



Communication of Engagement (CoE)

Period Covered by this Communication of Engagement: July 2018-July 2020

Statement of Continued Support

The Africa-America Institute (AAI) is pleased to reaffirm its support of the UN Global Compact and the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact based on human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption. With this commitment, we express our continued engagement to advance these principles within our operations and our sphere of influence. We further pledge to continue taking part in the activities of the UN Global Compact in ways including but not limited to the following:

- **Participate in UN Global Compact global and local events**
- **Propose partnership projects on corporate sustainability**
- **Support special initiatives and workstreams of the UN Global Compact.**
- **Engage companies in Global Compact-related issues**

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe and report on the actions and activities that AAI has taken and implemented, for the past two years, in order to uphold the UN Global Compact and its Ten Principles and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. AAI supports public accountability and transparency, and therefore welcomes stakeholders' review of our periodic report.

Sincerely,

Kofi Appenteng
President
Africa America Institute

Descriptions of Actions and Activities in support of the UN Global Compact and its Ten Principles

Since AAI joined the UN Global Compact in 2014, the Institute has actively worked to uphold the Global Compact's Principles and ideals through AAI's mission. Here are some of AAI's notable activities and accomplishments during this reporting period that support the values of the UN Global Compact:

- Joining and proposing partnership projects on corporate sustainability

To advance effective partnerships and collaborations, AAI holds an annual conference, the State of Education in Africa Conference (SOE), to engage with private companies on actions they can take to support the education sector in Africa. The conference brings together philanthropies, foundations, the private sector, government officials, academia, and students to share their bold visions and transformative ideas for handling the challenges of a rapidly changing political, social, cultural, and educational landscape in Africa. During the reporting period, AAI organized two successful conferences in Cote d'Ivoire (2018) and Senegal (2019).

In 2018, SOE held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, explored opportunities for transformative improvement in how higher education can create new pathways to sustainable livelihoods for Africans. Another key element explored was the need to build powerful new narratives about the role of Africa in the world and the achievements of Afro-descendants. A full report can be found at the following link: <http://www.soeafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/SOE-Outcomes2018-web.pdf>

In 2019, the 5th annual SOE held in Dakar, Senegal brought together private sector representatives and other stakeholders. They held innovative and solution driven conversations on how to build a globally competitive higher education system in Africa. Topics included the knowledge systems around agricultural innovation, demand skills driven for urban development, and women and girls' access to education.

- Engaging companies in Global Compact-related issues

∅ The Jim Ovia Foundation Leaders Scholarship

AAI is entering its third year of implementing the Jim Ovia Foundation Leaders Scholarship program, born out of a partnership with the Jim Ovia Foundation in Nigeria. Mr. Jim Ovia, Chair of the Jim Ovia Foundation, founded Zenith Bank. It is one of the largest commercial banks in Nigeria with branches all over West Africa. The program is available to African students attending two universities, notably Ashesi University in Ghana and Covenant University in Nigeria. Through the Jim Ovia Foundation Leaders Scholarship, AAI has provided undergraduate degree opportunities to 35 smart, under-resourced Africans. The Jim Ovia Foundation serves as a tool for Mr. Ovia to invest and empower citizens in the communities in which they operate.

Ø AAI-EADB STEM Graduate Program

For the past four years, AAI has partnered with the East African Development Bank (EADB) to train teachers and lecturers in the STEM field in East Africa (Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda). Since 2016, the partnership has funded Master's degree for 16 high-school teachers at Rutgers University. The teachers, upon graduation, return to their home countries to provide advanced training at their respective secondary schools.

In response to COVID-19 and its impact on student mobility across the world, AAI is rethinking how to best continue this program online, and how to best strengthen STEM fields in East Africa. AAI is further engaging with companies, foundations, and philanthropies on how to best respond to the impact of COVID-19 on higher education systems, and on the need to invest in health care leadership development in Africa. With the commitment of increasing African access to globally competitive education, AAI will further its mission to establish and strengthen education and training pathways for Africa's youth.

Furthermore, the killings of George Floyd and Ahmaud Aubrey, amongst others, follows a long pattern of systemic racism and police brutality that has long gone unaddressed. AAI's response remains tied to its mission; that being the integration of knowledge about the role of Africa in the world, and the achievements of Afro-descendants into the core of education curricula.

- Participating in Global Compact global, and local events

AAI Global Programs Director, Chantal Uwizera participated in the following events:

- **2019:** Regional Meeting- Making Global Goals Local Business
- **2020:** The UN Global Compact 20th Anniversary: Leaders' Summit event; Managing Business: Agility for the SDGs; UN PRM and Business Management: Education for SDGs; and the SDGs Leaders webinar series.

Measurement of Outcomes

- AAI Convening

The 2018 and 2019 State of Education in Africa Conference (SOE) gathered over 300 attendees, respectively. Key stakeholders in African higher education, with interest from the private, public, and social sectors, were represented. The post-conference online survey was used to gain a deeper understanding of attendees' perspectives on the value, usefulness, and quality of the conference. The surveys offered us valuable input on how we can improve the SOE conference in support of African Higher Education communities. For instance, SOE 2018 saw a significant increase in participation from government/policymakers, university professors, and university students. On the other hand, the SOE in 2019 built on past success and saw an increase in private sector participation. A rise in government interest in higher education also serves as a catalyst for fostering future

partnerships with private funders and international NGOs who see higher education in Africa as a means of economic opportunity and sustainability throughout the next decade.

AAI organized their first Student Summit, which was launched in Dakar, Senegal during AAI's 5th annual State of Education in Africa Conference. AAI hosted the convening after recognizing both the need and the willingness for students to lead discussion and design actionable processes to advance improvements across the field of higher education in Africa. Students from eight universities in Senegal, Niger, Nigeria, and Ghana participated in student-center discussions on a range of topics. These included global competitiveness, quality of education and related facilities, and curriculum. With over 80 students participating in this inaugural summit, AAI received positive feedback on the initiative and calls to continue hosting such summits that center students' needs.

- AAI Scholarship programs

The AAI-East African Development Bank STEM (AAI-EADB STEM program) program has trained 16 teachers from Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Uganda. They have since returned to their respective countries and schools. In addition, as per the Program's mission of increasing the quality of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education in East Africa, the graduates from this program have organized teacher training workshops in their respective countries, with close to 200 teachers benefiting from the workshops. In 2019, the AAI-EADB STEM program collaborated with a high school located in New York City. The goal being to provide practical, hands-on skills training in STEM to high school students in three select schools in Kenya and Uganda. A total of 60 students are currently participating in this project. We believe this innovative collaboration around STEM can be scaled to unite the world on an educational level. We aim to increase students' understanding of Africa and its people, while also empowering teachers with knowledge that can be transferred to systematically improve the quality of STEM teaching.

The Jim Ova Foundation Leaders Scholarship program has been awarded to 35 students from across Africa to attend Ashesi University in Ghana and Covenant University in Nigeria. The expected years of graduation are 2023 and 2024. These students, many being the first in their family to attend university, are high achieving students. They are receiving the necessary skills to prepare them for a dynamic and innovation driven career. In the second year of this partnership, the selected students have already shown promise, with their academic excellence and their commitment to public service.