# Towards a Regional Quality Assurance Regime: The Case of the Higher Education Quality Management Initiative for Southern Africa.

*By Amos Thapisa, Tim Ngwira, Kenny Samui, Pieter du Toit and Clemens Wollny*

## Berlin 2004

16/12/2004

Achieving the Millenium Goals:
A Challenge for Global Higher
Education.

1

# Introduction

To achieve the Millennium Goals a new World Order is required where:

- There will be concerted effort to empower the technologically-excluded and poor.

- About $10 Billion a year from rich countries will be made available to the poor (Sachs 2000).

- the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, various United Nations Agencies will be reformed and

- 1$^{st}$ World universities and scientific establishments will change their orientation towards the Underdeveloped World. (Sachs 2000).

- It was in Berlin in 1884 that Africa was partitioned among European powers, which then proceeded to impose different regimes of colonial administration, it is here that the process can be reversed.

# Challenges for Higher Education in Southern Africa

- **New Profit Providers** Demand for higher education is attracting private providers principally from Australia, Europe and the United States of America.
- Higher education is being transnationalised and becoming an important part of the total exports of the developed world (van Dijk 2001).
- The purpose, motive and strategy of academic trade is not necessarily to help in the transformation and development of the under developed societies but to generate profit..
- What is at stake with these developments are the standards and quality of education that is received by the franchisees.
- If educational quality from the North is now in doubt you begin to see and appreciate the reason why in Southern Africa we should have our own regional quality assessment agency.

Achieving the Millenium Goals: A Challenge for Global Higher Education.

# Virtual Universities

- Virtual universities are those that offer courses and instructional programs through the Internet and other technologically enhanced media like teleconferencing.

- The Canadian Virtual University (CVU) offers 2,200 courses and 280 accredited degrees, diplomas, and certificates online and through distance education.

- However private 'fly by night' virtual universities which are not so accredited also offer degrees and diplomas to our students in Southern Africa for a fee.

16/12/2004

Achieving the Millenium Goals:
A Challenge for Global Higher
Education.

4

# Academic Mobility of Students

- Students coming from all walks of life are exerting pressure on universities in our region to compete locally and internationally.

- To cope, alliances and consortia have been formed with universities of the North.

- The cause for concern here are the emergent new values and cultures that are predicated on profit rather than academic considerations (van Dijik 2002).

16/12/2004

Achieving the Millenium Goals: A Challenge for Global Higher Education.

5

# Our Context: The SADC Protocol on Education

- The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education, emphasises the importance of harmonizing regional education systems and maintaining acceptable standards at all educational levels (SADC 1997).

- The ultimate objective is "to progressively achieve the equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of education and training systems in the Region…" P7.

- It acknowledges "that primary and secondary education provides the critical foundation upon which tertiary education is built …." P8.

16/12/2004

Achieving the Millenium Goals:
A Challenge for Global Higher
Education.

6

# The HEQMISA Initiative

- The Higher Education Quality Management Initiative for Southern Africa (HEQMISA) was formulated in Malawi in December 2002 by the SADC Vice Chancellors.

- Conceptually, its purpose was "to enhance the ability of SADC institutions of higher education to play a leading role in the development of the SADC countries by addressing the most pertinent and current issues while maintaining accountability to all stakeholders."

# Purpose of HEQMISA

➢ Assist in the establishment of the Southern African Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency - SAHEQAA.

➢ Initiate cooperation and collaboration among all Southern African Development Community (SADC) institutions of higher education in the establishment of quality assurance initiatives.

➢ Assist institutions of higher learning in Southern Africa to establish internal quality assurance processes by means of institutional self-audits, with the aim of promoting Continuous Quality Improvement.

➢ Provide measures for determining value-for-money and accountability in the use of scarce public resources.

➢ Harmonize quality management policies and systems across Southern Africa with a view to ensure that weaker institutions are assisted to improve their quality management initiatives and thus enhance excellence in  learning and teaching.

Achieving the Millenium Goals:
A Challenge for Global Higher
Education.

# HEQMISA, Vision and Mission

- **Vision:** The existence of high quality institutions of higher education accessible by all, effectively networking and able to contribute significantly towards national and regional programmes on improvement of human development, sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, social justice and political stability in SADC.

- **Mission:** HEQMISA is a facilitator of change in the transformation of institutions of higher education in the SADC region, in line with the Millennium Goals and SADC Protocol on Higher Education.

16/12/2004

Achieving the Millenium Goals: A Challenge for Global Higher Education.

9

# Marketing and Promotion

- **Ministries of Education**

- **Vice Chancellors' Associations & National Training Authorities** e.g Vice Chancellors' associations of South Africa & Zimbabwe.

- **Regional Associations** e.g. Association of African Universities & Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

- **Quality Management Foundations** e.g. Botswana Excellence Foundation, South African Excellence Foundation

- **Donor and Development Agencies e.g. UNESCO, NORAD, GTZ etc.**

# Key Result Areas

➢ The **sharing of information** and knowledge.

➢ **Capacity building** in the field of QM.

➢ The establishment of operational **QM units in** the HEIs.

➢ The establishment of a framework for a **regional QM model**.

➢ The enhancement of **co-ordination and co-operation** around QM issues in the SADC region.

# Planned Main Activities

- **Result Area 1:** Regional co-operation.
- **Result Area 2:** Establishment, operationalization and institutionalization of QM systems and programmes.
- **Result Area 3:** Dissemination of information, knowledge and experience.

Achieving the Millenium Goals: A Challenge for Global Higher Education.

# Accomplishments

1) Vice Chancellors or their representatives gathering in Malawi established the Higher Education Quality Management Initiative for Southern Africa (HEQMISA).

2) The Association of African Universities Conference which met in Mauritius in March 2003 approved the establishment of HQMISA.

3) The Stakeholders Conference held in Johannesburg in September 2003 also voiced its appreciation and support of the initiative.

4) SADC Executive Secretary accepted the idea that HEQMISA is a SADC initiative

Achieving the Millenium Goals:
A Challenge for Global Higher
Education.

# Expected Outcomes

➢ Provision of guidance in the development and implementation of internal and external quality assurance procedures and practices.

➢ Assurance that the quality of academic programmes meet standards and criteria expected by stakeholders & employers.

➢ Assurance that graduates have attained skills and knowledge through the academic programmes that are valued by stakeholders & employers.

➢ Provision of guidance in identifying internal and external standards and criteria consistent with internationally recognized standards.

➢ Assistance in maintaining and developing the quality of academic programmes through enhanced support processes & in accord with International best practice.

16/12/2004

Achieving the Millenium Goals:
A Challenge for Global Higher
Education.

14

# Expected Impact

➢ collaboration among all SADC institutions of higher education in establishing quality assurance initiatives.

➢ existence of the Southern African Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency – SAHEQAA.

➢ availability of quality management policies across Southern Africa to ensure that weaker institutions are assisted to improve their quality management initiatives.

➢ existence of internal quality assurance systems by means of institutional self-audits with an aim to promote (CQI) in institutions of higher education in Southern Africa.

➢ availability of standards and criteria for monitoring both internal and external quality management initiative of the institutions of higher learning in Southern Africa.

Achieving the Millenium Goals: A Challenge for Global Higher Education.

# Regional Quality Assurance Model

A   generic   model   which   incorporates   the following will be preferred;

- A clear focus on the transformation of the learners enhancing them through adding value to their learning and empowering them.

- A synergistic collaboration at the learning interface between teachers and students, management and sponsors, and the university and the community at large.

- Senior management encouragement of a hybrid culture of both collegial and managerial approaches to quality assurance in higher education (Srikanthan and Dalrymple 2002).

16/12/2004

Achieving the Millenium Goals: A Challenge for Global Higher Education.

16

# Conclusion

- It is expected that the existence of HQMISA will culminate in the establishment of the Southern African Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency (SAHEQAA).

- SAHEQAA will ensure regional harmonization and alignment of quality assessment systems in the institutions of higher education.

- Those who will be managing these processes will be trained so that a professional cadre of academic quality assurors can be established.

- Benchmarking of institutions or their practices against regional and international best practices will be encouraged.

# End of Presentation

Thank You very Much for Listening

Achieving the Millenium Goals:
A Challenge for Global Higher
Education.