through their own quality assurance enterprise, the development of international standards may be dominated by more developed countries, perhaps choking off the traditions of countries that enjoy fewer resources. Although the UNESCO plan acknowledges this need, it is not clear that addressing it is a priority.

The *second* opportunity cost relates to higher education institutions. The focus on international standards as a government activity appears to be at the price of the key actors providing vital support to the development of a strong international voice for higher education institutions worldwide. UNESCO and OECD, organizations of governments, at least thus far prefer working outside the ambit of higher education and for the most part do not engage institutional leaders, policymakers, and academics in their deliberations. Yet, colleges and universities are among the oldest "international" institutions in the world, and their advice about whether to implement international quality standards might be quite useful. The development of international standards without the involvement of the academic community raises fundamental questions about whether such standards will ever be taken seriously—unless they are forced on institutions by government.

> **The development of international standards without the involvement of the academic community raises fundamental questions about whether such standards will ever be taken seriously.**

The *third* opportunity cost relates to other initiatives that these actors might undertake if they were not focusing on international quality standards—initiatives that might provide greater added value than the debate about international standards. One conspicuous example is attention to the worldwide flourishing of dubious providers of higher education: "degree mills" and "accreditation mills." An international dialogue and frame of reference to address shoddy higher education in an international setting are badly needed. It is difficult for any single country to address this. Legal constraints are one factor here and technology is another—distance delivery of degree mills cannot be effectively addressed by a single country. The key actors would help all of higher education by working with institutions and accreditation/ quality assurance organizations around the world to develop means to (1) identify rogue providers, (2) develop tools to aid students and the public in distinguishing between rogue and reliable providers, and (3) explore effective practices to discourage rogue providers.

*Conclusion*

The multinational actors described here are devoting significant energy to creating international quality standards for higher education. While it is too soon to determine whether these efforts will be successful, it is not too soon to acknowledge that there are significant opportunity costs associated with these efforts. Important quality-related issues that these actors could profitably address are receiving little, if any, attention. These include aiding developing countries in building national quality assurance capacity, contributing to the creation of a strong international voice for academic institutions about higher education quality, and addressing such pressing issues in the international environment as identification of degree mills and accreditation mills. ∎

# Accra Declaration on GATS and the Internationalization of Higher Education in Africa

*Editor's note: The following declaration was issued by a conference held in Accra, Ghana in April, 2004. Participants from 16 African countries discussed the implications of GATS and internationalization and agreed on the following document. The conference was organized by the Association of African Universities, UNESCO, and the Council on Higher Education (South Africa). It is presented here to provide an African perspective on the continuing worldwide debate on GATS and related issues.*

*Preamble*

It is imperative to reaffirm the role and importance of higher education for sustainable social, political and economic development and renewal in Africa in a context where ongoing globalisation in higher education has put on the agenda issues of increased cross border provision, new modes and technologies of provision, new types of providers and qualifications, and new trade imperatives driving education. Higher education in Africa has to respond to these challenges in a global environment characterised by increasing differences in wealth, social well-being, educational opportunity and resources between rich and poor countries and where it is often asserted that 'sharing knowledge, international co-operation and new technologies can offer new opportunities to reduce this gap ("Preamble to World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century," 1998, p. 19).

We participants in this workshop on the Implications of WTO/GATS for Higher Education in Africa assembled in Accra, Ghana from 27-29 April 2004:

*Recalling*

• the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (1948), Article 26, paragraph 1, which affirms that 'Everyone has the right to education' and that 'higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit

• the World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century (1998), which affirms the role of higher education in the 'consolidation of human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace, in a context of justice', and which asserts that 'international co-operation and exchange are major avenues for advancing higher education throughout the world', and further that the 'principles of international co-operation based on solidarity, recognition and mutual support, true partnership that equitably serves the interests of the partners and the value of sharing knowledge and know-how across borders should govern relationships among higher education institutions in both developed and developing countries and should benefit the least developed countries in particular'

• the "AAU Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium" (2001), which calls for 'the revitalisation of the African University and for a renewed sense of urgency in acknowledging the crucial role it should play in solving the many problems facing [the] continent', and which urges African universities to 'give priority to effective and positive participation in the global creation, exchange and application of knowledge' and urges African governments to 'continue to assume the prime responsibility for sustaining their universities, in partnership with other stakeholders' because of the 'critical role of universities in national development'

*Noting*

• the negative impact of decades of structural adjustment policies and inadequate financing on the viability of higher education institutions as teaching and research institutions in Africa

• the fact that the regeneration of higher education institutions in many African countries is at an early and vulnerable stage

• the fact that regulatory regimes for the licensing/ registration, quality assurance and accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes are undeveloped in many African countries or in early stages of development accompanied by problems of poor resourcing and capacity

• the fact that various forms of internationalisation in higher education, including cross-border provision, are already underway and that national, regional and international mechanisms to foster and regulate international

co-operation in higher education have been established by national governments, by regional associations and by UNESCO and other bodies

• the ambiguities, silences and lack of ªlarity in GATS provisions, the lack of transparency in GATS deliberations, and insufficient knowledge and understanding of the full implications of GATS for higher education, especially in developing country contexts

*Declare*

• a renewed commitment to the development of higher education in Africa as a 'public mandate' whose mission and objectives must serve the social, economic and intellectual needs and priorities of the peoples of the African continent while contributing to the 'global creation, exchange and application of knowledge' ("AAU Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium"). We therefore caution against the reduction of higher education, under the GATS regime, to a tradable commodity subject primarily to international trade rules and negotiations, and the loss of authority of national governments to regulate higher education according to national needs and priorities.

• continued support for multiple forms of internationalisation in higher education which bring identifiable mutual benefits to African countries as much as to their co-operating partners in other countries and regions. We therefore re-affirm our commitment to reducing obstacles to international co-operation in respect of knowledge creation, exchange and application, to the enhancement of access to higher education and to increasing academic mobility within Africa itself.

• a commitment to the strengthening of national institutional capacity and to developing national and regional arrangements for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications, and to greater co-operation and exchange of information on quality assurance issues relating to cross-border provision, including active support for and participation in activities to give effect to the Arusha Convention and to NEPAD objectives.

• a commitment to engagement with the political, educational and economic implications of GATS for higher education. We therefore call on African governments and other African role players to exercise caution on further GATS commitments in higher education until a deeper understanding of GATS and the surrounding issues is developed and a more informed position is arrived at on how trade related cross-border provision in higher education can best serve national and regional development needs and priorities on the African continent.

*Resolve to*

• promote greater availability of information on GATS and Higher Education in Africa, and more debate and discussion among relevant stakeholders in order to increase understanding of the potential dangers and/or opportunities from having cross-border higher education regulated by GATS.

• promote further research on the nature and extent of cross-border provision in Africa and on quality assurance and accreditation systems appropriate for the development of higher education in Africa.  ∎

# Wars, Geopolitics, and University Governance in the Arab States

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Universities in the Arab states expanded considerably, from 10 universities in 1939, to 47 in 1975, and to 184 in 2003. In 2004, 40 of the 149 universities affiliated with the Association of Arab Universities were private. Whereas there were roughly 30,000 students in 1945, 5 million were registered in a "tertiary course" in 1999 (out of a population of 240,000,000). Enrollment rates range from 7 percent of the 18-to-23 age group in Sudan to 49 percent in Libya. Gender inequality is most pronounced in Yemen and Iraq, placing women at a disadvantage, while at Gulf universities women are overrepresented. According to the 2003 *Arab Human Development Report,* universities are overcrowded, underfunded and "lack a clear vision."

*Universities, Civil Wars, and Military Conflicts*
Political instability, civil wars, and military conflicts affect the governance of Arab universities in many ways. Following independence or military coups, higher education institutions were brought into the orbit of the state's agenda. The appointment of university presidents and deans and the election of student unions are regulated, restricting participation in university affairs. There is no separation between universities and the state, with the exception of Lebanese and Palestinian universities.

In Sudan, the prolonged civil war triggered extensive brain drain, leaving many university departments devoid of senior academic staff. The consequences for the quality of research and teaching are incalculable. Moreover, following a 1989 coup, Sudanese universities founded during the 1990s were part of Arabization and Islamization policies, fueling conflicts over the aims of higher education in a country populated by different cultural and sociolinguistic groups.

In Lebanon, as in Algeria, universities were affected by civil wars during the 1970s and 1990s, respectively. In Lebanon, the civil war "fragmented" universities as a result of assaults on infrastructure, faculty, and students. Munir Bashshur observes that during post-civil-war reconstruction an effort was made to accommodate cultural and political diversity, while striking a balance between the state's supervisory role and the universities' autonomy. In a country where all universities are private save one, about half the student population is enrolled on the various campuses of that one public university. A book by Mahmoud Abu-'Ishsha, *The Crisis of Higher Education in Algeria and the Arab World* ([Arabic] Beirut: Dar Al-Jil, 2000), presents a professor's candid description of university governance in the context of political conflict and division and the precarious state of academic ethics, quality, and standards.

> *The worldwide contested and opposed American and British-led military invasion and occupation of Iraq in spring 2003 triggered student rallies and heated demonstrations on university campuses across the Middle East and beyond.*

Across the region, military spending weapons purchased from Western countries, coupled with Western hegemonic machinations and dependent regimes and depleted resources, have decimated generations of students and academics and intensified brain drain. Wars and geopolitical conflicts have exacted their toll as well. Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait in the summer of 1990 resulted in extensive damages and destruction to Kuwait University. Subsequent U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq hampered teaching and research in universities for over a decade. Faculty and students lacked access to up-to-date publications, computers and software, textbooks, and international conferences. The increased incursion of the Iraqi state during the 1990s into university administration and decision making sought to contain the repercussion of the sanctions within Iraq.

The worldwide contested and opposed American and British-led military invasion and occupation of Iraq in spring 2003 triggered student rallies and heated