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Partner

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# PRESS RELEASE

**Propelling Sustainable Development in  
Africa through Quality Applied  
Research and Innovation**

**Africa Higher Education Centers of  
Excellence and Partners Meet in Washington  
D.C. to showcase project milestones**

**Washington DC, USA (October 10, 2022)** – Fifty-three (53) Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence (ACEs) and their partners from over 13 countries will convene on October 17 – 18, 2022 at the World Bank Headquarters in Washington, DC to present and leverage project gains for enhancing higher education in Africa. Since its inception in 2014, the ACE Program is renowned for delivering quality post-graduate education and applied research meeting Africa's demand for increased skills, mainly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).



The two-day high-level event themed **“Africa Centers of Excellence: A Pathway towards sustainable development”**, is organized by the World Bank, in collaboration with the Association of African Universities (AAU), the French Development Agency (AFD), and the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD). The objective is to disseminate the impact of the ACEs to date in terms of their contributions, innovations, and best practices in addressing key regional development challenges and global crises that relate to public health, climate change, energy, agriculture and food security, digital transformation, and others.

The in-person interaction is envisaged to foster further networking and knowledge sharing, identify areas of future collaborations between the ACEs themselves, but also with various invited organizations including the following: Africa Centers for Disease Control (Africa CDC); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); European Union; Rockefeller Foundation; MasterCard Foundation; Wellcome Trust; Carnegie Corporation of New York; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; World Health Organization; IBM and Harvard University.

Please visit the dedicated website for details of the Event’s Agenda:

[African Centers of Excellence for Higher Education: A Path to Sustainable Development – High Level Event](#)

## Background Information

The Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence (ACE) is a World Bank initiative in collaboration with governments of participating countries to support higher education institutions specializing in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Agriculture, Health, Environment and, Social Science/Applied Science and Education. It is the first World Bank project aimed at building the capacities of higher education institutions in Africa through the promotion of regional specialization among participating universities in areas that address specific common regional development challenges. It further aims to strengthen the capacities of these universities to deliver high-quality training and applied research, as well as meet the demand for skills required for Africa's development. The first phase (ACE I) was launched in 2014 with 22 Centers of Excellence in Nine (9) West and Central African countries; Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo. The second phase (ACE II) was launched in East and Southern Africa with 24 centers



across Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Based on the initial successes, the World Bank and the French Development Agency (AFD) in collaboration with the African governments, launched the ACE Impact Project in 2019 to further strengthen post-graduate training and applied research in existing fields and support new fields that are essential for Africa's economic growth. Under ACE Impact, there are 53 ACEs specializing in the broad thematic areas of STEM, agriculture, health, environment and, social/applied science and education.

For more information on the ACE Impact Project, visit <https://ace.aau.org>

## About the Organizers

**Association of African Universities (AAU):** The Association of African Universities is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization created by African Universities to promote cooperation among them on the one hand, and between them and the international academic community on the other. Created in 1967, the AAU is the voice of higher education in Africa. AAU aims to improve the quality of African higher education and to strengthen its contribution to Africa's development by supporting the core functions of higher education institutions and facilitating critical reflection and consensus building on issues affecting higher education in Africa. The AAU is the Regional Facilitation Unit of the Africa Centres of Excellence for Development Impact project. The AAU is the Regional Facilitation Unit of the Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact Project).



**World Bank Group:** The World Bank Group is a multilateral development institution that works to reduce poverty and boost shared prosperity. Its subsidiary IDA (International Development Association) finances the Africa Centers of Excellence series of projects. The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), established in 1960, helps the world's poorest countries by providing grants and low to zero-interest loans for projects and programs that boost economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve poor people's lives. IDA is one of the largest sources of assistance for the





world's 74 poorest countries, 39 of which are in Africa. Resources from IDA bring positive change to the 1.3 billion people who live in IDA countries. Since 1960, IDA has provided \$458 billion to 114 countries. Annual commitments have averaged about \$29 billion over the last three years (FY19-FY21), with about 70 percent going to Africa.

Learn more online: [IDA.worldbank.org](https://IDA.worldbank.org) #IDAworks.

**French Development Agency (AFD):** For more than 75 years, the French Development Agency (AFD) has been fighting global poverty by supporting policies and investments that benefit the poorest populations. Strengthening the social link between individuals, groups, and territories are now at the heart of its actions in education, health, employment, urban planning, climate or biodiversity. The French Development Agency (AFD) is the project co-financier.



**French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development:** IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement) is an internationally recognized multidisciplinary organization, working mainly in partnership with countries in the Mediterranean and intertropical zone.



IRD is a French public research establishment operating under the joint authority of the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. It adopts an original approach to research, expertise, training, and knowledge-sharing for the benefit of countries and regions, making science and innovation key drivers in their development. IRD provides direct consultative and implementation support to the ACE PARTNER initiative.

## CONTACTS

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