accrediting all universities/university education, public and private
   b) Accrediting /approving all academic programmes offered in universities
   c) Regular monitoring of performance/adherence to standards

3. Focus only on university education at all levels – as long as university is the service provider.

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Commission for University Education: Core Mandate Activities

University Data

Collect Analyze and Disseminate Data on University Student Enrolment

Licencing

- Assess Applications for Collaboration between Foreign Universities and Local Institutions
- License Student Recruitment Agencies

Accreditation

- Evaluate proposals for Establishment of Universities
- Evaluate Academic Programmes
- Evaluate universities with Letters of Interim Authority for award of Charter

Post-Accreditation

- Institutional Quality Audit – Regular and Issue Based
- Annual inspection for campuses and universities with Letter of Interim Authority
- Review of Academic Programmes

Policies and Advisories

- Develop Policies relevant to University Education
- Formulate Advisories on University Education

Research

Undertake research to inform policy advisories and internal decision making

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Specific Relevant Tools

The Universities Act	The Universities Regulations	The Universities Standards and Guidlines

Other legislative provisions and policies e.g. the Constitution of Kenya

Challenges in Kenya

- Policy/harmonization

- Institutionalization- culture of practice

- Education reforms

- Funding

- Diversity of education systems

THE EAST AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

❖ The Inter- University Council for East Africa

❖Introducing regional accreditation of academic programmes

The Inter-University Council for East Africa

Is one of the institutions of the East African Community (EAC) responsible for higher education in the region.

Defined in <u>IUCEA Act 2009</u>

- ✓ **Networking universities** (new methods of teaching and learning, information dissemination, linkage between universities, and with research partners)

- ✓ **Collaborative research and development**

- ✓ **Quality Assurance**

NO LICENSING (LEGAL ENFORCEMENT) POWERS- mandate of national councils and commissions!

INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA

ACT, 2009

INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR
EAST AFRICA

ACT, 2009

Regional Accreditation legal basis:

1. **SECTION 6(c) of the IUCEA Act 2009**

"The Functions of IUCEA shall be to ensure the establishment of quality assurance through:

  i. the facilitation of harmonised entry standards - EAQFHE;

  ii. the development, in partnership with the national higher education commissions and accreditation councils, of criteria for assessing standards and assuring the quality of teaching and research through quality assurance mechanisms - evaluation;

  iii. promotion, modernisation and harmonisation of university curricula in the Community;

  iv. endorsing all approved programmes by accreditation bodies in the Partner States.

2. Section 6(g) "Oblige member universities to offer quality education to graduates in all academic disciplines"

IUCEA REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

Regional Accreditation as one of the ways to "Oblige member universities to offer quality education to graduates in all academic disciplines"
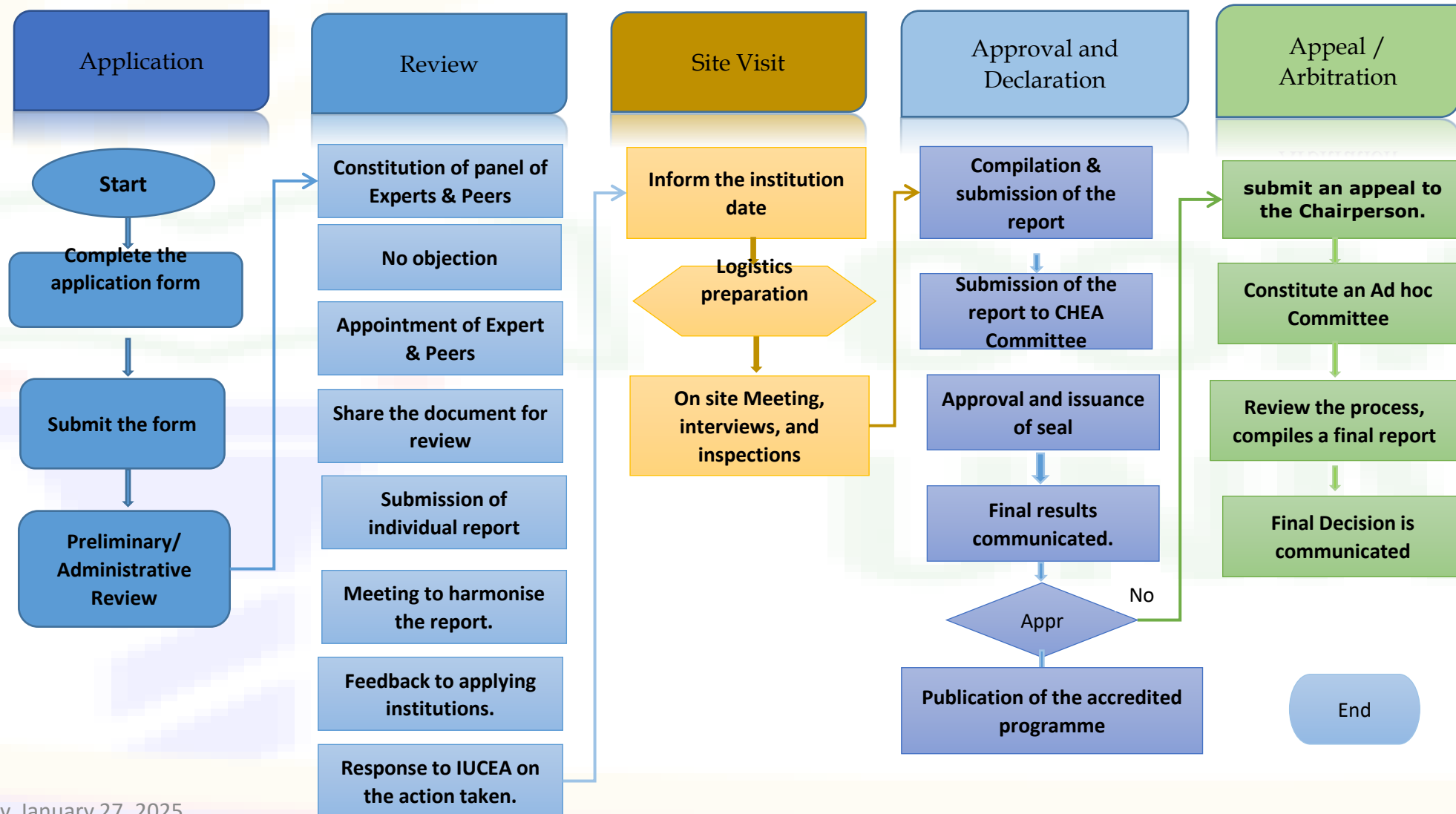
The EAC Regional Programme Accreditation System
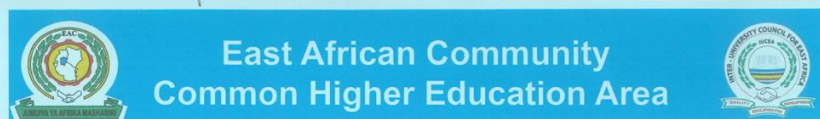
- Assessment and Accreditation is voluntary

- Regional Accreditation based on National Accreditation

- It is a Quality-Based Programme Assessment and Accreditation – Quality Seal is issued.

- Assessment and Accreditation based on defined regional framework.

Borrowed from Prof. Mawa

Process for EAC Programme Assessment & Accreditation

(Borrowed from Prof Mawa)

Application
- Start
- Complete the application form
- Submit the form
- Preliminary/ Administrative Review

Review
- Constitution of panel of Experts & Peers
- No objection
- Appointment of Expert & Peers
- Share the document for review
- Submission of individual report
- Meeting to harmonise the report.
- Feedback to applying institutions.
- Response to IUCEA on the action taken.

Site Visit
- Inform the institution date
- Logistics preparation
- On site Meeting, interviews, and inspections

Approval and Declaration
- Compilation & submission of the report
- Submission of the report to CHEA Committee
- Approval and issuance of seal
- Final results communicated.
- Appr
  - No
- Publication of the accredited programme

Appeal / Arbitration
- submit an appeal to the Chairperson.
- Constitute an Ad hoc Committee
- Review the process, compiles a final report
- Final Decision is communicated
- End

East African Community Common Higher Education Area

DECLARATION BY HEADS OF STATE OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY PARTNER STATES ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY INTO A COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

We, the Heads of State of the East African Community Partner States, wishing to accomplish the objective of harmonization of higher education and training systems in the East African Community ("EAC") by establishing a common frame of reference to facilitate comparability, compatibility and mutual recognition of higher education and training systems and the qualifications attained within the EAC Partner States, based on shared views on quality, criteria, standards and learning outcomes, for promoting student and labour mobility in the EAC;

Recalling that the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community in Article 102 provides that the Partner States agree to undertake concerted measures to foster co-operation in education and training within the Community and among others to harmonise curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education and training institutions in the Partner States through the joint action of their relevant national bodies charged with the preparation of such curricula;

Affirming the growing importance of knowledge as a key factor for social and human growth as alluded by the Dakar Declaration on Education for All, 2000, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, 2000, the Commission on Social Dimensions of Globalization, 2004, of which the EAC Partner States are signatories;

Recognizing that higher education, including research, is the leading pillar in creating a knowledge society and knowledge driven economy; and **Having reviewed** the progress so far made towards that objective, in particular, the development and adoption by the national commissions/councils for university/higher education and higher education institutions in all the Partner States of:

(a) Regional Quality Assurance Framework, based on four operational tools:
   (i) A policy framework, titled Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa;
   (ii) Regional quality assurance instruments contained in the Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education covering internal quality assurance at programme level, external quality assurance at programme level, institutional quality assurance, and implementation of a quality assurance system;
   (iii) Benchmarks for academic programmes; and
   (iv) East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network, which promotes the development of quality culture in East Africa; and
(b) East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (2015) as a human resources development instrument guiding the higher education and training systems, and as a reference tool in facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications attained in and outside the EAC Partner States;
(c) Staff Mobility Framework (2014) to enhance sharing of the existing human resources in higher education within the Community and encouraging staff mobility; and
(d) Students Mobility Policy (2015) to facilitate free movement of students within the Community; and

Noting that the achievements so far recorded require to be consolidated to ultimately evolve into a unified higher education system;

We hereby **affirm** our commitment and undertaking to accomplish that objective by transforming the EAC into a **Common Higher Education Area.**

WHEREFORE, we the Heads of State of the EAC Partner States **DO HEREBY DECLARE** the EAC a **Common Higher Education Area** whereby the national higher education and training systems shall operate and be guided by the common regional framework under which curricula, examinations and certification as well as academic and professional qualifications, and the quality of the educational and training output in higher education will be harmonised.

We **proffer** that the Common Higher Education Area will facilitate and enable the mobility of students and teachers and promote the free movement of labour, people and services as envisioned under the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community signed in 1999 and the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market in 2010.

We **acknowledge and commend** the good work so far done by the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), through the mandate given to it by its Act of 2009 (section 4 (2)) as a strategic institution of the EAC for the implementation of the objective to attain a fully harmonized and integrated higher education and training system in the EAC.

Consequently, we entrust and task the Council of Ministers with the responsibility of coordinating the operationalization of the Common Higher Education Area and IUCEA to provide the necessary technical support.

We hereby pledge to the people in the EAC our resolve as herein DECLARED at Dar es Salaam, the United Republic of Tanzania on this 20th day of May, in the year Two Thousand and Seventeen as duly attested by our respective signatures hereunder.

| H.E YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI PRESIDENT	H.E. DR. JOHN POMBE MAGUFULI PRESIDENT	H.E. WILLIAM S. RUTO, EGH, EBS DEPUTY PRESIDENT	H.E. GASTON SINDIMWO 1ST VICE PRESIDENT	HON. FRANCOIS KANIMBA MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REPUBLIC OF RWANDA	HON. AGGREY TISA SABUNI ECONOMIC ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA	UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA	REPUBLIC OF KENYA	REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI		REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

BASIS FOR THE DECLARATION

1. Summit recognized the progress made by IUCEA in preparing the community for a common higher higher education area;

2. Regional Quality Assurance Framework whose pillars are:
   i. Policy framework- principles and guidelines for QA in HE in the EAC
   ii. Regional QA instruments
   iii. Benchmarks for academic quality
   iv. EAQFHE (2015)
   v. EAQAN
   vi. Staff mobility framework
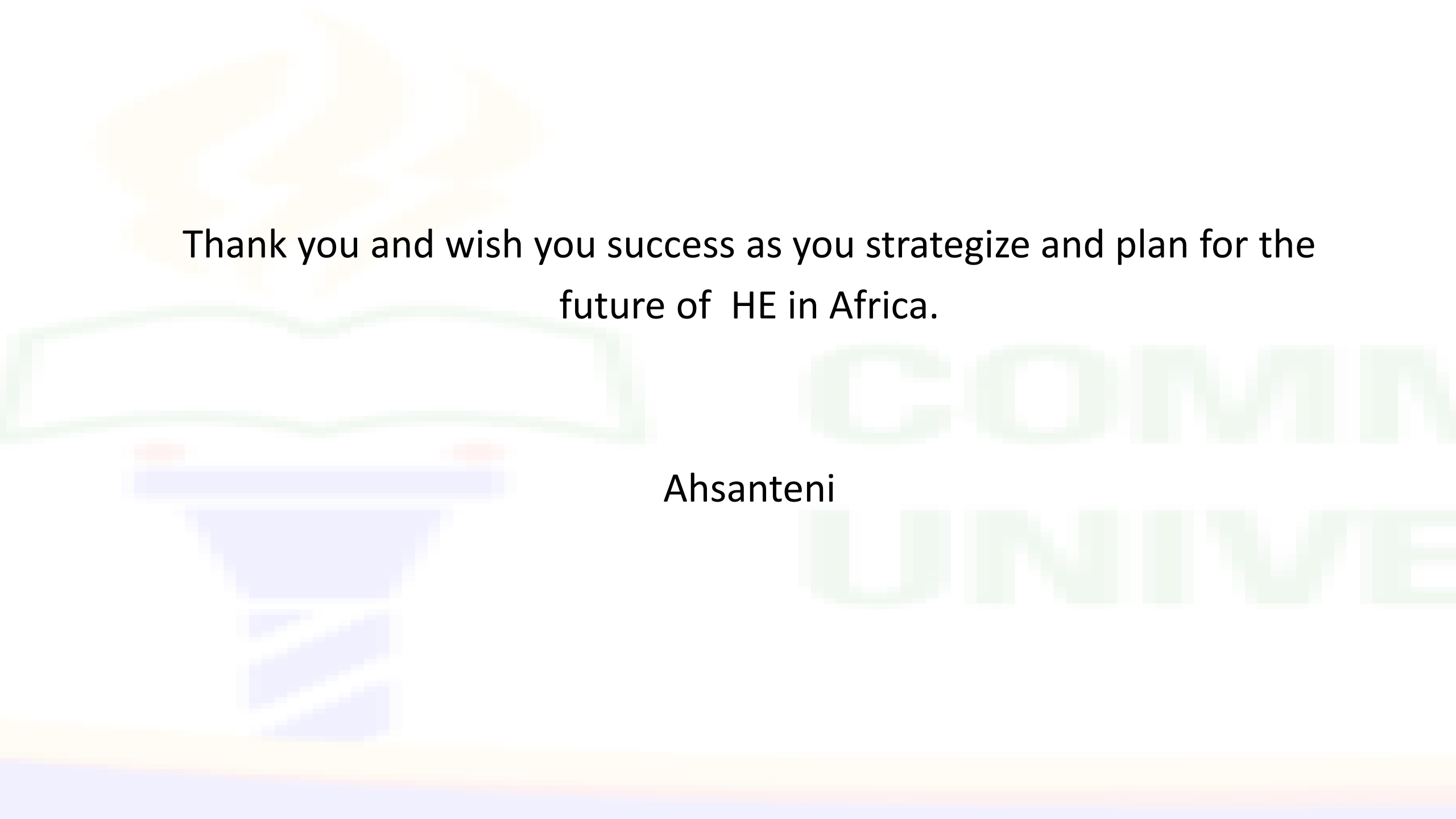   vii. Student mobility policy

CHALLENGES FACED
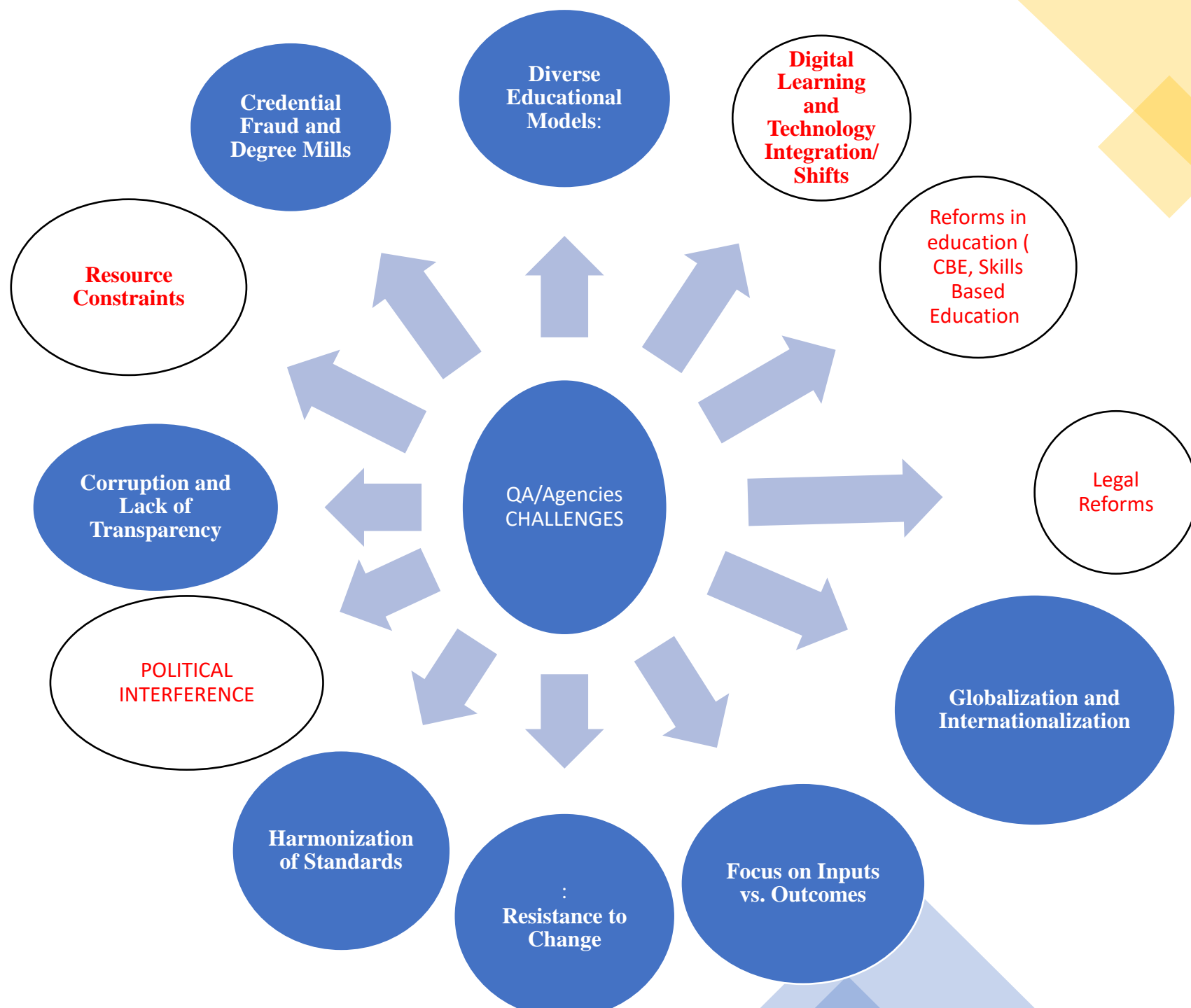
Possible innovations- looking into the future

Innovations Shaping QA in HE

1. Digital Tools and Automation

2. Focus on Outcomes-Based Education (OBE):

3. Regional and International Collaboration

4. Risk-Based Approaches

5. Student-Centric Approaches

6. Hybrid Models for Digital Education

7. Capacity Building and Professional   Development

8. Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

9. Transparency and Open Data

10. Sustainability and Social Impact

11. Micro-Credentials and Lifelong Learning

12. Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement

13. Adaptive Standards

Thank you and wish you success as you strategize and plan for the future of HE in Africa.

Ahsanteni