

UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY (UNU)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: July 2008 to June 2009

Education

Within the framework of the UNU and Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) joint initiative entitled “Innovative Centre on Education Support in Africa”, four African universities selected on the basis of their capacity to serve as a resource centre presented research papers on (i) Policies and reforms of educational systems in Africa; (ii) Programmes, pedagogy and teaching tools; (iii) Training of teachers in Africa; and (iv) Research on education in Africa at a seminar held in Accra, in August 2007. The reports’ main findings which were first presented on the occasion of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) were published and disseminated throughout African universities and African higher education institutions, during the first quarter of 2009. The development of an academic database on innovative experiences in the field of education in Africa is ongoing while the UNU is preparing to organize a conference in Africa on the same theme.

UNU-ISP has launched a new capacity development initiative to promote sustainable development in Africa, based on UNU’s network with higher education institutions and affiliated organizations in Africa and Japan. The Education for Sustainable Development in Africa (ESDA) Project aims at developing and testing a graduate-level education programme for professionals to be engaged in sustainable development in Africa. At its completion planned for March 2011, ISP hopes to come up with a concrete plan for full implementation of a Masters-level programme in African universities. A Steering Committee consisting of 7 university-based experts from Africa and Japan is engaged in elaboration of an overall conceptual framework for ESDA and development of curricular programmes oriented to three thematic issues – namely, ‘integrated environmental, economic and social development in rural Africa’, ‘community-based innovation for sustainable urban development in Africa’ and ‘management of mining and mineral resources for sustainable development in Africa’. This project aims to utilize knowledge, experiences and skills accumulated in different universities and institutions existing in Africa, with emphasis on the field-level learning, and design to make maximum use of ICT-based communication for distance learning.

Most postgraduate training programmes in Environmental Science in sub-Saharan Africa often neglect crucial policy and planning elements. UNU-INRA has been collaborating since 2003 with the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in the University’s MSc Environmental Science degree programme through the addition of training modules that emphasize environmental planning and policy analyses.

Agriculture and food security

UNU-INRA is cooperating with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and other international organizations to enhance the capacity of national agricultural research institutions and selected institutions of higher learning in Ghana and Burkina Faso to implement projects designed to enhance efficient use of rainwater and plant nutrient for crop productivity. As part of the effort to make African farmers derive maximum benefits from deposits of agro-minerals on the continent, UNU-INRA, through its Operating Unit at the University of Zambia School of Mines, is working with geologists, farmer-based organizations, extension workers and entrepreneurs in the southern African region to develop appropriate and effective information to improve access to and utilization of agro-minerals such

as phosphate rock, lime and gypsum for sustainable crop production.

Although indigenous African plant resources importantly contribute to food security in sub-Saharan Africa, their existence is continually threatened by negative human activities such as bush fires, over-grazing and over-exploitation. UNU-INRA is working with African scientists, universities and research institutions to undertake conservation of indigenous food and medicinal plants.

The UNU-INRA Operating Unit in Namibia and the ZERI Project Management Unit have been officially designated as the NEPAD Centre of Excellence for a network of 12 countries referred to as the Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBio). The centre has been responsible for research and development of mushroom resources.

Climate change and the management of surface water resources in the Volta basin

UNU-INRA is the lead agency for disseminating the knowledge and technologies generated in the GLOWA Volta Project (GVP), coordinated by the Center for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn and funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The GVP started in 2001 and is now in its final year of implementation. It has been conducted at several locations in Burkina Faso and Ghana, and in a collaborative venture between universities, research institutions, government agencies and NGOs in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Germany, the Netherlands, the USA and other countries. UNU-INRA only became involved in the GVP in its 3rd and final phase, which started about two years ago. During the past years, UNU-INRA organized some 15 training and consultative ventures with attendance of 15-35 persons per event. About half the events were organized in Burkina Faso (in French) and the other half in Ghana (in English). UNU-INRA cooperates closely with national partners in delivering its awareness and training workshops, both in Burkina Faso and Ghana: universities, research institutions, government agencies and management organizations and sub-regional organizations. The emphasis in the training workshops is on database management, modelling tools and related technologies that can be used in quantifying the hydrological cycle and in assessing the effect of climate change on the dynamics of water resources in the Volta Basin.

Income distribution, ODA flows and globalization

The UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) continues a research project designed to improve the capacity in Africa for assessing the impact of policy change at the level of individual households. Teams of researchers in Botswana, Cameroon, Nigeria and Uganda have been provided with the technical assistance necessary to build computer models that allow the impact of tax and transfer reform on income distribution and poverty to be simulated. This project has produced a website with user-friendly models where policy makers and others can experiment with the impacts of policy changes for these four countries and for South Africa as well. The second phase of the project involved an extension to five more African countries: Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia, as well as advancing the project for the original set of countries to produce macro models with linkages to the micro-simulation. This will allow countries to assess the distributional consequences of their macroeconomic policies. In 2007, workshops on this project were held in Cairo, Maputo, Kampala, and Addis Ababa. In addition, the project was presented at the December 2007 biannual research workshop of the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) held in Dar es Salaam. A training workshop was held in December 2008 in Pretoria and another in May 2009 in Kampala.

Increasing the flow of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa is critical to meeting MDGs in the region. The UNU-WIDER special issue of the *Journal of International Development* entitled *Aid to Africa: an Unfinished Agenda* examines the effectiveness of aid

across sub-Saharan Africa, with case studies from Ghana in particular. The research concludes that aid has been broadly effective in raising economic growth, but that the modalities of aid can be improved upon, including more attention to the fiscal management of aid.

Several other activities by UNU-WIDER with implications for NEPAD include the recent projects: “Gender and Food Security”; “Impact of Globalization on the Poor”; “Fragile States, Fragile Groups”; and “Southern Engines of Global Growth”. These projects have significant portions devoted to African issues of relevance to NEPAD. For example, “The Impact of Globalization on the World’s Poor”, has an Africa component. Arising from a project meeting held in Johannesburg in December 2005 that focused specifically on globalization and poverty in Africa, the results of the study are published in a special 2008 issue of the journal, *African Development Review*, in cooperation with the African Development Bank. Current projects include “Southern Engines of Global Growth” (a project meeting was held in September 2008 in Johannesburg in collaboration with the Rand Merchant Bank) and ‘Beyond the Tipping Point – Development in an Urban World’ (a meeting on African urban development was held in Cape Town, in collaboration with the Isandla Institute in June 2008). Over 30 Research Papers dealing with Africa, most resulting from the projects mentioned above, were published during Jan 2008 to June 2009 at www.widerunu.edu.

UNU-WIDER Deputy Director, Augustin Fosu, contributed as a “senior author” to the UN SG’s report on “African Development Needs”, which was presented to the General Assembly in September 2008. In June 2009 he and Wim Naude, also of UNU-WIDER, reviewed the draft 2009 report.

UNU-WIDER was a co-organizer of the side event on ‘Recovering from the Global Crisis: Towards an Action Plan for Africa and the Least Developed Countries’ at the UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development on 25 June 2009. A Discussion Paper “The Global Economic Crisis: Towards Syndrome-Free Recovery for Africa” (Augustin Fosu and Wim Naudé) was prepared as a background document.

In addition, UNU-WIDER has recently published journal articles dealing with Africa, including:

- Augustin Kwasi Fosu ‘Democracy and Growth in Africa: Implications of Increasing Electoral Competitiveness’, *Economics Letters*, vol. 100, no. 3, pp. 442-444 (September) 2008.
- Wim Naudé ‘Is there a Spatial Mismatch in South Africa’s Metropolitan Labour Market?’, *Cities*, vol. 25, pp. 268-276 (September) 2008.
- Augustin Kwasi Fosu and Ernest Aryeetey ‘Ghana’s Post-Independence Economic Growth: 1960-2000’, in *The Economy of Ghana*, edited by Ernest Aryeetey and Ravi Kanbur, James Currey Ltd. [Oct 2008]
- Augustin Kwasi Fosu ‘Implications of the External Debt-servicing Constraint for Public Health Expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *Oxford Development Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 363-377 (December) 2008.
- Wim Naudé ‘Geography, Transport and Africa’s Proximity Gap’, *Journal of Transport Geography*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 1-9 (January) 2009.
- Augustin Kwasi Fosu ‘Inequality and the Impact of Growth on Poverty: Comparative Evidence for Sub-Saharan Africa’, *Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 45, no. 5, pp. 726-745 (May) 2009.

Innovation and development

To explore the further use of free and open source software in Africa, UNU Research and Training Centre on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT) and the Free Software and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA) signed a memorandum of understanding in February

2008 to raise awareness on the benefits of open source software among African policymakers, civil society, academia and businesses.

Following the completion of the UNU-MERIT research and capacity building project on Hydrogen Fuel Cells and Alternatives in the Transport and Energy Sectors (HFCX), UNU-MERIT reached agreement with the South African Department of Science and Technology (DST) in June 2008 to provide support for the follow up phase of the project. The project entails an international dimension – through the continued monitoring of global developments in the hydrogen economy began by the HFCX project - as well as contributing to South Africa's own Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Research, Development and innovation Strategy. The project includes developing guidelines for the establishment of the HFCX project in South Africa and advising the Green Transport Team in areas of Hydrogen Economy activities. A UNU Press book based on the UNU-MERIT project titled *Making Choices about Hydrogen: Transport Issues for Developing Countries* was published in September 2008.

UNU-Cornell Africa Series

To contribute to UN and UNU's efforts on Africa's development and achieving the MDGs on the continent, UNU Office in New York (UNU-ONY), together with UNU Food and Nutrition Programme for Human and Social Development (UNU-FNP) based in Cornell University, initiated a UNU-Cornell Africa Series in 2007, aiming to map out, via a series of conferences, the state of scientific and policy knowledge, with the following goals:

- the UN General Assembly focus on Africa for its 2008 high-level segment;
- establish and further working relationships with UN partners and think-tanks, NGOs and private actors focusing on Africa;
- fuel the setting of more systematic and targeted networks between UNU and African actors; in this context UNU-ONY has so far built a database of 1,600 professionals working on and in Africa;
- contribute to advancing fundamental knowledge and policy formation in the aforementioned areas in the African context, and thereby strengthen future capacity development initiatives in the region; and
- outline concrete action-oriented initiatives with partners in the continent.

The Africa Series brings together academic experts and practitioners on and from Africa, the UN, and civil society to discuss many of the major challenges facing Africa. It is envisioned that the series will result in 5-6 volumes, published by UNU Press or Cornell University Press, based on the themes of the series.

The Africa Series symposia address issues concerning: food and nutrition, governance, HIV/AIDS and public health, environmental sustainability, and higher education. A final event will outline the lessons learned from the preceding events, contribute to UNU Africa Strategy, and elaborate on policy recommendations.

The Africa Series is undertaken in association with various UN agencies, including WFP, WHO, the World Bank, Economic Commission for Africa, and UNDP. Also, in addition to these partnerships, the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations, UNICEF, UNAIDS, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and Konrad Adenauer Foundation provided their financial support.