

## **International Research and Development Conference IRDeC**

**A. COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (IRDeC, 2023) ORGANISED BY THE DIRECTORATE OF HIGHER DEGREES AND RESEARCH IN CONJUNCTION WITH COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS IN KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROM 17<sup>TH</sup>-21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2023 HELD AT THE IBM LIBRARY COMPLEX OF KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, UGANDA**

### **PREAMBLE**

The Directorate of Higher Degrees and Research of Kampala International University in conjunction with the Colleges and Schools organized an international conference scheduled from 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 with the theme ***African Leadership and Development Challenges: The Role of Research, Innovation and New Technology*** at the main library complex of the University. This was a milestone achievement in the life cycle of the University.

In attendance at the conference opening ceremony was the Hon. Minister of State for Defense and Veteran Affairs, Hon. Oleru Huda who in her opening remarks delivered an impactful goodwill message on behalf of the Government and people of Uganda. The Hon. Minister commended the initiative of Kampala International University as the leading private University in Uganda for providing a platform that assembled eminent scholars from Universities across East Africa and beyond to brainstorm on critical issues that will promote state governance and economic development and prosperity in the continent. With these remarks, she declared the conference opened. The Vice-Chancellor of Kampala International University Professor Mouhamad Mpezamihigo, and Principal Officers of the University were fully in attendance. Delivering his welcome remarks, the Vice-Chancellor expressed his profound joy and appreciated the effort of the conference organizers for a job well done and for the caliber of personalities present at the opening ceremony. He welcomed all participants to the University and wished presenters credible, robust and rewarding intellectual discussions.

The conference had the following well delineated sub-themes spread across major academic concerns:

1. STEM
2. Agriculture, Biological Sciences and Health
3. Law and Governance
4. Humanities and Social Sciences

## 5. Economics and Management

## 6. Education

The objectives of the conference included the creation of an engaging platform for members of the intellectual community and other concerned stakeholders in education sector and beyond to brainstorm, discuss and articulate sound ideas that will stimulate knowledge and information sharing on cutting edge issues with profound scholarly implications on human existential reality in an increasingly complex and interdependent world; to showcase the academic prowess of Kampala International University and to provide an opportunity for postgraduate students of Kampala International University and the research community to interact and share ideas. The conference organizers identified leadership as a fundamental challenge to the advancement of democratic and economic prosperity within the Sub-Saharan Africa. To bridge the gap is to embrace credible research initiative; innovation and technology have become realistic in setting an agenda for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key speakers at the opening ceremony were erudite Professor Waswa Balunywa, Director, Balunywa Foundation and Leadership Academy, Janice Desire Busingye, Associate Professor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Finance and Administration, Kampala International University, Uganda and Dr. Peter Samuels of Graduate School of Management, Birmingham City University, UK. All three key presenters dwell extensively on the leadership question, research and innovation agenda and access to technology through digital education as critical support base for realistic transition to development within the Sub-Saharan Africa. They all emphasized the need for a transition to digital skills acquisition, transformative curriculum and critical pedagogy as the way to go in the context of overwhelming influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in educational delivery.

The conference attracted participants within and from Universities around Eastern African countries who broke into syndicated sessions for paper presentations according to their thematic areas that addressed stake issues of research and innovation, teaching engagement, leadership among others as pathways to building strong institutions, economies and prosperous Africa of our dream.

### **Total number of registered participants and papers Presented**

Fifty eight (58) participants both local and international registered for the conference. Physical 46 and Virtual 29 making a total of 75. There were multiple paper presentation by authors.

**At the end of robust discussions, the following communiqué issued:**

**1. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM)**

- Conference presentations acknowledged the burning wave of digital transformation across the globe and its impacts on all aspects of human life which has subjected man to a life of technology dependence. Scholars particularly noted the profound application of technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century educational delivery. The application of AI, Robotic and Internet of Things (IoT), Nano Technology, Biotech and Quantum Computing has changed the entire dynamics of educational delivery. The new digital agenda calls for the the intensification of teaching and research in science and technology as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) exerts tremendous influence on man.
- There is need to build a community of digital immigrants that goes with acquisition of digital and vocation skills as a guarantee for the current generation to cope and survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**2. AGRICULTURE, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES AND HEALTH(LIFE SCIENCE)**

- Conference participants noted the devastating high prevalence of malaria and typhoid as well-known undifferentiated febrile illnesses accountable for varying degrees of morbidity and mortality in the sub-Saharan Africa. The high prevalence rate of infection demands immediate proactive measures to effectively contain the devastating effect on humanity. With increase in research funding by concerned governments in Sub-Sahara Africa the scourge of malaria and typhoid on human health will be brought under control.
- Climate change and its attendant impact on crop yield and subsequent food insecurity, its impact on water quality were serious issues discussed and registered in the conference agenda for sustained policy framework to be adopted at various levels of governance as remedial measures. The imputation and computational mechanisms have been carried out through different models to assess the impact of climate change on crop yields in different regions across the globe. Therefore available evidence-based data is required for sustained policy action to address the scourge of climate change to safe humanity.

**3. LAW AND GOVERNANCE**

- With the discovery of oil in Uganda, one of the presentations strongly advocated for a legislative framework that encourages public/private participation in the exploration of petroleum.
  - In the spirit of promoting inter-African solidarity, bi-lateral cooperation and a lasting framework for peace and security in the Sub- Saharan African continent, there was a call

to strengthen the internal mechanisms of conciliation and arbitration as conflict resolution measures without resorting to litigations.

#### 4. HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Lack of strategic and credible leadership built on the principles of transparency and accountability was identified as the major challenge plaguing African countries. The dominant position of presentations linked African development challenges to a lack of responsible and credible leadership and demanded a demonstration of transparency and accountability in governance as ingredients that will inspire support and build confidence among the followers. The melt down in leadership reputation in African is reversible by turning African past failures into success and weaknesses into strengths with improvement in the quality of leadership.
- The resurgence of military intervention in recent time within the Sub- Saharan African was of great concern to conference participants. This was expressed through a paper presentation that categorically pointed at the various influences of colonial masters in the political processes of some African states. African bountiful resources have been the driving force for the surreptitious involvement of the neo-colonialists exerting undue influence through their comprador bourgeoisie in the politics of African countries. Presenters demanded immediate withdrawal from further intervention in the political processes of their former colonies and allow them to freely control their states and resources.
- Furthermore, participants expressed reservations about the democratic processes and culture among African leaders and requested for democratic openness that encourages full participation in the electoral process in their respective countries rather than the sit-tight mentality of most leaders that goes with a constitutional amendment to perpetuate their stay in power.
- On cross-border crimes, this was seriously linked to the forces of globalization that has made it easier for criminal elements to carry out their nefarious activities unhindered. Conference resolved that African leaders should set up a common front that would be able to tackle all forms of cross border crimes and to ensure that criminal elements are made to face the full weight of the law. Furthermore, it was resolved that all proceeds illegally acquired from such criminal activities are recovered through a well co-ordinated effort of African leadership.
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## 5. ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

- There was a strong consensus among conference participants for intensification of awareness creation and enlightenment campaign to educate micro business owners on the importance of business incubation as catalyst for economic development. This should be an integrated approach that will wield all resources to guarantee rapid economic transformation within the African continent.
- For the purpose of trade and development in Africa, a participant called for the expansion of paper technological innovation as a critical support base for adequate maximization of forest products to enhance economic transformation.

## 6. EDUCATION

- Participants in their presentations recognized that there are serious research gaps traceable to poor research funding by governments and private sectors. The conference underscored the importance of an integrated framework for funding research in Universities and research centres. This will lay a sustainable pathway to economic transformation and technological advancement that will propel Africa to the League of Prosperity.
- The disturbing and monstrous issue of brain drain was profoundly established during plenary as one of the greatest undoing of the African continent that keeps losing its vibrant manpower to already developed economies under the popular parlance of **JAPA**. It was convincingly noted that if appropriate and sustained measures are not adopted to improve the quality of governance in Sub-Saharan African countries, the continent is likely to be left out of the comity of nations in all development parameters.
- One serious issue that came up at plenary was strong advocacy for the integration of Afro-centrism as a philosophical orientation of combating intellectual colonialism among African Universities. This is to ensure the restoration of African dignity and pride through an indigenous transformative curriculum.
- There was the need for mass mobilization of digital immigrants to access and acquire digital literacy that has become a veritable partner for the enhancement of educational delivery across climes. It was noted that with the global trend of technological advancement and dependence on technology, equitable access to digital education is a necessity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of robust conference deliberations, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a leadership question that has been the fundamental bane to responsible and credible governance across Sub-Saharan Africa. African countries have been the cesspool of endemic corruption. African leaders must come to the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by adopting transparent and accountable leadership that has been lacking over time. The brazen mismanagement of resources of the people calls for ethical-based leadership anchored on service to the people and not leadership for profitization. Transparent and accountable leadership is seen as the catalyst to transform Africa continent economically, socially, educationally, culturally and technologically.
2. There should be massive investment in education at all levels by building adequate infrastructure that will provide the required support base to stimulate credible and cutting edge research and innovation in the context of a new education order that aligns with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).
3. African Heads of States through their appropriate organs of governance should adopt sustained and integrated policy framework that will be able to address ecological crisis with profound climate change implication. The scourge of climate change is getting intense with massive abuse and compromise of ecological integrity on daily basis. The consequences on humanity are severe food insecurity and lack of quality water among others.
4. There is need for African Union to intensify effort in promoting and strengthening inter-African solidarity and cooperation through building of concerted framework for lasting peace and security and peaceful resolution of disputes among member nations.
5. The upsurge in cross border crimes attributed to the forces of globalization was acknowledged. Globalization and its technological fire-power has stimulated and enhanced cross border crime. Conference advised that there should be coordinated effort through appropriate security mechanisms among African states to tackle criminal elements networking to perpetrate criminality across the continent. Further, all criminal acquisitions should be recovered and those responsible made to face the weight of the law.
6. There is a strong call for democratic openness among African leaders as most leaders have subjected their democratic processes to tight control that has compromised all democratic principles of equal participation. This is done through unethical constitutional amendment that confers undue advantages that breed sit-tight leadership.
7. The resurgence of military intervention in recent time in some African countries is seen as politically unhealthy. Though the western imperialists and their unending desire for exploitation of the resources of those countries is seen as a stimulant to military intervention. There was consensus of opinion for the imperialists to withdraw their surreptitious influence in the political processes of their former colonies and allow them free hands to control their affairs and resources.
8. In view of the identified research gaps traceable to poor funding of researches in Universities and Research centers in Africa by respective governments, it was recommended that an integrated and sustained approach to research funding by

government and corporate bodies is should be adopted as the only pathway to educational, technological and economic transformation in Africa.

9. There should be genuine effort on the part of African governments to mobilize resources in the direction of increasing access to digital literacy and vocational skills acquisition especially among the digital immigrants as a guarantee for the current generation to survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
10. In the context of Africa losing its best brains to the western world in search of greener pasture, it is recommended that African leaders should demonstrate courage, determination and goodwill by ensuring improvement in the working condition and welfare of African scholars as a way of combating the phenomenon of brain drain ravaging African Universities.
11. There is urgency for the integration of Afro-centrism as a philosophical orientation of combating intellectual colonialism that has been existing for many decades. Conference noted that the Western curricula have taken a great toll on Africa's collective psyche. This has westernized Africa for a long educationally, culturally, socially, intellectually and so there is need reinvigorate African consciousness through the domestication of African indigenous curricula that will restore Africa dignity, pride, culture and values.

### **Appreciation**

The IRDeC organizing Committee wish to sincerely thank the Chairman, BoT, for the financial assistance. Our special thanks also to Prof. M. Mpezamihigo (VC), Prof. Janice D. Busingye (DVC F & A), Dr. Sophia Kazibwe (DVC, AA) and the entire Management Team.

Prof. Israel O. Obaroh  
Chairperson