The Role of Higher Education in Africa’s Resurgence

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Introduction

The Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Johannesburg, Professor Ihron Rensburg, members of the University Council and the Executive Leadership Group, faculty and students; the Minister of Finance, Mr. Pravin Gordhan, former Cabinet Ministers, former Chief of the South African Defense Forces, General Siphiwe Nyanda, former Premier of North West Province, Mr. Popo Molefe, ambassadors, distinguished guests; and the family of Mr. Eric Molobi, thank you for the singular honor of inviting me to give the first Eric Molobi Memorial Lecture.

When I received the invitation, I immediately accepted because of my admiration for this university, my love for the great city of Johannesburg which I visit often and have family and friends including several at UJ, and above all, because of the exemplary life and contributions of the person the lecture commemorates and celebrates. Mr. Molobi models for all of us the indefatigable spirit of struggle for emancipation and empowerment through his political activism in the dark days of apartheid, and in his commitment to inclusive and innovative economic and social development, and to transformative education in democratic South Africa.

In honour and recognition of the passions and principles that animated Mr. Molobi’s life, I decided to talk on the “The Role of Higher Education in Africa’s Resurgence.” I will explore the intertwined challenges facing African higher education and the prospects for sustainable development. Both universities and development across the continent are undergoing complex and contradictory changes that reflect, reframe, and reproduce social inequalities that threaten the humanistic and historic dreams of the nationalist project for self-determination, democratization, development, nation-building, and regional integration. My last two books deal with these issues in greater depth: Africa’s Resurgence: Domestic, Global and Diaspora Transformations (2014) and The Transformation of Global Higher Education, 1945-2015 (2016).

I begin by looking at the changing contexts of African development, in which the transformations in the higher education sector and the sector’s contributions can productively be located. In this regard, I interrogate the narrative of Africa rising, its manifestations, and dynamics. This is followed by an examination of the major changes taking place in African higher education, which are part and parcel of the broad shifts occurring around the world. I conclude by trying to link the two, suggesting some of the ways in which higher education and the development project can be mutually reinforcing in the construction of inclusive, integrated, innovative and sustainable democratic developmental states and societies on our beloved continent.
Contemporary African Development Trends

Narratives of Africa Rising/Rising Africa

There has been a marked shift from the Afropessimism of the 1980s and 1990s to Afroptimism verging on Afri-euphoria. Let me preface my remarks by noting both are dangerous. One is based on the pathological denigration of Africa so deeply rooted in the western imagination and colonial discourse, the other invokes fantasies of merry Africa beloved in uncritical Afrocentric celebration of African pasts and futures.

1. The media: the swing from Afropessimism to Afroptimism is best captured in *The Economist*. In May 2000, it published a cover story, “The Hopeless Continent;” in October 2008, it revised that harsh judgement with lead article, “There is Hope;” the cover story of December 2011, discovered and proclaimed, “Africa Rising.” This narrative has been repeated in other economic magazines, such as *African Business*, and the general media in Africa and elsewhere.

2. International management consulting firms: McKinsey and Company, 2010 report, *Lions on the move: The progress and potential of African economies*; recently it published *Lions on the move ii: Realizing the potential of Africa’s economies* (September 2016) where it reaffirmed “the continent's fundamentals remain strong.” Although the report noted growth paths within the continent will continue to diverge, it maintained “Africa as a whole is projected by the International Monetary Fund to be the world’s second-fastest-growing economy to 2020.”

3. International financial institutions: reports and conferences by World Bank; African Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, etc.


5. My argument in my book *Africa’s Resurgence* is that we should avoid the rhetoric of Afro-pessimism and Afroptimism, let alone Afri-euphoria, and examine, soberly and critically, the complex and contradictory changes the continent is undergoing. I focus on the processes of domestic, global, and diaspora transformations whose trajectory is as multidimensional as it is unpredictable.

Manifestations of the Resurgence

1. Since 2000 Africa has been growing faster than other world regions except Asia and has enjoyed rates of growth reminiscent of the post-independence decade of the 1960s. Between 2000-2010 real annual GDP growth was 5.4%; this slowed to 3.3% between 2010 and 2015. Growth continued despite the global financial crisis and decline in commodity prices.

2. Africa’s growth is more broad based and increasingly less dependent on primary commodities. The contribution of resources was -4% between 2010
and 2014, compared to 12% during the previous decade. Services including, transportation and finance contributed 48% of GDP compared to 44% a decade earlier. Industry raised its share from 17% to 23%; much of it in construction and utilities—manufacturing grew much slower at 4.3% between 2010-2014.

3. Before 2000 almost all FDI went to resource-rich African economies. Now resource-poor economies outpace the latter when investment is measured as a share of GDP. Foreign investors from other African countries are especially keen on non-commodity industries: nearly a third of their investments are in financial services. FDI rose from $14 billion in 2004 to $73 billion in 2014.

4. The number of African countries classified as middle income increased from 13 in 2006 to 21 in 2013, and 10 more countries are expected to attain this status by 2025 on current trends. The size of the middle class in many countries has also grown.

The Dynamics of Africa’s Growth

Africa’s growth can be attributed to three sets of factors: domestic transformations, the restructuring of the continent's global engagements, and its deepening engagements with the diaspora.

Domestic Transformations
1. The expansion of intra-African engagements—trade and investment:
   a. The annual growth rate of intra-African trade averaged 13.5% between 2000 and 2010. According to the AfDB, “The trade was valued at almost USD$81 billion in 2012 and it is growing faster than Africa’s exports to the rest of the world.”
   b. Growth of intra-African investments: The share of FDI projects in Africa with other African countries as their source reached 22.8% in 2013 from 8% in 2007, and 16% in 2009. Intra-African investment is second only to Western Europe as a source for FDI on the continent. Intra-African investments are also the second-largest source of job creation on the continent. South Africa is the most active intra-African investor, followed by Morocco, Nigeria, Kenya, etc.
   c. The growth of intra-African trade and investment is encouraged by improving regional value chains and strengthening regional integration.
2. Socioeconomic changes
   a. Population growth: Africa had 1.1 billion people 2013—15.5% of world population; projected to grow on current trends to 2.4 billion 2050—25.1% of world population; 4 billion by 2100—40% of world’s population. In an aging world especially in the Global North many see this as a favorable long-term fundamental. Whether this will be a developmental boon or Malthusian nightmare will depend on the rate and patterns of Africa’s growth and development over the next few decades. Developing inclusive quality education is imperative for the continent to yield the demographic dividend of its bulging population.
   b. Urbanisation: African cities are growing at breakneck speed, at 3.6% annually, double the world average. Currently about 40% of African people live in urban environments, but by 2030, the number will exceed 50% as
Africa ceases to be a predominantly rural continent and some cities are expected to swell by up to 85% of their current size. Africa’s major cities are emerging as hotspots of investment, consumption, and growth. Whether they become transformative engines of development, or cesspools of slums and squalor, will also depend on the rates and patterns of economic growth and development and urbanisation.

c. Growth of middle classes: The African Development Bank estimated in its report, *The Middle of the Pyramid: Dynamics of the Middle Class* in Africa, estimated that in 2010 34% of the population was middle class, and projected in another report, *Africa in 50 Years’ Time: The Road Towards Inclusive Growth* that the middle class will reach 42% or 1.1 billion people in 2050.

3. Democratisation and development of more vocal civil societies and social movements, notwithstanding the setbacks, reversals, and chicaneries of Africa’s dictators and political classes wedded to authoritarianism.

4. Reduction in some continent’s most debilitating wars and conflicts, although terrorism is a growing threat in northern, western, and eastern Africa.

**Restructuring of Africa’s Global Engagements**

To fully understand the restructuring of Africa’s global engagement one has to examine the profound changes taking place in the global political economy. These transformations have become more evident in the last few decades, but their roots lie in shifts in the international division of labour going back many decades more. Unfortunately time does not allow for a detailed analysis of the unfolding of this complex historical process that should at the very least be traced to the Second World War.

*Shifts in the Global Economy Since 2000*

1. The declining dominance of the Northern economies accelerated by the ‘Great Recession’.

2. The growing importance of the emerging economies as represented by the rise of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa) and MINTs (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey).

Africa’s globalisation as represented by the expanding and shifting range and dynamics of relations with the Northern and emerging economies is one of the major developments of the 21st century, although serious questions remain about the contribution to sustainable development of the current forms of integration of many African countries into the global economy.

*Some Features of the Emerging Economies*

1. Since the 1990s the emerging economies have been growing much faster than the developed countries so that their share and importance for the global economy have risen while those of the Northern economies including the U.S. and EU have fallen signalling, according to some economic historians, a historic shift in the direction of the world economy. This growth has slowed significantly for all the BRICS, but the emerging economies as a
whole continue to grow and increase their share of the world economy.

2. Generally the emerging markets largely were not hit as hard by the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 as the Northern economies suggesting, in the view of some scholars, a decoupling in their growth trajectories.

3. Growing interaction between the emerging markets is a major factor in their economic expansion. This is clearly evident for Africa, whose growth has become less dependent on the Northern economies and increasingly driven by relations with the other emerging economies. For example, Africa-China trade grew from $2.4 billion in 1992 to about $10 billion in 2000 to $128.5 billion in 2010 and hit almost $300 billion in 2015. China overtook the US as Africa’s largest single trading partner in 2009. Africa-India trade rose from $1 billion in 1990 to $3 billion in 2000 to $35 billion in 2008-9 to $75-90 billion in 2015.

**Characteristics of the BRICS**

1. Population and physical size: The BRICS account for 40% of the world population and 25% of the world’s landmass.

2. Economic growth:
   a. The relative share of the BRICS of world GDP increased by some 3.6 times from 1990 to 2012 so that they accounted for 56% of world GDP growth.
   b. By 2012 the BRICS claimed about 20% of world GDP compared to 24% for the EU and 21% for US, and for 43% of world reserves of foreign exchange.
   c. The BRICS increased their share of total world trade to 21.3% as compared to 25% for the EU, and 27% for the United States.

3. Benefits of the BRICS for Africa
   a. These ‘emerging partners’ have presented Africa enhanced opportunities for trade and investment.
   b. They have offered higher commodity prices and enhanced competition for African resources.
   c. The BRICS have invested heavily in African infrastructure and industry shunned by the Global North.
   d. They have forced the major economic powers including the EU, Japan, and the United States to rethink their engagement with Africa.

4. Pitfalls of the BRICS for Africa
   a. The threat of reversal of democratic governance and human rights gains as some of the BRICS are authoritarian states.
   b. The undermining of African environmental, labor and safety standards.
   c. The dangers of mortgaging the future and selling short Africa’s natural resources by corrupt officials.
   d. There is little evidence thus far that the BRICS have assisted in integrating African economies into global value chains.

**Africa’s Deepening Engagement with the Diaspora**

There is growing recognition in development discourse of the importance of diasporas. This can be seen in changing analytical metaphors from “brain drain” to “brain gain” to “brain circulation”. Concretely, this is evident in the establishment of diaspora affairs
departments by governments—in 2004 the African Union recognized the diaspora as 6th region; and in new forms of diaspora activism to engage their countries of origin.

Diaspora engagements with their homelands are often complex, contradictory, and always changing so that it is hard to make generalisations about the behaviour and activities of any particular diaspora. Diaspora communities, like all communities are highly differentiated according to the social inscriptions of gender, class, ethnicity, religion, and ideology. Historically, the African diasporas played a fundamental role in the development of Pan-Africanism through which various continental nationalisms were incubated and developed. One can distinguish six versions of Pan-Africanism marked by complex intersections: trans-Atlantic, Black Atlantic, continental, sub-Saharan, Pan-Arab, and global.

Contemporary diaspora engagements with Africa include demographic, economic, political, cultural, social, iconographic, and digital flows.

1. Economic: The range of contributions from the diaspora includes remittances, philanthropy, human capital, and investment. From 2000 to 2007 remittance flows to the continent increased by more than 141 percent. In 2010, remittances sent by the 31 million international African migrants reached nearly $40 billion, equivalent to 2.6 percent of Africa’s GDP; climbed to $66 billion in 2014, led by Nigeria ($20.8 billion) and Egypt ($20.4 billion). This was higher than FDI inflows—thus the diaspora is Africa’s biggest foreign investor. Second generation diasporas and the historic diasporas are less involved in remittances and tend to gravitate more towards philanthropy and investment.

2. Political: The diaspora can also exert significant political influence, both positive and negative, on both their countries of origin and residence, and international institutions like the UN through protest, public relations campaigns, and diplomatic pressure. In the US the anti-apartheid struggle was heavily supported by diaspora mobilisation.

3. Social and cultural: Diasporas acquire and possess social and cultural capital—attributes and attitudes, skills and sensibilities—that can be mobilised for the development of their countries of origin. Increasingly African governments and the diasporans themselves are mobilising this social and cultural capital.

4. Digital diasporization: the Internet and social media have become powerful spaces for dynamic diaspora connections, negotiations, and inventions of transnational identities. Nollywood, one can argue, has done more to bring Africa alive and normalized it among the diaspora that generations of political exhortations about pan-Africanism never achieved.

Assessing Africa’s Growth

1. Undoubtedly Africa has made striking economic strides since the 2000s. But serious challenges remain, especially in three crucial areas:
   a. Translating economic growth into decent job opportunities.
   b. Improving service delivery.
   c. Reducing social and spatial inequalities. Many African governments have failed to convert the wealth created by economic growth into opportunities to build better lives and futures for all their people.

2. Thus the glaring mismatch between economic growth and inclusive
development continues. It can be blamed on many factors including

a. The inability to unleash what some call the green and blue revolutions of agriculture and fishing.
b. Incapacity to cope effectively with the effects of climate change.
c. Underdeveloped domestic financial systems.
d. Pervasive corruption and the damaging consequences of plunder by foreign interests
e. Exceedingly low rates of Africa’s global value chain reflecting the continent’s limited industrialisation and excessive dependence on natural resources and export of raw materials..
f. Many countries are held back by low domestic capacity in terms of skills, productive capacity, poor infrastructure, and unfavorable business environment.

3. Turning Growth into Development: Growth does not by itself, as we learned from development studies in the 1970s, turn into development. The most decisive drivers for Africa’s long-term development will be:

a. Increasing intra-African trade and raising the global value chains of African industrial and service sectors.
b. In the short term this requires the construction of democratic developmental states.
c. In the long term, it is imperative for Africa to establish integrated, inclusive, and innovative societies and states without which African countries will not realise their full potential, as they will continue to pay the heavy economic costs of suboptimal growth, the political price of inequality-generated conflicts, and the deficits of creative and entrepreneurial inertia. This is one reason why the creation of robust and transformative higher education systems is an historical imperative.

Transformations in Higher Education

Massification

a. No. of universities in the world from 6,931 in 1970 to 18808 in 2015. The fastest growth was registered in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean; for Africa it was from 170 to 1639.
b. Tertiary enrolments 32.6 million in 1970 to 198.6 million in 2013. Fastest growth in the global South—for Africa from 0.74 million to 12.2 million, Asia 7.3 million to 108.2 million, and South America 1.2 million to 18.0 million, while for Europe it was from 13.3 million to 31.5 million and North America 9.8 million to 27.0 million. Enrolment ratios in Africa rose to 12.08% compared to the world average of 32.88%.
c. Factors include population growth, urbanisation, decolonisation, development, and demands from women and other disadvantaged groups for access to the social, cultural, and political capitals and opportunities promised by higher ed.
d. Variations among countries and regions: e.g. demographic growth countries in global North facing demographic decline (institutional supply increasingly outstrips student demand) cf. global South, especially Africa, experiencing rapid population growth (student demand overwhelms institutional supply).
Privatisation

a. Explosion of private universities and privatisation of public universities; private universities worldwide grew from 40.60% in 1969 to 57.47% in 2015. In Africa private universities now outnumber public universities: 972 to 667.
b. Factors: (i) escalating student demand and incapacity of public institutions to meet it; (ii) declining state support for public higher education arising out of financial constraints and the imperatives of neo-liberal ideology.
c. As higher education institutions have become less dependent on public funding, they are forced to cultivate new revenue streams including ‘cost sharing,’ soliciting private donor support, and marketing institutional services.
d. As economic rather than educational outcomes have assumed greater salience, ‘credentialism’ and ‘consumerist’ expectations have risen among students.
e. Curricula realignments to address market demands and skills mismatch; growth of some fields e.g., business and IT and decline of others e.g. humanities.

Knowledge Reorganisation

a. Evident in the expansion and emergence of new disciplines, sub-disciplines, and inter-, trans-, and multi-disciplinary fields of study from environmental studies to ‘big science’; led to shifts in the positioning and status of different academic fields both inside and outside the academy.
b. Shifts in global knowledge hegemonies and hierarchies
   i. Dominance of Global North declining and rising for emerging economies; e.g. North America’s share of global research and development declined from 37.9% in 1994 to 28.9% in 2013, while Europe’s fell from $31.4% to 22.7%; it rose for Asia from 26.6% to 42.2%, and to much smaller extent for Latin America and the Caribbean from 1.9% to 3.5%, and for Africa from 0.9% to 1.3%, respectively.
   ii. The proportions of the developed countries in the growth and distribution of researchers and publications also fell relative to the emerging economies, especially China. Copious details in my book.
c. Modes of scholarly knowledge production, dissemination, and consumption are also undergoing changes, facilitated by the rise of new ICTs.
   i. Technology-enhanced learning has brought new pedagogical opportunities and challenges.
   ii. Role of libraries changing from repositories of information into nerve centres for digitised information communication; necessitating the provision information and digital literacy for students.
   iii. Changes in academic publishing by the acceleration, commercialisation, and digitisation of scholarly communication; academic impact measures from citation index to altmetrics (social media & data mining tools).
d. Disruption of academic profession
   i. Shifts in the relative influence among the state, academic professionals, and market models of governance; progressive shift towards more top-down institutional governance.
   ii. Edicts of managerialism increasingly undermining academic autonomy.
and freedom.

iii. Both academics and academic work are also becoming more fragmented. This is a product of the institutional, professional, and instructional unbundling of faculty roles.

iv. Academic workforce is also becoming more casualized and stratified as institutions seek to cut costs by reducing the number of permanent faculty and expand the ranks of part-time faculty (over 75% in US a reversal of the ratio of tenured and contingent faculty in the early 1970s).

Internationalisation

a. Internationalization has emerged as one of the defining features of 21st higher education, engendering new modes, rationales, and practices of collaboration, competition, comparison, and commercialisation.

b. The proponents of internationalisation trumpet its economic, political, social, cultural, and academic benefits. Also crucial is the consuming drive among a growing number of institutions for international recognition and branding.

c. One measure of the internationalisation of higher education is the international flow of students. The number of outbound tertiary students rose from 1,822,331 in 2000 to 3,546,552 in 2013.
   i. Asia raised its share from 43.39% to 55.45%, while Europe’s share fell from 31.51% to 24.21%, and North America from 7.1% to 5.29% during the same period. The respective shares of Africa and South America also fell, from 13.12% to 10.53% and 3.67% to 3.60%, respectively.
   ii. But North America and Western Europe increased their dominance as destinations for international students, as their collective share rose from 72.59% in 2000 to 74.26% in 2013.

d. Export of institutional models from the global North, which reinforces old historical patterns, to the global South. Particularly influential is the U.S. model.

e. Some scholars see the development of education hubs that offer a critical mass of local and international educational providers, as representing a new form, the third generation, of organizing and internationalising higher education in the 21st century.
   i. According to this formulation the first generation involved the mobility of people, primarily students, who went for full degree or short-term study and research.
   ii. The movement of programs and providers that comprised the creation of twinning, franchised, articulated/validated, joint/double award, and online/distance programs, or the formation of branch campuses and independent institutions characterised the second generation.

f. Importance of both internationalisation at home and internationalisation abroad is increasingly recognised as complementary.

g. Transnational research and scholarly collaborations have grown as well. Bibliometric studies show that publications with authors from multiple countries have far higher rates of citation than domestic or single-country ones.
   i. The percentage of co-authored articles doubled between the early 1970s and early 1990s.
   ii. The share of co-authored science and engineering articles worldwide
increased from 8% in 1988 to 23% in 2009. The rate was even higher for the world’s major science and technology regions where in 2009 it ranged from 27% to 42%.

h. Competition for talented students, top faculty, scarce resources, and reputational capital has intensified, sanctified and mediated by global rankings.

Accountability

a. As the costs and need for competitiveness among higher education institutions increase, demands have grown for accountability from all the affected constituencies. The concerns about the value proposition of higher education tend to find expression in the quality assurance and accountability movements.

b. No longer enough for universities to brag about inputs; now they are expected to demonstrate value through outputs, including learning outcomes, retention, graduation and placement rates, and employability. Employability is particularly critical. It encompasses the acquisition knowledge and skills (job-specific and generic work skills), development of personal qualities and values (e.g., reliability and time management), and social networks. A recent report on Universities, Employability and Inclusive Development: Repositioning Higher Education in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa makes sobering reading.

a. The African media is full of stories of the difficulties of graduates finding suitable employment and employers finding suitable graduates.

b. The Inter-University Council of East Africa estimates “over half of all graduates are inadequately prepared for employment.”

c. The accountability movement also manifests itself in rising student protests for access, equity, and affordability. There has been a resurgence of student activism around the world: in Europe from Britain following the increase of tuition from £3290 to £9000 in 2010 to Spain, Portugal, Greece, Belgium Switzerland, Ukraine, and Albania; in North America in Canada, the US and Mexico; in Asia in the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Bangladesh; and in North Africa during the Arab Spring, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and South Africa, etc.

d. The demands and pressures have led to the development of national, regional, and global quality assurance and regulatory regimes in many countries especially since the 1990s, for both public and private institutions.

Conclusion: Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Development

Based on the Framing Paper I wrote for the 1st African Higher Education Summit held in Dakar, March 2015, and the summit’s Declaration and Action Plan the following priorities are critical for African higher education to promote the development project.

1. Revitalizing the commitment of the various stakeholders to expand higher education, including raising enrollments to global averages while making concomitant investments in academic staff, infrastructure, and facilities by the state, private sector, society at large, and higher education institutions themselves to ensure and raise quality.

2. Promoting the diversification, differentiation, and harmonization of higher
education systems at the national, institutional and regional/continental levels.

3. Increasing higher education investments at institutional, national and international levels to facilitate development, promote stability, enhance access and equity, and develop, recruit and retain excellent academic staff and ensure high levels of institutional performance.

4. Pursuing excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, public service and provision of solutions to the development challenges and opportunities facing African peoples across the continent.

5. Building capacity in research, science, technology, and innovation by developing and designating select universities as research universities that drive the higher education sector and are globally competitive.

6. Strengthening linkages between academia, business, and government to overcome the skills mismatch and improve the production of graduates who are employable and who can drive the continent forward.

7. Ensuring that higher education is at the centre of nation building processes and nurturing of democratic citizenship by deepening the culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law as enshrined in the relevant sections of African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, 1981 and in the AU’s Agenda 2063.

8. Promoting productive and empowering forms of internationalization that facilitate the Africanization of global knowledges and globalization of African knowledges and include the mobilization of the Diaspora in the revitalization of the pan-Africanist project for the 21st century.

In short, it is imperative that the various key constituencies in African higher education from government to the general public to parents, and to students, faculty, staff, and administrators in the academic institutions themselves raise the value proposition of African higher education. This requires commitment to:

1. The 4As: availability (of institutions), access (to institutions), affordability (in institutions), and accountability (by institutions).

2. The 4Cs: comprehensiveness (provision of education that develops the whole person), curiosity (cultivation of lifelong learning), community (fostering civic values), capabilities (developing soft skills and attributes beyond technical, job specific, and generic cognitive skills, especially communication and critical thinking skills, problem solving, empathy, creativity, self-confidence, and intercultural, international, interdisciplinary and information literacies).

3. The 4Is: inclusion (valuing institutional diversity—class, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc.); innovation (cultivating creative and entrepreneurial mindsets); integration (building cohesive teaching, learning and research communities); impact (fostering inclusive cultures of institutional assessment).

4. The 4Rs: relevance (of knowledges produced, disseminated, and consumed to economy, society, and the times—entails sustaining the project of decolonizing knowledge from the historic epistemic stranglehold of Eurocentricism); retention (ensuring student completion, faculty and staff professional development and success); research (unwavering commitment to critical and basic knowledge production and evidence based decision making); and rigor (in all activities to ensure academic excellence, operational excellence and service excellence).
Only then will our universities contribute meaningfully to the ‘Africa rising’ narrative, turning it from a momentary rhetoric reflecting the fortunes of the few into a lasting reality for the well-being of the many. Higher education is a powerful engine for the construction of inclusive, integrated, innovative and sustainable democratic developmental states and societies. It is indispensable for fulfilling the dreams of generations of struggles against imperial and neo-colonial exploitation and marginalization and realizing our peoples enduring aspirations for emancipation and advancement. With that the continent may finally realize Kwame Nkrumah’s vision, expressed prematurely at the height of decolonization that the late 20th century would be Africa’s, and turn the 21st century into one that is truly ours. THANK YOU!