



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE



Foreword

by

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Dear Participants,

On behalf of the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), it gives me pleasure to welcome you to the HAQAA 2 capacity development programme. The HAQAA 2 Initiative is a critical, timely, and ambitious programme that intends to promote a harmonized and integrated approach to quality assurance at a continental level. This Initiative is driven by the realization that the Addis Convention for the recognition of qualifications is only the first step in achieving the dream of inter-continental mobility. Our continent needs to create a common higher education area that allows our students to pursue higher learning opportunities across national boundaries, secure in the knowledge that there is a reliable basis for recognizing and validating their learning achievement. So too, employers need to have confidence in the standards of the qualifications that are offered across the African continent, and our universities need to be well-managed institutions with a clear sense of purpose, and effective governance and management systems.

On a global level, we are entering an era when the role of higher education in addressing the pressing societal challenges that we face has never been more important. The HAQAA 2 Initiative provides a set of frameworks, standards and guidelines that allows external quality assurance agencies and institutions to address not only the question of what they are good at, but also, and perhaps more importantly, what they are good for. It is not enough for quality assurance to point to the need for effective systems, policies, and processes, important as these are. In higher education, quality assurance is also about transformation, about students as partners in the development of knowledge, and about educational opportunities that are inclusive and open new dimensions of understanding. In other words, quality assurance must also ask our higher education institutions how they understand their mission and role, how they develop their students for the demands of society and the world of work, how they ensure the relevance of their curricula, and how their research and innovation portfolio contributes to social and economic development.

To be more specific, the HAQAA 2 Initiative is embedded within a wider policy network at a continental and regional level. At a continental level, the HAQAA Initiative supports the Continental Education Strategy (2016-2025), with its aim of developing the knowledge, competencies, and skills that are necessary to meet sustainable development goals in an innovative manner, and also to increase the global competitiveness of countries on the African continent. Similarly, at a regional level, the development of effective and harmonized quality assurance systems must allow the SADC to achieve its regional development goals as set out in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (2020-2030) and the SADC Industrialisation Strategy (2015-2063). Thus, as you participate in the HAQAA 2 capacity development programme, I encourage you to look at the wider framework within which this

programme is embedded. To see quality assurance as part of a continuing journey of evidence-based enhancement in which our universities position themselves to make constructive contributions to the pressing developmental challenges of our region and continent.

Prof Martin J Oosthuizen

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