

REVISED DRAFT

Towards Academic Freedom for the Africa in the 21st Century

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1.1 Introduction

The present paper is part of an ongoing initiative of CODESRIA and UNESCO to review the state of academic freedom in the African region, with a view to enhancing the efficacy of existing instruments and strategies directed at developing, ensuring and protecting academic freedom. This is viewed within both organisations as a strategically important way of enhancing the capacity of the African higher education sector to pursue high quality teaching and research activities, as a means of ensuring that these institutions contribute to production of knowledge and skills essential to Africa's development and well-being.

The current context is one in which there is renewed interest in African higher education among both national and international players, for a number of quite widely articulated reasons. Key among these is the global shift towards a much greater reliance on knowledge and information, a trend that is likely to further marginalise the world's poorest continent if steps are not taken to address the fact that we also have the lowest higher education enrolment rates too. In such a context, the concepts of 'academic freedom' 'institutional autonomy' and 'social responsibility' assume new importance.

1.2 Aims of the Review

- i) to review the contextual changes that may have affected the implementation of the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (1990) and the UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel 1997,
- ii) To examine the present state of Academic Freedom in Africa, and the extent to which the existing instruments have been effective in African contexts,
- iii) To highlight factors influencing the observance or non-observance of these documents in selected African states,
- iv) Throughout this review, to highlight the implications of observance and non-observance for the core business of the universities, namely the production of intellectual capacity through teaching and research activities,
- v) To highlight the implications of the above for development and social progress towards equity and justice,
- vi) To recommend strategies for strengthening academic freedom and social responsibility in contemporary African contexts.

1.3 Situation Analysis: Crisis and Reform in African Higher Education

The main evidence presented in this section indicates that the changed global and regional conditions within which academia are located have posed serious challenges to the observance and strengthening of academic freedom in African contexts.

The crisis in African HE reached its extremes during the 1980's and 1990's. It is worth noting the political context within which this crisis has occurred. By the end of 1989 35 of African's 45 independent nations were under military rule, and conflicts had become alarmingly commonplace. Dire political circumstances have since

continued to take a major toll on academic institutions in many countries, as these

based international financial agencies currently driving globalisation) and ends with the local, namely African citizens who have historically had the strongest and most vested interests in the maintenance of a strong and vibrant HE sector.

i) International Financial institutions. The negative impact of the macro-economic policies of the 1980's and 1990's need not be reiterated here at any length, because its disastrous consequences for African public services and the higher education sector in particular are well known.

Only towards the end of the 1990's did the "Washington consensus" begin to give way to a return of broader development thinking. It is in this context that the renewed interests in African higher education must be located. The World Bank, while it may still regard higher education investment as having poor financial returns, recently acknowledged that tertiary education:

...is a critical pillar of human development world-wide. In today's life-long learning framework, tertiary education provides not only the high level skills necessary for every labour market, but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and myriad personnel. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead effective governments, and make important decisions which affect entire societies (Ramphela 2002:ix)

The World Bank's current vision of Africa as a region lacking in "human capital" has been addressed through a broad framework that views the Bank as playing a central role in:

..to provide balanced emphases on the academic and the practical, thus enabling universities to become more robust intellectual institutions that can effectively produce a new generation of scholars, analysts, scientists, technologists, teachers, public servants, and entrepreneurs.

The extent to which HE Partnership funding will create options beyond the dominant tendency in HE reforms – namely that which privileges the imperatives of market-driven developmentalism – remains to be seen.

Other donor agencies, notably the Swedish SIDA-SAREC, have also supported African academic activity in various areas – including research - that cannot be fully listed here, but which have included various UNESCO initiatives, and a major part of the research funding still reaching African research institutions and networks such as the Council for the Development of social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the Association of African Universities (AAU).

However, the vast majority of African institutions of higher education have relied almost entirely on state funding. The costs of the increasingly limited availability of state support for the core functions of universities have therefore been great, and hardly mitigated by the limited availability of international aid or partnership arrangements with colleagues in the West.

iii) African universities have clear stakes in the direction of HE reform, and articulate principles that guide the manner in which teaching and research is carried out. Most were established by African governments, expressly to address the development needs of postcolonial states, in contexts where education was widely viewed as a route to national liberation.

‘Widespread university education is essentially a post-colonial phenomenon...only 18 out of the 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa had universities or colleges before 1960. With the approach of political independence or immediately thereafter, many African countries regarded the establishment of local universities as a major part of the post-colonial national development project. The new universities were to help the new nations build up their capacity to manage and develop their resources, alleviate the poverty of the majority of their people, and close the gap between them and the developed world’ (Sawyer 2002: 2)

As early as 1962, the Tananarive Conference on the development of Higher Education in Africa outlined an ambitious mission, according to which African Universities were

“viewed as key instruments for national development. They were expected to produce the skilled human resources necessary to manage newly independent countries, to generate developmentally relevant research and to provide

effort. The Ghana (Manuh et al 2002) and part of the Nigerian case study (Pereira 2002) were procured from the researchers, along with discussions of the reform efforts in Uganda (Musisi 2003), and privatisation in Kenya (Murunga 2001). Efforts to procure the others from the HE Partnership ongoing at time of writing.

community service...to contribute to African unity, and to serve as cultural centres for the nations” (cited in Ajayi et al 1996:191)

To date African notions of the university have continued to include their role in development and a deep sense of social responsibility. The Association of African Universities ‘Declaration on the African University in the Third Millennium’ (2001) is illustrative, for it includes a view of higher education:

as the principal venue for knowledge creation and dissemination...occupies a very special place...Additionally, higher education has the function of fostering the capacity of individuals and communities to embrace democratic principles, to uphold human rights and to promote sustainable development.

African universities are charged to do no less than to “create an institutional environment that fosters the development of the mind and the ennobling of the spirit, inculcating citizenship and the will to serve.” Academic freedom is implicitly assumed to be a necessary condition for African universities to fulfil their role:

Through the promotion of research and free enquiry, the open contestation of ideas, and the appreciation and tolerance of difference, African universities must generate and disseminate knowledge and understanding, foster the values of openness and respect for merit, and enrich the general quality of the social life of their communities.

Other HE institutions (teachers training colleges, polytechnics, technikons) are guided by more modest policy frameworks that undoubtedly impact on the manner in which they pursue their involvement in training/teaching and research.

iv) Scholarly networks and intellectual communities

A range of non-governmental national and regional independent centres and networks also make important contributions to knowledge production in African contexts, often in ways that have resisted being bound by the logic of either the state or the market. Even so, those that are nationally based are often highly vulnerable to the national political conditions, not to mention the vagaries of fund-raising. Regional centres in particular have seen their relative importance grow with the diminution of the research capacity of the universities. Some, like CODESRIA have found it necessary to take on teaching and training functions too, as this became a necessary way of ensuring the reproduction of continental research capacity. It also soon became a valuable way of keeping Africa’s scholars apace with emergent and highly relevant academic fields of study such as governance, democratisation and gender studies.

Such independent research centres and institutes have a vested interest in academic freedom, not just because they owe their existence to a basic level of state tolerance, but also because they are often well-positioned to undertake transnational monitoring work, given the longstanding and dynamic networks of scholars through which they operate.

v) African People

When one reviews the recent history of African HE, it might not be an exaggeration to suggest that the system as a whole probably owes its survival to the tenacity of popular interest in higher education. This interest has persisted across the various

development decades, in the face of quite extreme odds, and curtailed the extent to which even the most anti-intellectual regimes have been able to pursue the diminution of the sector. This public interest is seldom directly articulated through systematic formal channels (although many claim to represent it). It is particularly relevant in the context of the broader concerns around equity considerations, given that the reform process includes privatisation and cost recovery policies, likely to have marked effects on the access of marginalised communities to universities in some of the poorest parts of the world. However, popular interests are diverse, and include desires for upward mobility, and the acquisition of skills that will facilitate migration to more affluent economies, as well as social justice and development agendas.

It is also worth noting that popular interests in higher education exist in the broader context of economic globalisation and the simultaneous resurgence of African democratisation movements and struggles for social justice.

Discussion

The various stakeholders have different levels of influence on the HE landscape. While they can be separated out to some extent, it is also clear that the different agendas are not uncontested, between agencies, and within any given agency, in ways that are never wholly transparent. Complex interplays occur continuously, creating a shifting landscape that is never fully transparent. However, overall it is clear that the overall HE scenario is a product of interactions and negotiations between and across different stakeholder, and the various outcomes of the process of HE development and transformation have profound implications for the possibility of academic freedom, and the survival of a socially engaged and responsible African intelligentsia.

This analysis demonstrates that African visions of the meaning of knowledge and knowledge production for social and political advancement of Africa have always co-existed with external perceptions and constraints. The idea of Africa as a continent entitled to produce its own intellectuals for its own purposes faces serious challenges in the global marketplace. At the present time, philosophically-inspired education and knowledge production runs against the grain of more reductionist approaches that would limit the role of African HE to the production of the technical, administrative and financial management skills needed to service the residual public sector, and furnish some of the labour needs of the global marketplace.

More radical visions of African intellectual life – as linked to democratisation and social justice agendas - have been key feature of the continental thinking which has motivated and driven considerations of academic freedom in African contexts, and linked these to a profound sense of social responsibility (discussed below). The long and restless history of student and staff protests against political repression and unfavourable economic policies indicate a high level of social engagement, which on occasion links to broader social concerns and social movements.

Hountoundji, renowned philosopher and former Minister of Education, describes the narrow instrumentalism demanded of academics by many African governments as “rampant pragmatism” (2003:227-). He draws a link between the external over-determination of African intellectual life and Africa’s ongoing economic dependency and indebtedness, rejecting the global international division of labour that continues to position Africa in a way that renders regional intellectual and theoretical development

redundant. He joins the other major African thinkers who emerged during the twentieth century in calling for a scientific revolution, that is,

“a radical appropriation of theory...a methodological effort to give ourselves the material and human resources for an autonomous research that is master of its problems and themes” (Hountondji 2003: 232)

The late Claude Ake, former Director of the independent Centre for Advanced Social Sciences, used more explicit language to suggest that the African intellectual is:

“uniquely placed to demystify and expose the self-serving ideological representations of the state and external domination...a daunting task (that) puts the academic in potential confrontation with the state and international capital, both of which are more intolerant of change than ever (Ake 1994: 23)

More recently, a distinction has been drawn between transformations which denote the “repositioning of higher education to serve more efficiently as the ‘handmaiden’ of the economy” and transformations that seek to “align higher education with the democracy and social justice agenda or a new polity” (Singh 2001).

This context reviewed here has profound implications for the changing meaning and understanding of academic freedom in African contexts, and for the development of instruments and mechanisms for the protection and advancement of academic freedom. The disparate interests of the various stakeholders outlined above are the basis for a number of contemporary contestations over the future of African higher education, the outcomes of which are likely to have profound impact on the capacity and direction of continental knowledge production, and the quality of Africa’s intelligentsia. Academic freedom, social responsibility and institutional autonomy are crucial pre-requisites for the emergence of a regionally-relevant, vibrant and dynamic intellectual culture, without which Africa’s participation in the world is likely to continue to be marginal and vulnerable to exploitation by external forces and interests.

This increasing contestation, and the inseparability of academic freedom from broader political and economic challenges facing Africa, provides the major rationale for reviewing the existing instruments designed to advance and protect academic freedom in Africa. This can only be meaningfully undertaken in full cognizance of the global changes that have occurred over the past decade or so, and the manner in which may have affected the prospects for advancing academic freedom and institutional autonomy, not to mention sustaining the social responsibility of African intellectuals.

2. Academic Freedom in Africa:

In the early years of independence, Nkrumah the nationalist and Pan Africanist may have been the first to link academic freedom with social responsibility, and he did so within a nationalist and anti-imperialist paradigm that was not welcomed by the departing colonialists:

‘..no resort to the cry of academic freedom (for academic freedom does not mean irresponsibility) is going to restrain us from seeing that our university is a health university devoted to Ghanaian interest’ (cited in Mkandawire 1999).

At the time, national interest was more easily assumed to be the same thing as public interest, and the state was assumed to be the main expression of both. Things have taken many turns since the formative moment. Notably, the state, while still the major source of funding and resources for HE, is no longer viewed as necessarily upholding the public interests in Africa. Instead has increasingly been identified as the major culprit perpetrating the abuses of academic freedom.

Today however, international economic doctrines have undermined the capacity of the state to the extent that the very meaning of national sovereignty is being debated. Sovereign or not, it is clear that the state has been unable to resist the pressure to cutback on HE in Africa. This lack of adequate public funding now constitutes the main obstacle to HE development in Africa, and as such, indirectly makes the pursuit of academic freedom virtually impossible. It is in this context that the feasibility of academic freedom in African contexts has to be re-visited. Are the existing instruments still adequate? How is African HE reform affecting their viability? How might they be developed and implemented to ensure that they are effective in the contemporary and future scenarios?

2.1 The Kampala Declaration 1990.

During the recent period, the African scholarly community has built on the historical understanding of the importance of a locally attuned and adept intelligentsia, to develop a distinct regional approach to academic freedom, which the Kampala Declaration seeks to reflect.

A key concern expressed at the conference that gave rise to the Kampala Declaration include the need to develop an African perspective that would address the highly challenging conditions facing African academics. This centred on affirming the link between academic freedom and broader societal freedom. Academics were clearly defined as being entitled to their freedom only insofar as the struggle for academic freedom is coupled with popular struggles, and imbued with social responsibility towards those struggles. Academics were located within broader definitions of intellectual life which include the social, cultural and religious life beyond the academies.³

Academic Freedom was explored along five main themes, each of which refer to particular stakeholders:

- The state and academic freedom
- Civil society and academic freedom
- The intelligentsia and academic freedom
- Donors and academic freedom
- The social responsibility of intellectuals

(Oloka-Onyango 1994: 338)

³ This is culled particularly from the contributions of Ake, Ki Zerbo, Mamdani to Diouf and Mamdani (1994) ed.

A great deal of attention was directed at the **African states**, largely on the basis of extensive evidence of intimidation, harassment and elimination of academics by intolerant and authoritarian regimes. Articles 13-18 nonetheless focus on the obligations of the state, requiring that the state respect and protect academic freedom, desist from deploying armed forces on campuses, desist from censorship, allow free movement of academics across borders, and ensure continuous availability of funding for research and higher educational institutions. Institutions of higher education are required to be autonomous and democratically self-governed by the academic community.

Discussions regarding the role of the **intelligentsia** and the rights of intellectuals were extensive. The first nine articles of the Kampala Declaration address the rights of intellectuals to education, to participation in and pursuit of intellectual activity, to all the civil rights contained in the International Bill of Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, to work without harassment and intimidation, to freedom of movement and association, to self-governance, to freedom of expression, and to security of tenure.

There is no specific mention made of the right to freedom from gender, ethnic, class and religious discrimination, or to equal treatment within academic institutions, the declaration refer to an abstract 'African intellectual' which a generous interpretation may take to include women, and those members of other marginalised groups who do become intellectuals. The Declaration is inconsistent with regard to the use of gender-inclusive language, and there is no acknowledgement of the gross under-representation of women (or other marginalised groups), or of the extent of gender discrimination, or of the widespread sexual harassment and abuse that occurs within the academic community.

There were also many self-criticisms addressed to the conservative reliance on imported Western paradigms, disciplinary constraints and undemocratic academic organisational structures, all of which were viewed as reproducing rather than challenging social divisions and hierarchies constraining African societies. It was argued that this has led African intellectuals to reproduce rather than challenge inequalities based on gender, class, ethnicity and other dimensions of oppression.

The discussions on **social responsibility** were extremely wide-ranging, but coalesced around the need for Gramscian-style organic intellectuals, namely intellectuals rooted in popular struggles for democracy and social justice. No less than six articles in chapter III of the Declaration address the building of social responsibility in and beyond the academic community. However, there is no specific acknowledgement of the widespread effects that religious, ethnic, class, gender and other discriminations have on the possibility of academic freedom. Instead, the intellectual community is charged with a general resolution calling upon them to ensure that differences are resolved "in a spirit of equality, non-discrimination and democracy".

In terms of **civil society**, there was much discussion of the relationship – or lack of relationship - between academics (often viewed as part of the state) and social movements, including women's movements. The contradictory nature of civil society was raised in the context of cited instances in which religious bodies have taken over

the surveillance and repression of academics, notably in North Africa, where the Islamic fundamentalist movement targets academics for intimidation and elimination.

The role of **donors** was posed as a duality between the protective role that financial and material assistance offers on the one hand, and the independence that this affords them in terms of the scientific agenda, and their own interests in particular brands of developmentalism. The need for financial autonomy in subregional and regional centres was clearly identified as an *a priori* condition for maintaining intellectual autonomy.

Very little attention, and none of the resolutions deal specifically with the influence of international financial institutions on the higher education arena, or the manner in which the ‘market forces’ that feature so powerfully in global economic doctrines of may affect the prospects for academic freedom.

In conclusion we can see that neither the deliberations of the Kampala Conference nor the Kampala Declaration itself fully anticipated the extent or impact of globalisation, the diminishing role of the state and the ensuing marketisation of higher education. They only partially anticipate the development of repressive civil society forces that have been the primary constraint to academic freedom (notably in Algeria). The increased fragmentation of the intellectual community, to the extent that it has become increasingly difficult to discern a unified African intellectual community with a coherent agenda for the future of higher education and academic freedom. Instead old and new dividing lines have emerged to further disempower the African intelligentsia, whose marginalisation has taken new import in the current context.

2.2 The UNESCO Recommendation of the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel 1997.

This document has its origins in the 1966 Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teaching Personnel, which focused on primary and secondary school teachers. It follows a similar format, setting out the educational objectives and policies governing HE in the member states, and the minimal conditions necessary for the maintenance of HE teaching as a profession.

The main substantive differences between the Kampala Declaration and the UNESCO Recommendation are due to the fact that the latter is organised within a global framework, rather than an African one. As such, although it was signed seven years after the Kampala Declaration, it does not specifically attend to the major features of the contemporary African context, namely the intense economic and political crises of the 1990’s. Nor does it attend to the constraints imposed on public funding of higher education by the unfavourable political conditions of authoritarianism, instability and conflict, or the intensely constraining macro-economic policy environment of structural adjustment programmes. As the situation analysis indicates, the political economic and institutional conditions of the African region have major implications for the status of teaching personnel and the prospects for academic freedom, institutional autonomy and social responsibility.⁴

⁴ See also Federici et al 2000.

The UNESCO Recommendation sets out core educational objectives and policies (para IV), notably the principle of public accountability regarding the expenditure of public funds on higher education, and the need for measures to ensure that teaching personnel are adequately provided with the necessary means to carry out their professional duties. The identified means include a list of items that are worth noting, if only because of their absence, or at best inadequacy, in many African tertiary institutions. Access to up-to-date libraries, the encouragement of research, publication and dissemination of research results, opportunities to travel and to participate in local and international scholarly gatherings, to take salaried sabbatical leave, and the right to maintain communications and contact between institutions and associations as well as between individual personnel, have become distant memories for most, possibly the majority, of African academics.

The specified rights of HE teaching personnel include the basic freedom to determine the curriculum, to carry out teaching, research and publication without interference, to freely express opinions and to undertake professional activities outside of their employment, insofar as these do not impinge on their duties within their home institutions. This clause recognises the need, if not the value, of academics engaging in activities beyond the campuses, but in many African contexts poor salaries present academics with little choice. In such a situation the extent of off-campus income-generating activities may well compromise the execution of duties within home institutions. Ensuring the maintenance of professionalism also becomes more difficult too, once the terms of employment have deteriorated below a certain level.

There are extensive recommendations regarding the terms and conditions of employment (Section IX 40-72). These address entry into the profession, security of tenure, appraisal systems, discipline and dismissal, collective bargaining and negotiation of terms and conditions of employment, salaries, workload and benefits, and the right to study and research leave and annual holidays. The effects of HE reform processes may have superseded many of these terms and conditions, in ways that deserve further exploration and analysis.

However, when it comes to equity and social justice considerations, the UNESCO Recommendation is more advanced than the Kampala Declaration, and this clearly has great relevance to African contexts, where the broader conditions are such that inequalities and justice practices continue to be pronounced. There are specific clauses relating to affirmative action, now widely accepted as a necessary strategy to promote the entry and advancement of disadvantaged groups. The promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment of women is addressed in clause 70. There are also specific provisions regarding disabled people (clause 71) and part-time employees.

2.3 Structures for Monitoring Observance and Non-Observance

The efficacy of both instruments critically depends on committing resources to communication and promotion of the instruments, and to effective implementation and monitoring.

The final paragraphs of the UNESCO recommendation indicate that the *DG of UNESCO* was to prepare a comprehensive report on the world situation, but enquiries as to the status of this report, did not prove fruitful.⁵

Beyond this, the *Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning the Status of Teaching Personnel (CEART)* is identified as the main body responsible for monitoring the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation. To this end the Executive Board of UNESCO and the ILO Governing Body both approved an extension of the CEART's mandate to include the monitoring and promotion of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation in the course of 1999.

In terms of follow-up, two issues arising from this mandate have been those of a) deciding what methodology to adopt and b) what substantive issues to prioritise? In terms of methodology, it was agreed that CEART's work should be based on reports from governments, national organisations of teachers, international NGO's and studies and reports of the ILO and UNESCO. The CEART has offered the DG of UNESCO guidelines for the pursuit of the report that is to be prepared. This essentially advises the use of existing organisations in the preparation of case studies in developed and developing countries, as a means to identifying models. Two phases are suggested, the second of which is due to be completed in 2007, and the full results are not therefore available at this time.⁶

The UNESCO Recommendation also calls upon *Member states and HEIs* to:

“take all feasible steps to extend and complement their own action by encouraging co-operation with and among all national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations whose activities fall within the scope and objectives of the recommendation.”

What such action might be is left undefined, and as such remains open to interpretation. How African Education Ministries and Universities pursued the matter is yet to be documented, but if the level of reporting on observance is anything to go by, action has been limited.

For present purposes, it would appear that little has been done to ensure observance, and/or that there is an almost complete lack of reporting from these quarters. Our own enquiries indicate that a number of institutions have established academic freedom committees, but these are seldom very active. Those contacted appeared to be primarily concerned with protecting the universities in question from litigation by and against academics.

⁵ But the Report of the Seventh Session of the Joint ILO/UNESCO CEART indicates that the deadline for the completion may be taken to be 2007.

⁶ Details obtained from Annex 3, Report of the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning the Status of Teaching Personnel, Seventh Session, Geneva 11-15 Sept 2000. (Or is the present report to be located as one of these commissioned studies – clarification would be welcome???)

Legally, it has been suggested that the enforcement of academic freedom could be sustained under the existing human rights legislation (detailed by Hagan 1996). The limits of the law, and as a tool for social and institutional change have been well documented, in the fields of human rights and gender justice. The main concerns arise out of the highly limited access to legal services and information, and to the constrained nature of legal definitions based on the notion of a rational individual citizen, rather than on a notion of collective rights or social justice.

However, the much broader challenge appears to be one of awareness and the capacity to make use of the existing provisions for the protection of academic freedom. Reporting is limited to extreme cases, and defined within a human rights paradigm. Clearly restrictive definitions of the goal and purpose higher education can be deployed to constrain academic freedom, according to disparate and increasingly contested stakeholder interests.⁷

The Kampala Declaration contained only two articles pertaining to implementation. Article 25 state that ‘academics may further elaborate and concretize the norms and standards set herein at regional and pan-African level. Article 26 notes that it is incumbent on the African intellectual community to form its own organisations to monitor and publicise violations of the rights and freedoms stipulated herein.

To this end that CODESRIA established and maintained an *Academic Freedom Unit* for a number of years, but this was interrupted by a temporary crisis within the organisation. This was the main institutional site through which the state of academic freedom was monitored during the initial period (CODESRIA 1996). The report indicated the ongoing severity of the conditions facing African academics, and noted the urgency of continued monitoring and action to defend academics against tyranny. Many of the examples cited below are drawn from this report.

Other sources of information are the international human rights NGO’s such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Network for Education and Academic Rights (NEAR)⁸. In the USA, an independent committee, the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa (CAFA) was established in the 1990’s at the initiative of North American and African academics who had found it necessary to relocate because of the deteriorating conditions since the mid 1980’s

4.0 Findings

The most general finding that even a cursory reading of any of the above reviewed documents reveals is that the basic economic and institutional conditions required for the existence of a healthy and vibrant academia, not to mention academic freedom,

⁷ For example, in post-apartheid South Africa, anecdotal evidence (at least within historically privileged institutions) suggests that calls for social responsiveness or “relevance” can actually be perceived as a direct threat to academic freedom, perhaps because such calls threaten the privileging of a racial elite. In similar vein, calls for “equity” are seen as not as advancing South Africa’s transformation, but rather as compromising quality, and the new systems for rating “excellence” seem to owe more to north American than to African contexts.

⁸ NEAR was established in June 2001 to serve as a repository and clearing house for information about academic freedom cases, and is currently undertaking a study of academic freedom in Ethiopia, Liberia and Zimbabwe.

are not in existence in many African countries and institutions. Secondly, there is an urgent need to examine the higher education reform process from this perspective. Clearly it makes little sense to discuss academic freedom in African without grounding the concept in the stark realities of the regional context. The situation analysis (section 2.0) highlights the fact that conditions differ widely, creating great variability in the constraints to academic freedom in different parts of the continent. For example South Africa's elite institutions enjoy very different conditions compared to those prevailing in historically disadvantaged institutions, and both are very different from the universities in Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone, or the Gambia. The history and experience of academic freedom reflects this diversity.⁹

4.1 Pre-requisites for Academic Freedom in the 21st century.

Financing Higher Education

Both documents indicate the necessity of an *adequate material base* for academic life. The Kampala Declaration calls upon African governments to ensure adequate funding (article 17). The UNESCO Recommendation does not address core funding directly, but calls upon member states to “encourage aid programmes” for developing countries, to mitigate the mass exodus of academics, by assisting “in sustaining an academic environment which offers satisfactory conditions of work for higher education teaching personnel in those (developing) countries”.

Much of the *higher education reform* that has been underway in recent years is driven by financial considerations and an approach that continues to work against sustaining the publicly funded and therefore publicly accountable higher education systems that have hitherto been the bedrock of HE systems world-wide. The global trend towards the marketisation of higher education is a complex set of processes, currently being differently engineered in different African countries, about which there are many views which cannot be adequately reviewed here. What is clear is that the processes have undermined most of the pre-requisites for academic freedom and social responsibility, and that there needs to be a concerted effort to re-consider higher education reform from this perspective. With regard to institutional autonomy, the conceptualisation needs to be revised if it is to address what ‘autonomy’ means in the context of globalisation, distance learning institutions, privatisation and outsourcing within public institutions, and the emergence of private institutions. In other words, financial diversification, such as the growing reliance on unregulated corporate financing, and/or development aid within public institutions also pose many new challenges to academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

⁹ In South Africa the major challenges to academic freedom emanate from the racist and sexist legacies of apartheid, and the calculated restrictions imposed on different social groups. The gender and race profile of university staff still reflect these legacies, and the disparities between institutions. However, for such major systemic and social constraints to be included in the business of academic freedom committees would require a complete re-conceptualisation of their terms of reference, and the development of a positive synergy between academic freedom and the imperatives of transformation. At present, academic freedom tends to be invoked in reaction to the official discourses calling for transformation, and the negotiated settlement appears to take the form of administrative and financial restructuring. The situation is complicated by the fact that it is not at all clear that the reform strategies being deployed – notably the merging of disparate institutions - will in fact bring about the expressed goals of race and gender equality.

While national dependence poses its own constraints and freedoms, the externalisation of financing of key pre-requisites for the exercise freedom e.g. academic gatherings, collegial networking and associations has enabled their survival, but makes academic freedom vulnerable to the exigencies of becoming donor-driven.

The prospects for securing an adequate material base cannot realistically be separated from national and regional economic circumstances. It needs to be reiterated that neither development aid money nor private corporate interests offer any substantive means for the financing of HE anywhere in the world, and especially not in dependent and impoverished economies that characterise the African landscape.

Changing National political conditions

These have also changed in many countries, notably with the transitions away from military dictatorship and towards multipartyism (for example, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, and a host of others). Both civilianisation and party politics can be seen as national political responses to the demands of broad-based social movements, which have prioritised considerations of human rights. The extent to which direct repression and intimidation are reduced by these developments deserves to be properly assessed. In other nations civil disturbances and armed conflicts have seen institutions of higher education either destroyed completely, or deprived to such an extent that there is little capacity for any academic activity (The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone). In the case of Rwanda, a large proportion of the intelligentsia were eliminated during the genocide, creating dire capacity problems for those now seeking to rebuild and indeed develop new initiatives in the sector.

On the favourable side, the broader context of the last decade or so has seen the continuation of the trend towards political democratisation and greater respect for fundamental human rights and gender equality, at least formally, in many countries. Academics may be less likely to face imprisonment or even elimination in the emergent democracies of the last decade or so.

However, there are also countries in which, the structural semblance of democratisation has given way to renewed authoritarianism, with improperly elected or appointed leaders operating in uncritical complicity with the logic of market fundamentalism. In such contexts there is almost complete compliance with a reform agenda that risks continuing to undermine the public financing of public education, and diminishing the state's capacity to sustain and protect public higher education and the attendant academic freedoms and social responsibilities.

Institutional Conditions

i) Both instruments identify *institutional autonomy* as a necessary condition for academic freedom. The situation is improving in some countries (notably Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria) institutional autonomy is still often compromised in African nations, where the state often controls the appointment of university leaders.¹⁰ For example, in Nigeria, the 1998 transition to civilian rule has led to the withdrawal of

¹⁰ Banjo (2003) suggests that the two do not necessarily go together, giving the example of Nigeria suggesting where he suggests that "academic freedom has always flourished in Nigerian Universities" despite institutional autonomy has been constrained by military rule. One might add that overt repression has also flourished in that context.

the Sole Administrators imposed on several universities by the military. In Uganda the NRM government has recently accepted that the President will no longer appoint the Vice Chancellor of the national universities, and an independent search committee comprised of senior faculty has been appointed.

ii) Employment Conditions

Both instruments correctly identify *security of tenure* as a minimal pre-requisite for the exercise of academic freedom. Yet this is increasingly threatened by higher education reforms that include a greater reliance on contract lecturers, the exploitation of student assistants, and other strategies designed primarily to cut costs. As has been noted :

‘such an environment has resulted in the comparative growth in non-tenured or contract positions and, to some degree the “casualization” of higher education employment’ (ILO/UNESCO 2000:49)

Clearly the implications of the *erosion of tenure* need to be examined, not least because casual employees are more vulnerable to censorship by their employers, and to self censoring their work in order to secure further contracts.

The *outsourcing* of the many of the support services formerly provided by workers employed within HEIs to private companies has made it increasingly difficult to prevent abusive and exploitative practices, as these trends place them outside the provenance of HEIs.¹¹ More importantly, the costs of such services , which now have to be profitable to private companies delivering them may affect provision and affordability. This may have gendered impacts in the areas of child care and other services that women may be the primary users of, so affecting the prospects for gender equality in the workplace.

In short, the ongoing economic crisis, and the global macro-economic responses to this have ensured that Africans are not guaranteed the right o pursue higher education, while academics have found themselves increasingly deprived of most basic acadmic freedom – namely the right to pursue viable academic careers in their own countries, or on their home continent. The implications of these economically–rooted constraints for the quality of training and for the broader agenda of knowledge production have been profound. These broad changes in the environment demand a radically different approach to academic freedom that takes it far beyond the realm of traditional jurisprudence and individualised protection, into the public realm of social and collective rights and freedoms, and the need

contemporary African universities. However, the existing information on the observance and non-observance is limited to the existing thinking, as this is reflected in the two CODESRIA and UNESCO instru

staff dismissals still occur frequently. Documented examples of non-observance by the state include the following examples:

The State

Professor Niyi Osyundare was prevented from travelling to South Africa in 2002 when representatives of Nigeria's civilian government seized his passport.

The Kenyan government did not issue visas to the Nigerian delegation invited to attend the international Conference on Innovations in higher Education in Nairobi, 2002.

Kenyan academics and students are required to obtain official clearance to travel outside Kenya, first with their head of Department, then with their Dean of Faculty, the Principal and then the Vice Chancellor. When all that has been obtained, official government clearance must then be obtained from the Ministry of Education, and the Office of the President.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a prominent Egyptian sociologist and critic of the government went on trial for reporting on elections in October 2000, accepting foreign funds without authorisation and a charge of embezzlement. On May 21 2001 Ibrahim and 27 colleagues from the Ibn Kjalidun Centre for Development Studies were convicted and sentenced. Ibrahim was sentenced to 7 years in prison, 6 others (including Nadia Mohamed Abdel Nour and Magda Ibrahim al Bey, both women) were given custodial sentences between 2 and 5 years duration.

Ethiopian security forces used excessive force to deal with student protests in April 2001. At least 40 people were killed, and eyewitnesses reported that live ammunition was fired at protesters, while unresisting bystanders, including children, were beaten. Over 2,000 students were detained, and an unknown number have remained in jail.

In Eritrea, student protests against the conditions in the camps accommodating them during a compulsory summer work program. Semere Kesete, the president of the Asmara University student council was arrested and jailed without charge on July 31. On August 10th, 400 students protesting Kesete's arrest were rounded up and sent to a work camp out in the desert, and 1,700 other were taken to join them. The government acknowledged that at least 2 died of heatstroke. Parents of the resisting students were also arrested.

Closures and occupations: the University of Abidjan has been subject to frequent occupations by the security forces, often without any request from the university authorities.

Public universities in Kenya have been seen frequent closures, ostensibly to deal with students expressing views considered to be anti-government, and usually accompanied by expulsions of student leaders.

Over 500 Nigerian students and staff were said to have been victimised for the political views in only 5 of the country's 30 universities between 1985-1993 (Jega 1994). The relationship between the Academic Staff University Union deteriorated to a situation of 'running battles' between the military and its appointed Vice Chancellors on the one hand, and ASUU on the other. ASUU members became the target of endless instances of harassment, incarceration without trial (called preventative detention), and purges, with concerted attempts being made to bribe and displace the leadership.

Sacking: In 1990 the Nigerian government endowed the Minister of Education with the power to sack academics from any university in the country.

The Government has sent the police force onto the University of Zimbabwe campus on numerous occasions between 1996 and the present time, where they have deployed tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse and terrorise students. This destabilisation has resulted in frequent and sometimes lengthy closures of the University.

University Administrations

The Government-appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Abuja, Professor Isa Mohammed engaged in a variety of despotic practices, and when challenged, had no hesitation in declaring his total authority when he said "I am the Law".

Sacking: Many Nigerian academics, have been summarily dismissed from their jobs, while others have opted to leave after threats and intimidation.

Academics in the employment of Usman Dan Fodio University have been subjected to harassment and intimidation by the university authorities. In 1998, Dr Jibrin Ibrahim, political scientist at Ahmadu Bello University was sacked. After various advocacy efforts and legal representations to the Sole Administrator of the day, he was reinstated, but left the University to work for an international agency shortly thereafter.

Suspension: AC Jordan Chair in African Studies, Professor Mamdani was suspended from the University of Cape Town in 1998, during a controversy over the curriculum content in African Studies. He was subsequently reinstated, but resigned from his tenured position and emigrated to the US shortly thereafter.

Freedom of association: unauthorised meetings and gatherings are proscribed on many campuses. On other campuses, such meetings invoke intimidation and surveillance from the 'campus protection services' as has been experienced on a number of South African campuses in the aftermath of a major outsourcing of service workers which has generated new workers organisations (2003).

Expulsions, non-graduation, and missing records: incidents such as these are hard to monitor as they are generally carried out against student leaders and activists and critics, under an official pretext. Sometimes these are linked to the non-accommodation of demands for sexual favours.

Non-promotion, non-availability of opportunities for further education and training, and other constraints imposed by senior colleagues as a result of an increasingly constrained and competitive institutional environment, peer envy and discriminatory values.

Extortion: financial extortions perpetrated against students include the practice of lecturers compelling students to purchase photocopies from them, or fail their courses, and the widespread extortion of sexual favours from female students on campuses in Nigeria, Cameroon and elsewhere.

Non-payment of salaries for long periods often compounds the prevalence of extortion and other corrupt practices, where lecturers grow increasingly desperate to ensure their own economic survival.

There appears to be a growing trend towards civil society actors compromising academic freedom. New challenges arise from the increasing levels of intimidation and violence being perpetrated by civil society groups. In the Algerian case, numerous academics have been assassinated, and many others attacked and intimidated by Islamic fundamentalist groups. In Nigeria, on-campus student organisations commonly referred to as 'cults' impose regimes of intimidation and terror that affect the academic freedom and security status of students and faculty. The Dar Es Salaam case cited above was orchestrated by a student group, as was the assault on Dr Phiri (reported below). The reticence and/or complicity of university administrations in dealing with such groups seems to warrant further investigation. Additional examples include the following:

In March 2001 Khedija Cherif, a sociologist at the University of Tunis and a prominent women's rights advocate was attacked by a group of people. She was beaten, sexually harassed and verbally abused.

Also in 2001, unidentified assailants attacked Abdel Kader Ben Khemis, professor at the University of Sousse, known for his critical views.

In the single year 1993-1994 at least 20 intellectuals were assassinated in Algeria. Some of them were publicly executed as a warning to their colleagues, and this campaign of violence and intimidation has continued, largely displacing state repression of the previous era.

The activities of cults on the Nigerian university campuses at Ibadan, Ife and Benin have used rituals and acts of intimidation to inspire fear into the hearts of faculty and students alike.

Indirect Observance and Non-Observance

This section refers to the non-observances that result from the erosion of the pre-requisites for freedom discussed above.

National and regional conditions

It is clear that since the publication of the 1996 CODESRIA report, the global conditions within which African universities exist have continued to make the observance of many of the provisions contained within both documents extremely challenging, if not impossible. It is also clear that it is unrealistic to isolate the protection of academic freedom from the broader struggles for democracy and social justice, struggles that go well beyond the liberal individualism and legalistic underpinning of traditional human rights discourses.

In this context the articles concerning the obligations of the state deserve reconsideration. To what extent is it at all feasible for African states to resist the logic of international financial institutions, in order to “continuously ensure adequate funding for research institutions and higher education”? Clearly this would, at a minimum, require serious pressure from civil society and the African public, possibly in the context of national and subregional public debates that might lead to a re-commitment to public education. But how far can regional and national mobilisations be effective in the context of globalisation, and the related impact of an externally driven and financed higher education reform process?

Globalisation

The global trend towards ‘financial diversification’ of tertiary education seems likely to exacerbate rather than reduce existing patterns of exclusion and inequality, and as such to diminish the possibility of honouring commitments to equality and public accountability, both locally and more globally. Higher Education reform is an integral aspect of globalisation. With the world market for educational services exceeding 30 billion dollars, it is not surprising to find free trade advocates calling for the complete opening up of the world education market, to be regulated by the new General Agreement on Trade in Services (Altbach 2003). The same source notes that the USA is already a major exporter of education, and “benefits enormously” from the 547,000 foreign students attending higher education institutions in the USA, as they contribute approximately 11 billion dollars to the US economy each year.

Needless to say, African higher education institutions are in any case poorly placed to compete with the largest and most diverse higher education system in the world. The brain drain is a direct reflection of this fact. Furthermore there is little evidence that partnership arrangements between US and African institutions effectively benefit the African partners, and some evidence to the contrary (Samoff and Carroll 2002).

The emergence of private colleges and universities (see above) has been facilitated by the combination of national conditions (rising demands and shrinking public provision), as well as the globalisation of HE now manifesting not so much through international academic exchanges and collaboration, as through the reform process.

Institutional cultures and Compounding Gender Inequalities

Longstanding inequities of access seem likely to be compounded by the financial diversification (cost-recovery, removal of subsidies and outsourcing of services).

underprivilege, so militating against the emergence of more egalitarian collegial cultures. The increasingly fragmented nature of academic life poses certain challenges, as does the prevailing culture of competitiveness, augmented by scarce resources and growing competitiveness. The changing institutional environment continues to sustain corrupt, harassing, domineering and oppressive behaviour.

The following brief discussion takes gender equality as illustrative.

With regard to the observance of gender equality, discrimination takes direct and indirect forms. It can be argued that all of these constitute non-observance, particularly of the UNESCO Recommendation's provisions for gender equality. However, it may be preferable to consider the maintenance of inequality as indirect observance in the sense that inequality is part of the overall conditions that prevent observance, and should not be limited to consideration of extreme instances. The broader picture is a more mundane one in which observance is hindered simply by the inherent logic of male dominated institutional cultures.

Institutional and administrative tolerance of sexual abuse is one of the more negative features of African universities clearly works to re-inscribe women's subordination and diminish the prospects for equal treatment. The non-protection of staff as well as students leaves them open to harassment and intimidations that clearly violate their right to equitable treatment and freedom from discrimination.

A case in point is that of Isabel Apawo Phiri,¹² during her tenure at Chancellor College in Malawi. Dr Phiri undertook a research project whose findings suggested the women students experienced a high incidence of rape and sexual harassment by peers and lecturers, both on and off the campus, and that most of this went unreported. The dissemination of her report, and a radio coverage of her findings provoked a campaign of refutation, harassment and intimidation. Her house was attacked and damaged. The university administration failed to offer her alternative accommodation in the face of threats to burn down her home and issued a statement that more or less blamed her for the incident. Her findings were disputed and she was subjected to intense hostility from many colleagues. The head of the law department was among those who objected to her treatment and demanded that measure be taken to deal with "such terrorism" on the basis that it amounted to a serious violation of academic freedom. Dr Phiri was obliged to hire a lawyer to seek compensation, and subsequently applied for leave to recover from her ordeal. She subsequently left her position and to take up employment elsewhere.

A second well-known instance of non-observance through failure to offer adequate protection against sexual harassment is that of Levina Mukasa, a woman student at the University of Dar Es Salaam who committed suicide after enduring a lengthy campaign of intimidation and abuse mounted against her person when she refused a relationship with a male student (Othman 2000). While sexual abuse and harassment of women students may not fall into the received definitions of academic freedom, it is clear that institutional tolerance of such inequitable behaviour mitigates against the

¹² Phiri 2000

expressed commitments to fair and just treatment, and should be regarded as one of the factors responsible for the persisting under-representation and marginalisation of women in African HEIs. Women faculty, particularly those at junior levels are also subject to unwarranted sexual attention and may find their career advancement affected. The prevailing gender norms and values allow male students, lecturers, and members of the general public take advantage of the situation with few qualms and little threat to their careers, while women are negatively marked and affected (Pereira 2002, Manuh et al 2002). Concerted monitoring of sexual harassment and abuse has only recently been undertaken at some universities, notably through the activities of *Southern African Network of Tertiary Institutions Challenging Sexual Harassment and Abuse*, established in Gaborone in 1996.¹³

Given the rising HIV/AIDS infection rates on many campuses (especially in Southern Africa), neglecting these dynamics does not just threaten academic freedom, but goes much further to threaten the longevity of students and faculty alike.

Reviewing the evidence on gender inequality and sexual abuse in Afousul y tW8.42es

Effects of Non-observance on Knowledge Production

Non observance, whether direct or indirect has profound effects on the quality of scholarship and research produced by African academics.

In practical terms, the demands of academic careers have proliferated in ways that are increasingly incompatible with time for research and reflection that might be deemed essential to good quality intellectual production. Sabbatical leave, recognised within both instruments as a preconditions for academic freedom, has virtually ceased to exist. Where it does, it seldom serves its original purpose. Instead, financially deprived faculty members find it necessary to use their sabbaticals to pursue income-generating activities, or to seek more viable career opportunities abroad. They may also have to self-finance sabbatical leave, and find funds to cover their own replacement. Research production has become harder and harder to sustain, the commendable efforts of various continental and subregional networks notwithstanding.

While inadequate financing has not been traditionally defined as a threat to academic freedom, in African contexts this has perhaps posed the greatest threat of all. It has been integral to the phenomenon of *brain drain*, both in terms of the international out-migration of African academics, and the non-return of over 42% of Africans who depart to the U.S.A. for doctoral study (Pires et al 1999). The mass emigration that has occurred has been compounded by localised drainage of a different kind. The non-viability of academic careers has seen would-be professional academics engaging in a multiplicity of entrepreneurial activities, not all of them scholarly, both on and off the campuses.

This partly explains the *consultancy syndrome* which sees academics abandoning independent research activities which can no longer attract funding in favour of carrying out income-generating consultancies for a variety of agencies. Others have come to rely on the small but growing number of independent research institutes, many of which have been established in response to a situation in which research grants, and in some instances research training (traditionally acquired through the undertaking of graduate study) has largely ceased to be available. While these issues were flagged at the Kampala conference, they were not nearly as salient as they have since become.¹⁴ Meanwhile Africa's contribution to global scholarship, research production and publication continues to deteriorate, relying increasingly on those who have migrated to more viable institutions in the West.

More broadly, the non-viability of academic careers raises the alarming spectre of an even more denuded future as fewer and fewer of today's students even consider the academy to present a career option.

Within higher education institutions the professional role of academics is also diversifying, gaining additional functions that include self-administration in the name of efficiency. The development of new technologies has fuelled the assumption that support staff can be reduced in the name of efficiency, as personal computers and developments in telecommunications replace secretarial functions. At senior levels, this role diversification often includes that addition of administrative, fund-raising and

¹⁴ Imam and Mama 1997 discuss many of the economic issues in a paper on self censorship

consultancy work. These additional activities create greater loading, but are increasingly being adopted as a necessary means of topping up departmental income deficits and maintaining teaching delivery. These additional demands deplete the time and energy available for teaching, not to mention knowledge production through research, in ways that deserve monitoring from the perspective of the freedom to carry out one's teaching and research duties under reasonable conditions of employment.

The reliance on donor funds for research activities is highly undesirable, as it constantly risks compromising the emergence of national and socially responsible intellectual agendas in favour of donor agendas that often carry particular brands of developmentalism.

Just as academic freedom might be considered a necessary condition for knowledge production, so too is academic freedom severely compromised by the absence of African knowledge production. Scholars and analysts are forced to rely on imported knowledge and resources, much of it derived in contexts that may have little or no relevance to the pressing challenges facing Africans. Reliance on irrelevant resources, and being compelled to cite them in order to be published in accredited journals can even retard the development of locally relevant theories and paradigms, so compromising indigenous knowledge production. Those still struggling to find ways of continuing to carry out research often find themselves reliant on unequal partnerships with Western scholars with funds, or dependent on the generosity of donor agencies willing to fund research for their own reasons.

Conclusions

Broadly speaking, the situational update and analysis and review carried out here together indicate that existing instruments do not fully or adequately reflect or respond to the major challenges facing higher education in Africa at the present time. To some extent they are limited by their liberal human rights orientation, and the focus on the state both as an arbiter of freedom and as the major funder of academic institutions. This kind of generic approach to academic freedom may be insufficiently attentive to the changing context, to the marked local variations in conditions, in the absence of local uptake and engagement with academic freedom in specific national and institutional contexts. However, it needs to be said that in the 1990's it would have been hard to anticipate the rapidity with which the new challenges of globalisation, and within this the marketisation of higher education, would gain ground during the last decade. Yet these are the major forces creating the need to re-think the meaning of academic freedom. Incorporate the implications of these changes for higher education into a the instruments designed to protect and advance academic freedom therefore clearly requires substantially more work than a review such as this can undertake.

The present context is one in which it is more important than ever to devote serious attention to developing broader and deeper thinking about the conceptualisation, development and pursuit of academic freedom in African contexts. Never has the imperative to strengthen African intellectual life been stronger. Not only does the parlous condition of the continent demand that we create the capacity to think our way out of the crisis, but the global circumstances also demand a much higher level of intellectual, strategic and creative capacity. Academic freedom is an essential

condition for the development of a vibrant and socially engaged intellectual culture, and in African contexts the constraints range from the most overt to the more invidious forms of self regulation and censorship which appear to be gaining ground in the context of marketisation. Indeed, it seems that in some ways the naked repression of undemocratic states has been largely displaced by the poorly substantiated and little understood logic of the “market forces”.

Some potentially fruitful directions for the neo.0005pary

is a basic pre-requisite for the development of a vibrant continental intellectual culture, which draws on the diverse perspectives of the widest possible range of social groups, and which can produce both the knowers, and the knowledge that Africa needs to think her way out of the crisis and forward into the 21st century.

4.0 Recommended Strategies

The strategies recommended below are a unified package, which need to be implemented as such to be effective.

- *A more comprehensive revisiting and revision of existing understandings of academic freedom, as reflected in the Kampala Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility, and the UNESCO statement. This should take full cognisance of contemporary challenges to public higher education, most notably the shift from the imperatives of “the state” to those of “the market” and the implications for equity within higher education institutions.*
- *A broad programme of national and subregional activities designed to establish and re-affirm the public stake in higher education by establishing the connections between national agendas for democratisation, strong and unfettered intellectual capacity drawn from all sectors of the society, and the broad goals of sustainable, equitable and democratised development processes.*
- *The strengthening and protection, and where necessary the establishment of academically free and independent national, subregional and regional research and reflection centres dedicated to the reproduction of continentally grounded critical thinkers and researchers competent to identify and engage strategically with the major contemporary challenges to African development in key areas of policy specialisation,*
- *The re-establishment and support of an independent regional programme to monitor and report on academic freedom, and to continuously affirm the link between academic freedom and social responsibilities, in the context of democratisation and the strengthening of secular civil society.*
- *The promotion of national-level, sub-regional and regional dialogues designed to strengthen broader awareness about the crucial importance of academic freedom and to build a wide social consensus at all levels of society and in the local and global policy establishment. In this regard, Ministers of Education, UNESCO and other organisations should play a pro-active role in this mobilisation and popularisation effort, taking it as part of their official mandate and linking it to other aspects of the ongoing national and regional development and democratisation efforts*
- *The greater recognition of the need for more attention to be paid to the creation of the basic, supportive environment necessary for academics to function in the first place as academics and then to promote their freedoms.*
- *The encouragement of countries to adopt policies that facilitate the cross-border movement of scholars in the settled knowledge that scholarly mobility and the*

ability to belong to, as well as exchange with other scientific communities are integral to the promotion of the freedom of thought and academic freedom.

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