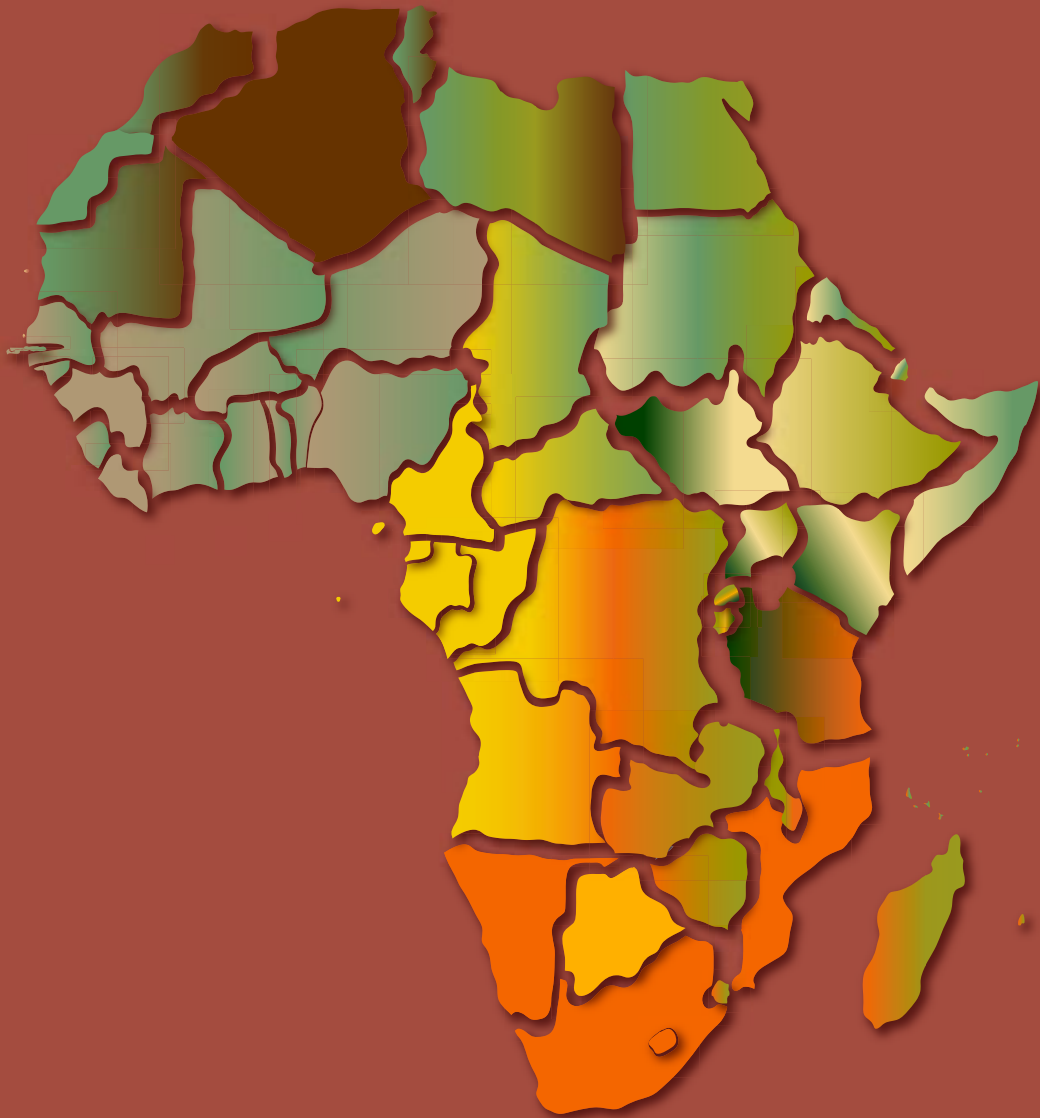


Materials on African Regional and Continental Integration in Higher Education



Materials on African Regional and Continental Integration in Higher Education

These Materials have been produced under a contract with the European Union (HAQAA-2). The opinions expressed are those of the contractor only and do not represent the contracting authority's official position.

First version: October 2022

Table of Contents

Presentation of the materials

- | | |
|--|---|
| I. Orientation, Purpose, and Content of the Materials – R. Torrent | 4 |
| II. Barriers to African Continental Integration in African Higher Education – O. Oyewole | 9 |

Part 1

- | | |
|---|----|
| The Analytical Framework | 15 |
| Chapter 1. The Analytical Framework of Regional Integration – R. Torrent | 16 |
| Chapter 2. The Analytical Framework of Higher Education Policy – R. Torrent | 33 |

Part 2

- | | |
|---|----|
| Higher Education in the framework of African continental and regional integration | 64 |
| Chapter 3. Higher Education in the framework of African Continental and Regional Integration – H.B. Asmelash / T. E. Kassahun | 65 |
| Chapter 4. Integration of Higher Education in Africa: an Overview – J. Shabani | 96 |

Part 3

- | | |
|--|-----|
| Elements of comparison with other regions/continents | 124 |
| Chapter 5. ASEAN Regional Integration in Higher Education – National Higher Education Research Institute, Universiti Sains Malaysia | 125 |
| Chapter 6. 30 years of regional academic integration in MERCOSUR. Insights from a region of the South for a Dialogue with Africa – M. Larrea | 143 |
| Chapter 7. EU Integration in the Area of Higher Education – R. Torrent | 175 |

Part 4

- | | |
|---|-----|
| Issues of substance | 190 |
| Chapter 8. Recognition of credits and academic qualification. The EU experience | 191 |
| A) The two tracks: academic and professional qualifications – H. Davies | 192 |
| B) Recognition of credits. The ECTS – H. Davies | 212 |
| Chapter 9. Curriculum. Learning and Teaching – Charmaine B. Villet | 225 |
| Chapter 10. Quality and Quality Assurance – J. Mukora | 239 |
| Chapter 11. Research and innovation: Learning and Innovation strategies for sub-Saharan Africa – M. Dosso | 252 |
| Chapter 12. Recent developments in Internationalization in Africa – J. O. Jowi | 265 |

Part 5

- | | |
|---|-----|
| Viewing integration from the perspective of specific African regions or countries | 275 |
| Chapter 13. Identifying Issues: Challenges and Perspectives of North African Universities: A Window on African Higher Education – W. Benjelloun | 276 |
| Chapter 14. A regional perspective: Higher Education in the East African Community – M. Kuria and G. Banyankimbona | 285 |
| Chapter 15. Ethiopian Higher Education Reform and Regionalization of Higher Education in Africa – K.M. Haile | 294 |

- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| List of Authors | 322 |
|------------------------|-----|

Presentation of the materials (II)

Barriers to African Continental Integration in African Higher Education

Olusola Oyewole

Secretary General of the Association of African Universities, Accra, Ghana

Introduction

There exists a wide literature on Regional Integration. If you go to the World Bank's website, (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/overview>), you'll find what could be considered a sort of summary of it:

Regional integration helps countries overcome divisions that impede the flow of goods, services, capital, people and ideas. These divisions are a constraint to economic growth, especially in developing countries. The World Bank Group helps its client countries to promote regional integration through common physical and institutional infrastructure.

Divisions between countries created by geography, poor infrastructure and inefficient policies are an impediment to economic growth. Regional integration allows countries to overcome these costly divisions integrating goods, services and factors' markets, thus facilitating the flow of trade, capital, energy, people and ideas.

Regional integration can be promoted through common physical and institutional infrastructure. Specifically, regional integration requires cooperation between countries in:

- *Trade, investment and domestic regulation;*
- *Transport, ICT and energy infrastructure;*
- *Macroeconomic and financial policy;*
- *The provision of other common public goods (e.g. shared natural resources, security, education).*

Cooperation in these areas has taken different institutional forms, with different levels of policy commitments and shared sovereignty, and has had different priorities in different world regions.

Regional integration can lead to substantial economic gains. Regional integration allows countries to:

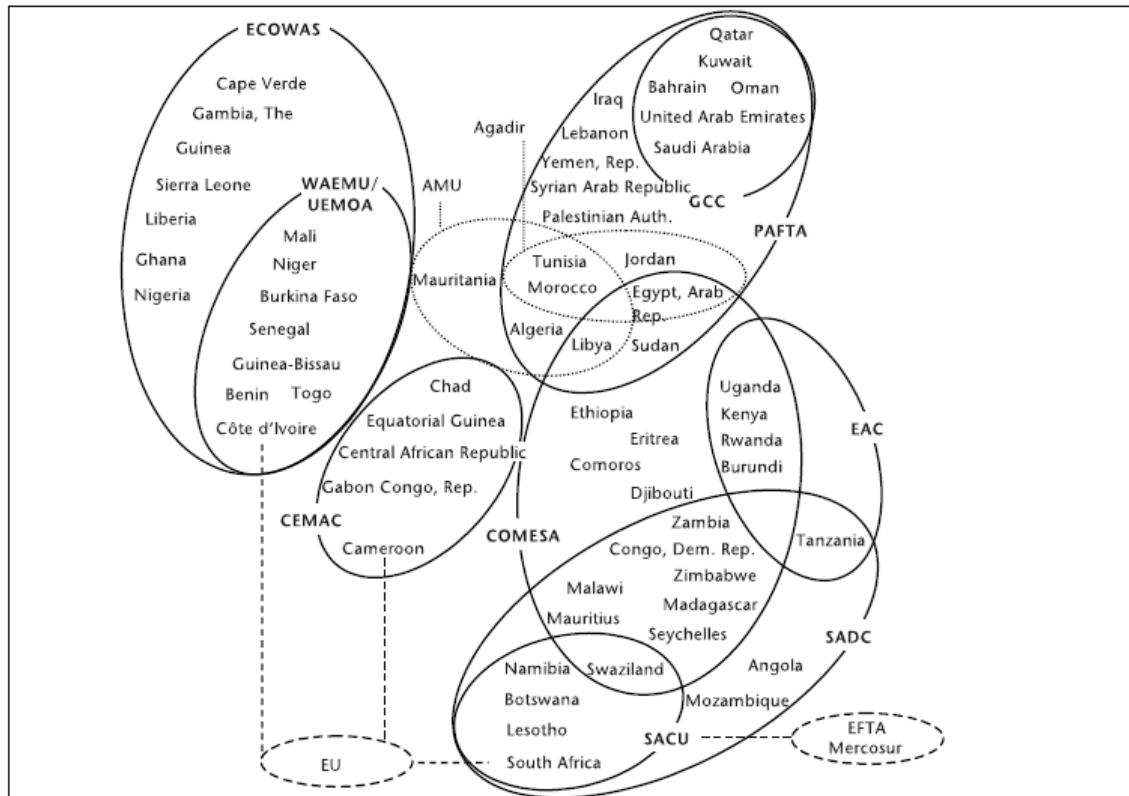
- *Improve market efficiency;*
- *Share the costs of public goods or large infrastructure projects;*
- *Decide policy cooperatively and have an anchor to reform;*
- *Have a building block for global integration;*
- *Reap other non-economic benefits, such as peace and security.*

However, there are risks to regional integration that need to be identified and managed.

- *Countries may have different preferences on priorities for regional integration, depending on their connectivity gaps, economic geography, or preferences for sovereignty in specific areas.*
- *Regional integration's impact on trade and investment flows, allocation of economic activity, growth, income distribution are often difficult to assess.*
- *Lack of adequate complementary policies and institutions may lead to inefficient outcomes. For instance, policy barriers at the border may offset the gains transport infrastructure cooperation.*
- *Regional integration creates winners and losers, notably within countries. Policies and institutions are needed to ensure that regionalism is inclusive and social, environmental, governance risks are managed.*

These HAQAA-2 Materials offer, in its first Chapter, an Analytical Framework to analyze Regional Integration. It emphasizes the need to distinguish its pre-conditions, its objectives, its instruments and its dimensions. Concerning objectives, they vary from economic to political and security. And it has been observed that objectives can change during the development of the process, and new objectives can be generated from within the integration process itself, as seen in the case of the European Union. In Africa, regional and continental integration is seen mainly as an instrument of development; and this is my assumption for this presentation.

Melo and Tsikata (2015)¹ reported that over the last thirty years, Regional Integration Agreements, and simpler Preferential Trade Agreements², have been spreading everywhere including across Africa, where they have given rise to a complex and overlapping system, as reflected in Figure 1, and in which Regional Economic Communities are prominent.



Source: WTO Secretariat.
 Note: AMU, Arab Maghreb Union; CEMAC, Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (Communauté Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale); COMESA, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; EAC, East African Community; ECOWAS, Economic Community of West African States; EFTA, European Free Trade Association; EU, European Union; GCC, Gulf Cooperation Council; Mercosur, Southern Cone Common Market; PAFTA, Pan-Arab Free Trade Area; SACU, Southern African Customs Union; SADC, Southern African Development Community; WAEMU/UEMOA, West African Economic and Monetary Union/Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine.

Figure 1: Regional arrangements in Africa

But, in all these analyses, the concrete examination of the specific Barriers to Integration faced by each Regional Integration process is usually missing. This is why, by reference to the specific area of Higher Education (the area for which Chapter II of these Materials also offer an Analytical Framework), I want to concentrate this short Presentation on the discussion of Barriers.

1. Melo, Jaime de and Tsikata, Yvonne (2015) Regional Integration in Africa: Challenges and Prospects. Discussion Paper No. 10598. Centre for Economic Policy Research 77 Bastwick Street, London EC1V 3PZ, UK. www.cepr.org

2. Regional Trade Agreements are also 'preferential' because they involve favourable access from each Member State to all the other that is not extended to non-Member States

Regional and Continental Integration of Higher Education in Africa

The Colonial-shaped Integration

Most countries in Africa have colonial pasts. One of the legacies left behind by the colonialists is their attempt to promote integration between the countries under their control even following the termination of colonial rule. Cooperation in the field of education, especially higher education, feature prominently in the colonial-shaped integration. This effort has worked easily because many of these countries adopted the language of the colonialists as their national language, extending it into the educational system, thus causing, or at least strongly favouring, the integration of the educational setup through the medium of expression (and making difficult the integration with other countries that use a different language in their educational systems).

Looking to the future

For a long time, African countries and governments have seen the need to pursue higher education integration. It is envisaged that such integration will strengthen the capacity and competitiveness of higher education institutions, facilitate mobility of staff and students across the continent, foster continental solidarity and overcome the colonial legacy in the continent. And, by reaching these objectives, promote development and enhance the peoples' well-being. One of the strategies being adopted was to introduce the integration of higher education within the scope of the Regional Economic Communities.

However, over five decades into independence in many African countries, it is becoming apparent that there is a need to break down the colonial-shaped integration. This is because, while having been more or less able to integrate the colonies under the same groups, it has failed to integrate the African continent. The African Union has therefore been working on various initiatives to integrate the continent as a "single region". A recent success in this direction has been the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). There is high hope that the AfCFTA will serve as an instrument to integrate the countries of Africa economically through the promotion of free trade and free movement of goods, services and people across the continent. And there is a great prospect that this initiative will help to improve the economic well-being of the various countries of Africa.

From the HE perspective, a broad and ambitious effort at promoting continental higher education integration has been carried out through the use of the following vehicles:

- a. The Arusha Convention, revised and replaced in 2014 by the Addis Convention, on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African states
- b. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa – CESA- 2063, which was adopted at the 26th ordinary session of the AU in January 2016. It seeks to 'bring coherence and integration in the development of the various sub-sectors into a holistic system that addresses the needs of imparting knowledge, skills, and values required for systematic response to the socioeconomic demands in the 21st century'.
- c. The African Continental Qualifications Framework, which is an AU-led initiative launched in September 2019 that plans to integrate the existing national and regional frameworks for comparability and equivalencies of qualifications into a continental framework.
- d. The Pan African University.
- e. The African Standards and Guideline for Quality Assurance n Higher Education (ASG-QA)
- f. The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STIGA)
- g. The Pan -African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF)
- h. The African Credit Transfer System

However, there has also been some unexplainable resistance to higher education integration in Africa. Despite the fact that one of the major features of the 1963 Charter of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was already the cooperation in the field of education, science, and technology. Resistance continues to exist even if education has also featured in the latest legal instrument of the agreement establishing the AfCFTA. Indeed, the AfCFTA protocol on Trade in Services calls for the recognition by each State Party of education, experience, licenses, certification, obtained in the other State Parties. One thing is very clear: as of today, it has been difficult to establish the African Higher Education space. Repeated recommendations to learn from the European experience (EU law and the Bologna Process) have not yet been successful.

In fact, information about the many integration initiatives going on in Africa is not yet even fully known by many academic in African Universities. Many countries in Africa are still grasping with many internal challenges, mainly political and economic, which leave little space and capacity to think of promoting the continental integration strategies. Multiple turn-over in governance in Africa has not made things easy either, as many government functionaries that ought to propagate these regional initiatives do not know what it is all about. This accounts for example, and at least partly explains, why the 2014 Addis Convention has only been ratified by 13 signatories, only 12 African if the Holy See, also a signatory, is excluded, and only one – South Africa – from the 12 African more populated States (see <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/revised-convention-recognition-studies-certificates-diplomas-degrees-and>).

Barriers to Higher Education Continental Integration in Africa.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to look squarely to the main barriers that must be overcome to really promote continental integration in African higher education, to advance in the creation of an African Higher Education space and to achieve the purpose of true students and staff mobility, and quality assurance in the African continent. In order to launch the discussion and reflection process that these Materials, and the course programmes based on them, intend to promote, I will very summarily point to the following ones:

a. Multiplicity of membership of the Regional Economic Communities.

Many African countries are members of more than one Regional Economic community, and this has caused some conflicts in the implementation of integration strategies. African Countries have multiple priorities for regional integration, and they seem to be aligned with the REC which offers more on their expectations (but this can change depending on the specific area or sector).

b. Lack of African funding to promote regional integration.

African States and REC, if they were aware of the benefits to be obtained, should provide a minimum amount of funds to drive initiatives towards integration. It is not a positive commentary on Africa that, very often, the main financial support for activities that support integration has to come from the European Union or other international organisations.

c. Insufficient Political Leadership.

The African Union Commission (AUC) should be in the driver's seat for integration and intra-African cooperation in Africa, in general and in the HE sector. They will be serving the purpose of their existence if they do this. But issues have arisen, too often, about the responsiveness of the African Union Commission in facilitating, even simply at the political level, integration initiatives. The AUC and other African agencies should adopt a much more proactive stance, not only for intra-African, but also for international cooperation.

d. Lack of cohesive Inter-regional collaboration among the regional blocks in Africa.

The various regional economic blocks in Africa need to work together much more than they do now and accept the need for an all-African perspective. This is the necessary condition a) to avoid duplication of efforts and resources (always very scarce), b) to avoid the existence of holes and empty spaces and c) to strengthen individual efforts and achieve an impactful collective one.

e. Language barriers in Africa

There is no need to re-emphasize that integration in Africa has been divided on the line of the colonial languages that had been enforced on the people. And, in many countries, deliberate efforts had been made to discourage the use of indigenous languages. In East Africa, the use of Swahili as a regional language is now being pursued as a tool of integration. Such efforts at promoting regional integration through the promotion of indigenous languages should be further encouraged and multilingualism must be accepted and promoted as the only vehicle to intra-African cooperation.

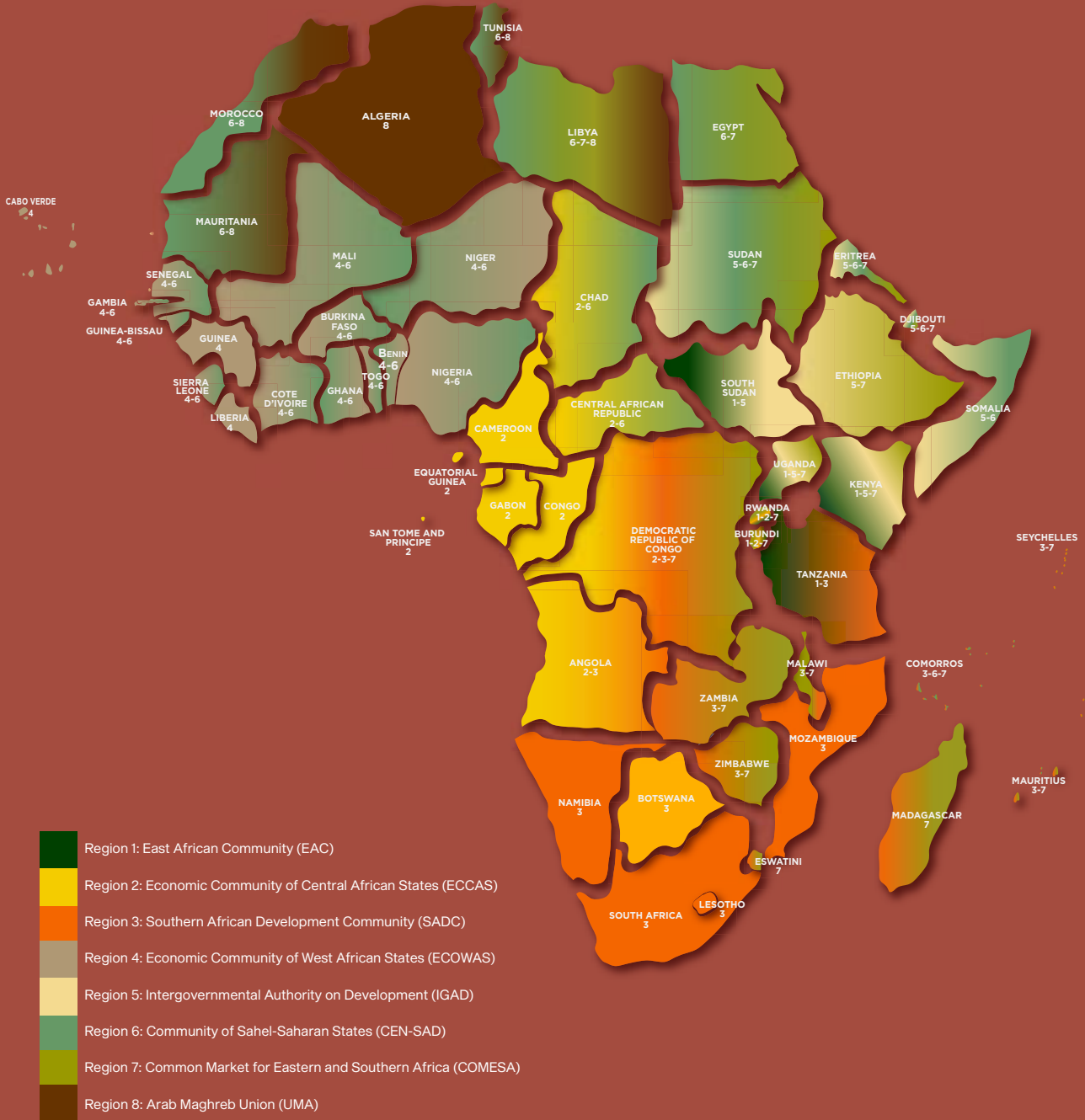
f. Disintegration in the African educational system.

There is little coordination between Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary (both HE and TVET) education institutions and policies in Africa. Current efforts at developing the African Qualification Frameworks (both at the Regional and the Continental levels) should be seen as an opportunity to progressively overcome this Barrier.

g. Ignorance of Regional integration is a major challenge

Finally, there is an urgent need to educate Academia and all other players in Africa on the needs and benefits of regional integration. The pursuit of a permanent open learning program on regional integration is very commendable.

I hope that all of you, dear readers, will contribute, by studying and using these Materials, to overcome these barriers.



The map has been jointly designed by Henok B. Asmelash and Nicole Font, developing an idea launched by Prof. Goolam Mohamedbhai and relayed by R. Torrent. It is, as all the Materials, "work in progress": comments welcome. The usual disclaimer applies.