



THE 14TH ANNUAL EAST AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE FORUM REPORT

Theme:

***“Strengthening and Harmonizing Higher Education Quality Assurance
Systems for Enhanced East Africa Regional Integration”***

**15th - 18th September 2025
Kampala, Republic of Uganda**

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Executive Summary

The East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) is a legally registered network of quality assurance practitioners in the East African Community Partner States (EAC). EAQAN operates through National Chapters in each member State to localize efforts and strengthen country-level quality assurance coordination. Every year, EAQAN holds a Forum and Conference in the EAC Partner States on a rotation basis. This year, the 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference in Kampala, Uganda from 15th to 18th September 2025. The high-level quality assurance dialogue event was held 17th September 2025 while the EAQAN General Assembly was held on 18th September 2025.

The theme for the Forum and Conference was “Strengthening and Harmonizing Higher Education Quality Assurance Systems for Enhanced East Africa Regional Integration”. The sub-themes were three: Enhancing Quality Assurance Mechanisms to promote Competence-Based Education for East Africa Regional Development; Leveraging on Innovative Technological Integration in Internal and External Quality Assurance Practices for Excellence in Higher Education; and Promoting Best Practices in Higher Education for an EAC Common Higher Education Area in East Africa. The 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference had 14 sessions that included four keynote presentations; 17 presentations, and discussions. All the presentations were under the above three mentioned subthemes of the Conference.

The resolutions of the 13th EAQAN General Assembly were: Scale up competence-based approaches; collaborate on a harmonized framework; harness digital tools responsibly; evaluate progress on actionable steps; advocate for inclusive capacity building; establish and strengthen EAQAN Country Chapters; organize Regional Quality Assurance Fora and webinars on QA matters; identify and secure funding sources to support the development and dissemination of innovative quality assurance practices; pursue collaborative research projects; create a register of quality assurance experts; develop the EAQAN Strategic Plan; and work towards establishing a home in the IUCEA.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) is a legally registered network of quality assurance practitioners in the East African Community Partner States (EAC). The Vision of EAQAN is “An internationally recognized network of quality assurance practitioners in East Africa.” The mission of EAQAN is “To promote, enhance and improve the quality of higher education in East Africa through the implementation of quality assurance activities.” The EAQAN has six core values: commitment, excellence, innovations, integrity, quality, and transparency. The objectives of EAQAN are as follows:

- i) To foster collaboration and linkages among quality assurance practitioners within East Africa;
- ii) To promote a culture of quality assurance in higher education in East Africa;
To enhance the capacity of quality assurance units in higher education institutions in East Africa;
- iii) To collaborate with quality assurance bodies regionally and internationally in capacity building;
- iv) To promote research into the practice of quality assurance in higher education for purposes of improving the quality of higher education in Africa;
- v) To share quality assurance expertise and experiences within the region;
- vi) To plan and host quality assurance conferences, symposium, workshops and such forum in the region for sharing ideas and for the dissemination of research findings and best practices; and
- vii) To train, and sustain a pool of quality assurance experts in the region.

EAQAN operates through National Chapters in each member State to localize efforts and strengthen country-level quality assurance coordination. The National Chapters include:

- i) Kenya Universities Quality Assurance Network (KuQAn);
- ii) Rwanda Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (RWAQAN);
- iii) Tanzanian Universities Quality Assurance Forum (TUQAF);
- iv) Uganda Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF);
- v) Forum Burundais d’Assurance Qualité (FOBAQ); and
- vi) Somali Universities Quality Assurance Network (SuQaN).

Every year, EAQAN holds a Forum/Conference in the EAC Partner States on a rotation basis. The 14th EAQAN Forum/Conference was held from 15th to 18th September 2025, at Speke Resort Munyonyo – Kampala, Uganda. The participants included quality assurance practitioners, policy makers, and the academicians. Attendance lists are attached as **appendix 1**.

1.1 Theme for the Forum/Conference

Strengthening and Harmonizing Higher Education Quality Assurance Systems for Enhanced East Africa Regional Integration.

1.2 Sub-themes

The sub-themes were three:

- i) Enhancing Quality Assurance Mechanisms to promote Competence-Based Education for East Africa Regional Development;
- ii) Leveraging on Innovative Technological Integration in Internal and External Quality Assurance Practices for Excellence in Higher Education; and
- iii) Promoting Best Practices in Higher Education for an EAC Common Higher Education Area in East Africa.

1.3 Sessions for the Forum

The 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference had 14 sessions:

Day One – Monday 15th September 2025

- Session 1: Official opening of the 14th EAQAN Forum.
- Session 2: Keynote presentation.
- Session 3: Sub-theme 1 - Enhancing Quality Assurance Mechanisms to promote Competence-Based Education for East Africa Regional Development.
- Session 4: Sub-theme 1 - Enhancing Quality Assurance Mechanisms to promote Competence-Based Education for East Africa Regional Development.
- Session 5: Sub-theme 3 - Promoting Best Practices in Higher Education for an EAC Common Higher Education Area in East Africa.

Day Two – Tuesday 16th September 2025

- Session 6: Sub-theme 2 - Leveraging on Innovative Technological Integration in Internal and External Quality Assurance Practices for Excellence in Higher Education.
- Session 7: Harmonisation of Higher Education in the East African Region and the African Continent.
- Session 8: Sub-theme 1: Enhancing Quality Assurance Mechanisms to promote Competence-Based Education for East Africa Regional Development.

Session 9: Sub-theme 3: Promoting Best Practices in Higher Education for an EAC Common Higher Education Area in East Africa.

Day Three – Wednesday 17th September 2025

Session 10: Opening session for High-Level Quality Assurance Dialogue Event.

Session 11: Keynote presentation.

Session 12: Panel Discussion.

Session 13: Panel Discussion.

Day Four – Thursday 18th September 2025

Session 14: 13th East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network General Assembly.

DAY ONE – MONDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 2025

SESSION ONE: OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 14TH EAQAN FORUM

The Master of Ceremony was Professor Michael Mawa, the Chief Principal, Quality Assurance and Qualifications Framework, Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). The opening ceremony started at 9:49 am, with anthems and the prayer. Professor Mawa introduced the different categories of participants that were present. The opening ceremony had the following items:

- i) Welcome remarks by Professor Paul Muoki Nzioki, President of EAQAN;
- ii) Statement by Professor Ramon Torrent Macau, President OBREAL Global Observatory and Coordinator of the HAQAA Initiative;
- iii) Remarks by Dr. Dorothee Weyler, Regional Director, DAAD;
- iv) Remarks by Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol, Executive Director, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Uganda;
- v) Remarks by Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary, the IUCEA; and
- vi) Official Opening Speech by the Guest of Honour, Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, State Minister for Higher Education, Uganda.

1.1 Welcome remarks by Professor Paul Muoki Nzioki, President of EAQAN

The President welcomed participants to the 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference and thanked the Government of Uganda, the IUCEA and NCHE for hosting the event, noting that EAQAN had evolved over 14 years from a modest gathering into a vibrant platform for dialogue and collaboration aligned with Articles 5 and 102 of the EAC Treaty to harmonize curricula and

promote mutual recognition of qualifications. He highlighted tangible results of the collaboration, including training over 3,500 university staff in quality assurance, widespread adoption of harmonized IUCEA guidelines across the region, and progress on the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education to advance student mobility and qualification recognition. He described the theme for the Forum “Strengthening and Harmonizing Higher Education Quality Assurance Systems for Enhanced East Africa Regional Integration” as timely, given the region’s opportunities and challenges; a combined population of over 300 million but a higher education gross enrolment ratio of only 9% versus a global average of 38%.

The President highlighted the three sub-themes of the 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference: Enhancing quality assurance to promote competence-based education for East Africa Regional Development; Leveraging on Innovative Technological Integration in Internal and External Quality Assurance Practices for Excellence in Higher Education; and Promoting Best Practices in Higher Education for an EAC Common Higher Education Area in East Africa. He pointed out EAQAN’s core mandate to strengthen internal QA in universities, build institutional capacity, promote collaboration and align systems with international standards. He expressed gratitude to the host, NCHE and development partners. He urged participants to treat the Forum as a call to action for innovation and collaboration, and recognized the tireless work of the Organizing Committee led by Professor Michael Mawa.



EAQAN President, Professor Paul Muoki Nzioki, making welcome remarks

1.2 Statement by Professor Ramon Torrent Macau, President OBREAL Global Observatory and Coordinator of the HAQAA Initiative

Professor Ramon Torrent Macau was not available to make a statement.

1.3 Remarks by Dr. Dorothee Weyler, Regional Director, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Represented by Ms. Margaret Kirai, Dr. Dorothee Weyler noted that DAAD has partnered with EAQAN since 2006 and remains a proud supporter of the Network's mandate to facilitate experience-sharing, networking, and capacity building for quality-assurance practitioners. She likened EAQAN's 14-year history to a teenager facing modern challenges, such as digitalization, AI and the rise of Gen Z/Alpha and expressed confidence that the Network is evolving to meet these demands. Reported that DAAD, together with Kenya's Commission for University Education, had recently organized a workshop on integrating competence-based education and artificial intelligence for Kenyan university QA directors to develop a roadmap for AI policy implementation in higher education, and that DAAD was supporting the 14th EAQAN Forum by providing two experts to broaden participants' knowledge and networks. She highlighted DAAD's support to EAQAN through the EU-funded HAQAA3 initiative which brings together African QA networks, including RAFANAQ, RAAQES, SAQAN and AfriQAN. She cited Tanzanian-German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies as a best-practice model offering LLM and PhD programmes in EAC regional integration law. Emphasized DAAD's objective to strengthen, align, and build robust higher-education systems that produce graduates who drive socio-economic development. Underscored the importance of harmonized QA systems for mutual recognition, academic mobility and international competitiveness. Highlighted that DAAD is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year (2025), marking a century of promoting international academic exchange. Celebrated 20 years of cooperation with IUCEA, which led to the birth of EAQAN. The sustained nature of the collaboration was highlighted as a major milestone. Concluded her remarks by thanking the host, National Council for Higher Education – Uganda; the EAQAN Secretariat; and the IUCEA for making the event a success.



1.4 Remarks by Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol, Executive Director, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Uganda

In her remarks, Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol highlighted that: NCHE – Uganda was privileged to host the 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference. The Forum of CEOs of Councils and Commissions of East Africa reaffirmed the importance of harmonized QA Frameworks, and mobility for students and staff, and central role of QA Agencies and Networks, such as EQAN. The 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference builds on the Ministerial resolutions. The Forum convenes at a critical moment for the region, which continues to grow with new Partner States and growing number of higher education institutions. The three sub-themes of the 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference were key to achieving EACHEA. NCHE – Uganda continues to align its frameworks with those of the region, hence complementing the efforts of the IUCEA. Observed the need to share evidence-based mechanism, explore use of AI tools to enhance QA, and build relationships with industry. Commended the IUEA for the commitment towards to the Network and quality education in the region. Thanked the universities and development partners for investing in higher education in the region. Urged the participants to use the Forum to translate the resolutions of the 1st Regional Ministerial Conference on Common Higher Education Area into action. Congratulated DAAD upon the 100 years of promoting academic exchange in the region. The ED informed participants that she is an alumnus of DAAD.



1.5 Remarks by Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary, the IUCEA

The Executive Secretary welcomed all participants to the 14th Annual EAQAN Forum. He highlighted that with the support of various stakeholders and partners, IUCEA nurtured EAQAN from its infancy into a powerful engine for harmonizing higher education in the region. EAQAN plays a central role in enabling the EACHEA, driving mutual recognition, academic mobility, and global competitiveness. Emphasized that as the EAC expands, quality assurance systems must also keep pace, and expressed confidence that EAQAN would achieve the same. Commended key stakeholders, including the Chief Guest, Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, and the Government of Uganda, for leadership and hosting both the Forum and the 1st Regional Ministerial Conference on EACHEA. Thanked Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol, the ED of NCHE - Uganda and NCHE – Uganda for the partnership and organising the 1st Regional Ministerial Conference. He also commended the Forum of CEOs of National Councils and Commissions, for political and technical support towards the Conference. He thanked Professor Nzioki and EAQAN leadership, for their dedication to the Network. Commended the Partners, DAAD and Obreal Global, for technical and financial support. He applauded the IUCEA Quality Assurance Department and Organizing Committee, for meticulous planning and execution.

The Executive Secretary outlined three critical pillars to discussed during the Forum: CBE – aligning quality assurance with labor market needs to produce job-ready graduates; Technology in Quality Assurance – harnessing AI, digital platforms, and data to modernize assurance systems; and Best Practices for EACHEA – accelerating realization of the ECAHEA through shared standards and mobility.

He acknowledged existing challenges, such as resource gaps, digital divides, and curriculum misalignment, while stressing the region’s collective resolve to overcome them through collaboration. He called upon participants to propose practical policy options and strategies,

beginning with available human, technical, and financial resources, and urged higher education partners to collaborate in advancing EACHEA. Noted the personal significance of the Forum, as it was his final EAQAN Forum as IUCEA Executive Secretary, while reaffirming his continued commitment to the mission of East African higher education, EAC Vision 2050, and AU Agenda 2063. He urged the participants to engage fully in the scheduled dialogues and discussions, share innovations and challenges openly, and build lasting partnerships beyond the EAQAN Forum. Emphasized that universities remain engines for regional integration and socio-economic transformation.



Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona, ES of IUCEA, making his remarks

1.6 Official Opening Speech by the Guest of Honour, Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, State Minister for Higher Education, Uganda

Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, the Minister of State for Higher Education was represented by the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Sports, Hon. James Kubeketerya. The Minister applauded EAQAN and the IUCEA for the milestone, hosting the annual Forum. He noted that consistency is an indicator of resilience, which should be one of the attributes of quality. Stated that the theme for the 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference was pertinent as it underscores the role of higher education in regional development.

The Minister observed that there was need to have a robust discussion on what constitutes quality higher education. Noted that quality is viewed differently by the various stakeholders, for instance parents and students – consider grades as an indicator of quality education while employers focus on competence of the graduates. Emphasized that quality education does not just happen, it needs plans and timely execution of the plans, which underscores the need for quality assurance in higher

education. Highlighted that QA is the cornerstone of higher education that meets the needs of employers and society.

The Minister noted a need to pursue harmonized QA systems in the EAC. He added that this would in turn encourage mobility in the region which fosters social economic transformation. Harmonization is guided by Article 5 & 105 of EAC Treaty. He stressed that attainment of quality in higher education is a process rather than an event. The Minister thanked IUCEA, CEOs of Councils and Commissions of higher education in EAC for the harmonisation efforts of QA systems in the region. He highlighted that the political leaders in the region support harmonisation of QA systems. He, therefore, urged the experts to capitalize on the good will to ensure quality higher education in the region. Pointed out that the fruits of the efforts of the participants may not be seen now but later. He urged the participants to engage actively in the discussions, share views and contribute to a harmonized higher education system. The Minister thanked the ED of NCHE for inviting him. Noted that the ED was making the work of legislators that is, making laws, easier.

After the official opening of the 14th EAQAN Forum, gifts of appreciation were given by EAQAN Executive to the Chief Guest; the ED of NCHE – Uganda, Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol; Deputy Regional Director DAAD; and Executive Secretary of the IUCEA. This was followed by group photographs.



Session 2: Enhancing East Africa Regional Integration through Harmonization and Strengthening of Higher Education Internal and External Quality Assurance Systems

The keynote presentation was delivered by Dr. Vincent A. Ssembatya, the Director Quality Assurance and Accreditation, NCHE – Uganda, on the topic “Enhancing East Africa Regional Integration through Harmonization and Strengthening of Higher Education Internal and External Quality Assurance Systems.” The key issues in the keynote address included:

Quality assurance had been in higher education institutions for a long period of time, for instance, institutions conducted external examination and scrutinized academic documents of students to ascertain whether they met the minimum entry requirements. With the increasing number of institutions, including the private, it became necessary to put in place national QA systems. About 3% of the population in the world were tertiary education students. Sub-Saharan Africa had a GER of 9% (World Bank), against the world average of 43%. India had 30%, China had 60%, and Korea had 90%. For East Africa, it was about 10%. East Africa had over two (2) million students, over 300 universities, and over 331 million people. Defined quality as fitness for purpose. QA in higher education was a rising global challenge. There was need to ascertain whether institutions in the region were using the PDCA cycle: Plan, do, check, and act.

All policies and processes of an institution should be dedicated to enhancement of quality and standards of education provision. Quality assurance systems included facilities, programmes, processes, students, financial resources, staff, management and governance support. Quality assurance is important to win public support, to reward success, among other things. Internal mechanisms in institutions include self-assessment, student evaluation of teaching, plagiarism checks, tracer studies, internal moderation of examinations, student internships, curriculum review, student experience surveys, monitoring of teaching load, pedagogical training, review of policies, and quality assessment of support services. External mechanisms for QA include external academic review, external examiners, professional bodies, external accreditation agencies, employers, and former students. The support services for academic matters include counselling services, welfare services, financial advice, library services, and medical services. External QA is mainly conducted by national councils/commissions.

The challenges faced included diverse national legal frameworks, resource and capacity gaps, rapid higher education expansion, and new delivery modes such as online learning. The strategic actions included harmonisation of standards and guidelines, strengthening QA agencies and networks; institutionalizing mutual recognition of qualifications, leveraging digital QA and AI tools, and CBE. Call for action: building trust, harmonized QA systems to enable mobility of students and employer confidence, and create a united, competitive EAC higher education area. There were various global benchmarks on QA, such as in Europe, South Africa, and Australia. Specific proposals for EACHEA included establish EAC Common higher education QA protocol and operationalize the regional qualifications frameworks.

The key issues emerged in the discussion included: The need to engage owners of private universities to discuss issues pertaining quality assurance; the participants requested the IUCEA,

which convenes the EAQAN Forum and Conferences to organize for the engagement. Employer expectation survey and tracer studies could guide review of the curricula. In Uganda, lower levels of education progressed to CBE. The NCHE – Uganda was developing guidelines to enable institutions review/develop competence-based programmes. After drafting the guidelines, NCHE would engage different stakeholders for input. Once approved, institutions would be required to adhere to the same. The IUCEA would bring Councils and Commissions for higher education in the EAC Partner States together and develop a regional framework for competencies.

SESSION 3: ENHANCING QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE COMPETENCE-BASED EDUCATION FOR EAST AFRICA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The session had a Keynote presentation and a presentation on Strengthening Quality Assurance Frameworks to Foster Competence-Based Education for Sustainable Development in East Africa. The session was chaired by Dr. Mukirae Njihia.

3.1 Keynote presentation

Dr. Sylvia Ruschin, the Head of Academic Staff Development, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Hochschule Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, Germany, delivered the keynote presentation online. In the presentation, the key issues were highlighted:

As of September 2025, the University had 12,948 students, 236 Professors in nine (9) departments, 32 Bachelor degree programmes, 25 Master's degree programmes, three (3) campuses in two cities, and in 2024: € 2,1 Mio research funding, including research on teaching/learning. Academic staff development for CBE was core at the University. The University's service portfolio included: full scale program for newly appointed professors on how to facilitate competence-based learning; University teaching qualification program addressing topics, such as competence-based assessment, teaching and learning with generative AI; supporting curriculum design processes; internal funding of teaching projects and research into one's own teaching; acquisition of third-party funding; supporting University management in strategic processes concerning teaching and learning. There is a strong linkage between CBE and QA at the University.

We must be prepared for the world in transition. The future competencies refer to the capacity to act in emergent contexts. Competence-based approach to teaching and learning is the shift from input to outcome or from teaching to learning. CBE is a model: centered on the students, focused on mastery of competencies, and based on learning outcomes. CBE means that: students can only move forward when demonstrating mastery of learning; implies personalized learning; fosters deeper learning; requires assessment that is meaningful, positive, and empowering learning

experience; expectations for learning are explicit, transparent, specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound; and students receive proactive guidance, feedback and support from teachers.

The challenges for CBE included: Many stakeholders have only their own educational experience to draw on - knowledge acquisition; most of us progressed through a traditional environment - teacher as sage on the stage; many of us might, therefore, be unfamiliar with CBE by own experience - being the guide from the side; and those who trust in teaching may have difficulties to trust the learner. The three main motives of action for students: self-efficacy (competence); autonomy (Let me do it my) way; and relatedness (I am part of the gang). At the heart of QA in HEI with respect to teaching and learning lies the quality of study programmes. The important keys to CBE were courage, trust, commitment and networking. Internal QA involves: up-to-date study programmes; improving teaching and learning strategies Internal QA; graduates asked for by labour market; high rate of enrollment; and low drop-out rate. On the other hand, external QA includes: accreditation by external QA, formal approval of study programme, and accountability to society and legislation.

The University's specific quality criteria regarding CBE included: The study programme's qualification objectives are available and can be accessed any time; the study programme's qualification objectives are operationalized by the learning outcomes of modules and courses; the respective learning outcomes of modules (and the associated courses) are described in a competence-oriented manner using the "what - how to - why" structure; the modules describe competence-based teaching, learning, and assessment; teachers receive regularly training on topics of CBE and apply this training to their teaching and assessment; and teachers use qualitative course feedback instruments to further develop their teaching.

The key questions/comments raised by the participants were: Is industry having a place in delivery and assessment under CBE? some curricula are detailed for CBE, what is your experience in computing notional hours in CBE? some people think that CBE is vocationalizing university education, what is your view? and are large classes appropriate for CBE. The responses were: The industry/people from the workforce can be engaged in CBE such as in curriculum development. However, they should not regularly sit on the table, large classes was also a problem at Hochschule Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, there was need to review the curriculum critically and only maintain key content to maintain, and CBE is a holistic approach, hence consideration of notional hours may not be suitable

3.2 Strengthening Quality Assurance Frameworks to Foster Competence-Based Education for Sustainable Development in East Africa

Dr. Wardah M. Rajab-Gyagenda delivered a presentation emphasizing that Competence-Based Education (CBE) bridges the gap between educational outcomes and labour market demands, marking a shift from traditional, content-heavy curricula to learner-centered approaches. The study aimed at investigating the current state of QA in East African education systems, explore the critical role of enhancing QA mechanisms as a strategic approach to advancing effective delivery

of CBE for sustainable regional development, and propose evidence-based reforms to strengthen implementation of a coherent, regionally integrated, competence-driven education system at both national and regional levels. The study employed a qualitative desk review research design involving comprehensive analysis of existing literature and policy documents related to QA mechanisms supporting CBE in the East African Community (EAC), with thematic analysis used to identify patterns and gaps in QA frameworks and their alignment with sustainable development objectives.

The study revealed that few EAC Partner States had established QA frameworks fully aligned with CBE, and there is notable variability in implementation capacity and institutional coordination. Approximately 65% of universities in the region possess fully operational QA systems tailored to CBE principles (IUCEA, 2021), with Uganda and Kenya leading at over 75% compliance due to strong national QA bodies such as NCHE–Uganda and CUE–Kenya (NCHE Uganda, 2021; CUE Kenya, 2022). In contrast, South Sudan and Burundi lag behind with less than 40% effective implementation, hindered by limited resources and political instability (IUCEA, 2021; World Bank, 2021). The CBE framework is increasingly being integrated into existing QA mechanisms, primarily through collaboration between the IUCEA and national QA agencies, to foster consistency, coordination, and sustainability in higher education quality assurance across the region.

SESSION 4: ENHANCING QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE COMPETENCE-BASED EDUCATION FOR EAST AFRICA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Enhancing Quality Assurance Mechanisms to promote Competence-Based Education (CBE) Implementation on Basic Education: The Experience in Kenya

Dr. Jackyne Okello Alari of Kibabii University, Kenya, presented on the implementation of Competence-Based Education (CBE) in Kenya, noting that the CBE curriculum, introduced in 2017 to replace the 8-4-4 system, emphasizes seven core competencies including communication, critical thinking, and citizenship (KICD, 2019). The study sought to establish QA mechanisms supporting CBE implementation, identify the QA roles of various stakeholders, highlight challenges in CBE implementation, and propose ways to leverage digital tools to enhance QA.

A total of 1,028 participants took part in the study, of whom 39.1% were male and 60.9% were female respondents. Findings showed that key QA mechanisms included internal school self-assessment checklists (78.3%), teacher performance appraisals by the Teachers Service Commission (65.2%), monitoring visits by QA and Standards Officers (60.9%), and the Ministry of Education’s School Quality Assessment Tools (56.5%). The study also outlined stakeholder roles: teachers were responsible for effective curriculum delivery, continuous assessment, and

maintaining a safe and resourceful learning environment; parents supported schools financially, provided materials, and collaborated with teachers; learners actively participated in projects, applied knowledge, and sought guidance; while the government ensured adequate facilities, teacher training, provision of learning materials, and overall monitoring of CBE implementation.

Dr. Alari further highlighted that CBE implementation faced challenges, such as limited training for QA officers, inadequate funding for school visits and resources, lack of standardized digital monitoring tools, resistance to change among some educators and parents, unequal access to materials and infrastructure, and insufficient internal school monitoring mechanisms. To strengthen QA in CBE implementation, she proposed leveraging digital tools to track learner progress across competencies, generate real-time teacher evaluation data, and host online resource libraries for educators. These measures, she noted, would promote transparency, consistency, and continuous improvement in the implementation of CBE across Kenya's education system.

A copy of the presentation is attached as **appendix 5**.

4.2 Towards Quality Competence Based Education in Open, Distance Learning: Addressing Quality Assurance Gaps and Strategies at the Open University of Tanzania

Dr. Emmanuel Kazuwa of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) presented on the Institution's adoption of Competence-Based Education (CBE), explaining that the shift was driven by strategic priorities, such as aligning with national education policies, enhancing graduate employability, responding to labour market demands, and promoting flexibility within the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) model. To integrate CBE, OUT undertook key steps, including curriculum redesign, staff training, and the adoption of new assessment methods focused on the acquisition and application of competencies rather than rote content delivery.

Dr. Kazuwa outlined several challenges faced in implementing CBE within an ODL context, notably difficulties in verifying practical competencies remotely, limited industry placement opportunities, high digital infrastructure costs, QA frameworks tailored to traditional learning modes, and the complexities of supporting geographically dispersed learners. To address these, OUT adopted strategies, such as phased implementation, leveraging existing learning management systems to reduce costs, providing continuous professional development on CBE pedagogy and assessment design, piloting CBE in select programmes to demonstrate success, and conducting awareness campaigns to communicate its benefits and build stakeholder confidence. He further recommended investment in digital assessment platforms, fostering stronger industry partnerships, modernizing QA frameworks, and expanding faculty development initiatives to ensure sustainable and effective implementation of CBE in ODL settings.

The discussion emphasized that values and attitudes are central to CBE, noting that any teacher can effectively teach at the junior or secondary level when guided by CBE principles. It was

observed that skills are no longer traditionally graded, with the focus shifting toward assessment methods that promote regional integration and learner-centered teaching and learning approaches, where the teacher's role is primarily to guide rather than instruct. Participants also underscored the importance of proposing harmonisation strategies through the EAQAN Forum to ensure consistency across the region, while acknowledging that related programmes are still under review.

SESSION 5: PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR REALIZATION OF COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA IN EAST AFRICA

The session Chairperson was Dr. Abukar Mukhtar Omar. The session had two presentations:

- i) Between Borders and Benchmarks: A Comparative Policy Review of QA Alignment in East African Universities with Continental and Global Standards.
- ii) Quality Assurance, Benchmarking, and Institutional Collaboration: Pathways to Higher Education Integration in East Africa.

5.1 Between Borders and Benchmarks: A Comparative Policy Review of QA Alignment in East African Universities with Continental and Global Standards

Professor Isaac Naibei, together with co-authors Fred Odiambo and Dr. Andrew Kipkosgei, presented a study that aimed at mapping the regional landscape of higher education harmonization by documenting existing strategies, frameworks, and policies; identify success factors and best practices in learning outcomes, credit transfer, and quality assurance (QA) alignment; expose structural and contextual bottlenecks hindering convergence; and propose actionable recommendations to support universities, policymakers, and QA bodies in advancing the EACHEA vision.

The study employed a systematic literature review covering publications from 2015 to 2025 sourced from Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, ERIC, Google Scholar, IUCEA repositories, QA agency portals, and grey literature. It included studies addressing curriculum harmonization, credit transfer, QA, and qualifications frameworks across East Africa; namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan—and comparable regions. Out of 412 records identified, 334 were screened, 112 reviewed in full, and 30 met the inclusion criteria for thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that several countries; particularly Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda have made progress in adopting outcome-based curricula, though implementation remains uneven due to

limited staff training and differing national philosophies. The IUCEA's Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) has promoted standardization, yet adoption is inconsistent due to issues such as credit equivalence, differing academic calendars, and institutional resistance. Joint academic programmes in disciplines, such as engineering, education, and medicine were noted as promising but largely donor-driven and unsustainable. Regional qualifications frameworks, though strong policy tools, suffer from weak enforcement and symbolic compliance, while QA alignment efforts remain fragmented, compliance-driven, and under-resourced, undermining trust in harmonized curricula.

The study recommended that IUCEA and national governments strengthen enforcement of harmonization frameworks through binding protocols and legal domestication, enhance QA agencies with funding, training, and developmental evaluations, and monitor progress using regional scorecards and professional councils. It further advised universities and partners to train faculty in outcome-based curriculum design, align programmes regionally, implement transparent credit transfer systems, and institutionalize joint academic programmes as core strategies, while urging development partners to fund curriculum mapping, QA training, ICT development, and expanded mobility schemes for students and staff.

5.2 Quality Assurance, Benchmarking, and Institutional Collaboration: Pathways to Higher Education Integration in East Africa

The presentation was made by Professor Nabukeera Madinah. The other co-author was Dr. Ssemambo Hussein Kakembo. It was noted that while East African countries have committed to educational integration, academic quality assurance and institutional standards remain largely isolated. The absence of common benchmarks undermines trust in credentials, impedes student and faculty mobility, and limits the impact of regional academic programs.

The general objective of the study was to examine how quality assurance, benchmarking, and institutional collaboration can contribute to higher education integration in East Africa. The specific objectives were: Evaluate current quality assurance frameworks; Assess benchmarking practices and identify gaps; Explore models of effective institutional collaboration; and lastly Propose a regional framework for quality alignment and academic recognition. The study employed qualitative methods and a comparative case study design across six EAC countries: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan. Data was collected through content analysis of secondary data and policy documents, including university and accreditation bodies' bulletins. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes.

The findings of the study were: Quality Assurance - All countries have national bodies, but audit criteria, evaluation frequency, and independence vary widely. IUCEA frameworks are referenced but not fully implemented. Benchmarking Practices: Less than 30% of institutions engage in cross-border benchmarking, and most of it is internal or ad hoc, hindered by a lack of regional indicators

and funding. Institutional Collaboration: Collaborations (staff exchanges, joint degrees) are often donor-driven and short-lived. Regional Framework: A proposed framework includes standardized QA protocols, an IUCEA-hosted benchmarking portal, and institutional consortia with joint targets. Policy-Implementation Gap: Existing quality frameworks are often "on paper" without enforcement or real evaluation. Absence of Benchmarking Tools: Lack of regionally agreed metrics makes cross-country comparison difficult. Limited, Fragile Collaboration: Collaborations are often short-term and unsustainable without funding. Strong Support for Regional Framework: Stakeholders express enthusiasm for a coordinated approach to quality assurance.

The recommendations of the study were: Establish a Regional Accreditation Council, develop a centralized benchmarking portal by IUCEA, formalize institutional consortia for joint programs, secure political and financial commitment for mutual recognition legislation, and launch pilot projects in harmonized program delivery.

DAY TWO – TUESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 2025

SESSION 6: LEVERAGING ON INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES FOR EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

The session was chaired by Dr. Abdallah Baguma, the President of Rwanda Chapter. The session had a keynote presentation, and three presentations:

- i) Leveraging postgraduate student satisfaction data to strengthen quality assurance systems for regional integration in East Africa;
- ii) The role of University Quality Assurance in the use of Generative AI for uploading academic integrity: A Narrative Review; and
- iii) Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to strengthen Internal Quality Assurance Systems in East African Universities: A case of Bugema University.

6.1 Leveraging Postgraduate Student Satisfaction Data to Strengthen Quality Assurance Systems for Regional Integration in East Africa

The presentation was made by Dr. Charity Chemnjor, Laikipia University - Kenya. The key issues highlighted were included: Listening to the voices of the students helps to improve their experiences and also shape the future of higher education in the region. Student satisfaction is a key driver of quality assurance and academic mobility. The problem statement was that mechanisms for integrating postgraduate feedback remained underdeveloped, or limited for systematically integrating postgraduate feedback, which feedback would inform best practices that contribute to the realization of a common higher education area. There were gaps in administration, such as record keeping and results; academics which includes supervision process and curriculum delivery; and support structures.

The study objectives were three: Assess postgraduate satisfaction (academic, administrative, and support); identify gaps affecting postgraduate experiences which would have implications for quality assurance; and show how feedback informs best practices for harmonization. Mixed methods approach was used. The target population were all postgraduate students (2024-2025). An Online questionnaire (google form) was utilized. Descriptive statistics as well as thematic analysis were conducted.

The findings included: Academic records and results; there were delays in uploading results, missing marks on student portal, and limited access to academic records which slows the progression of the students. Supervision and research; delayed feedback from supervisors, long wait for proposal and thesis defenses, inadequate supervisory guidance, and need for supervisor

accountability. Curriculum and delivery; insufficient contact hours in specialized PhD courses, curriculum delivery sometimes misaligned with expectations, and inconsistent adherence to teaching schedules. Administration and communication; online registration challenges, unclear degree specializations, unavailability of course directors, and limited student support – weak communication with students. The respondents that were satisfied were 38.3%; 34% were neutral, and 17% dissatisfied. 68.1% would recommend the University. The recommendations included: Institutionalize postgraduate satisfaction surveys; Develop real-time feedback response systems; Improve administrative turnaround time; Strengthen supervision models and blended learning; Invest in research infrastructure and supervisor training; Promote regional collaboration for harmonized standards/benchmarks.

6.2 The role of University Quality Assurance in the use of Generative AI for uploading academic integrity: A Narrative Review

The presentation was made by Assoc. Prof. Mohammed Ibrahim Ribah. The other co-authors were Dr. Irene Muriithi Wanjiru; Dr. Goparaju Anomolu; and Dr. Mundu Mustafa. The following key issues were highlighted:

The rapid proliferation of AI technologies was transforming education, health, agriculture among others. In higher education, AI presents both opportunities and challenges, hence the need for robust quality assurance practices. To mitigate the risks posed by use of AI in academics requires adherence to principles of accountability, inclusiveness and sustainability. There were numerous AI tools available at the students' finger prints. The categories of AI were two, namely assistive and substitutive. There were AI tools for research; AI tools for learning and development; and AI detection tools. The roles of AI in higher education included enhanced academic and administrative tasks, personalized learning, adaptive content delivery, and student performance analytics. The role of AI in education will continue to grow with new tools that are used in learning, research, and administration. There were two (2) types of quality assurance systems: Internal and external.

The rapid integration of AI in academics sphere sparked a flurry of research and debates about its effects on academic integrity. AI brings both opportunities and challenges. While it can assist in identifying and preventing dishonest behaviors, its use also raises ethical questions. Most generative AI tools allow authors to write content in a second but, the language model does not have the understanding, critical thinking, or personal insights needed to produce authentic scholarly work which raises concerns about academic integrity because the content does not represent the author's ideas. Students and faculty should be educated about the ethical use of AI. There is need to develop and enforce robust academic integrity policies that specifically address the use of AI tools. There is also need to leverage AI for Personalized Learning. The following were recommended in the use of AI in education: AI as a tool, not a substitute; acknowledge the use of AI; ensure accuracy; avoid plagiarism; follow the course objectives, and supervised use of AI.

6.3 Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to strengthen Internal Quality Assurance Systems in East African Universities: A case of Bugema University

The presentation by Mr. Okoth Ronald Otieno, Quality Assurance Officer at Bugema University, with co-authors Dr. Eria Muwanguzi and Dr. Rosette Kabuye, focused on the current state of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and the potential role of AI in enhancing these processes. The study highlighted that while Bugema University has made significant progress in developing its IQA structures, it still relies heavily on static documentation and manual processes, including class attendance registration, staff appraisals, leave forms, and report storage. Current monitoring mechanisms encompass course evaluations, student feedback surveys, peer reviews, staff attendance, and periodic departmental reports, all aligned with NCHE and accreditation guidelines. The study explored stakeholders' perceptions of AI in IQA, noting that AI is seen to improve efficiency, accuracy, and enable real-time monitoring and feedback. Opportunities for AI integration include predictive analytics for early intervention, streamlined data management, and enhanced student engagement through improved feedback mechanisms.

Based on the findings, the study recommended investing in digital platforms, providing targeted faculty training on AI tools, establishing clear AI policies and support structures, and enhancing student feedback systems. Strategic oversight was emphasized to ensure that technological, human, and ethical considerations are addressed simultaneously. The study acknowledged limitations, including a small sample size and context-specific focus, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Overall, the research underscores the potential of AI to transform IQA processes at Bugema University, provided that adoption is supported by proper infrastructure, policies, and training.

A number of key issues emerged in the discusses: There should be acknowledgement of use of AI to generate particular information; some students were more knowledgeable on use of AI more than lecturers and therefore lecturers should be trained on use of AI; ethical use of AI should be observed; there was an ongoing training of staff from universities on AI organized by the IUCEA; the IUCEA in partnership with GIZ were establishing AI centres of excellence in universities; IUCEA partnered with UNESCO, Centre of Excellence where the UNESCO Centre working with experts in the region have developed a training programme for staff in universities. The course was implemented this year (2025) and has already been taken up by members of different universities.

SESSION 7: HARMONISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE EAST AFRICAN REGION AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

The Session was chaired by Dr. Judith Tindimwebwa, the Rwandan Chapter Representative on the EAQAN Executive Committee.

The session had three presentations: Survey report on the status of the East African Community (EAC) Common Higher Education Area conducted among member universities and National Councils and Commissions; Survey Report on the HAQAA3 (Harmonization, Quality Assurance and Accreditation) Mapping of the Tools and Practices used by National Quality assurance Agencies (NQAAs) in Africa to Evaluate and/or Accredite of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) and/or Online Teaching and Learning in Africa; and Implementation of HAQAA3 Initiative and the next steps and opportunities in the initiative's work areas.

7.1 Survey report on the status of the East African Community (EAC) Common Higher Education Area conducted among member universities and National Councils and Commissions

The report was presented by Professor Michael Mawa, Chief Principal, Quality Assurance and Qualifications Framework, IUCEA. He highlighted that the EAC integration milestones were Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union, and Political Federation. Education is a core driver of integration (Treaty, Article 102). Declaration of EACHEA in 2017 was a bold step to harmonise higher education. The Vision is One Region, One Education Space. The key building blocks of EACHEA were Regional Quality Assurance Framework – common standards; East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (2015) – comparability; Student Mobility Policy (2015) – movement of learners; Staff Mobility Framework (2014) – academic exchanges; and Regional Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN). In 2024, IUCEA embarked on a process to Monitor and Evaluate implementation of the EACHEA. The Purpose of the survey was to Assess progress since the 2017 EAC Declaration of EACHEA.

Objectives of this survey were three: To establish levels of awareness of the existence and use of the policies, tools, and documents of IUCEA in promoting the common higher education area; to obtain information and document experiences on the adoption and use of the policies, benchmarks, tools, and documents of IUCEA; and iii) to establish the extent to which the policies, benchmarks, tools and programmes are supporting in the realization of the goal of the EAC common higher education area. The methodology included online survey, interviews, documentary reviews. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed. The respondents included 64 higher education institutions and five Commissions/Councils; and six Partner States (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda).

The overall findings were: 1% HEIs aware of EAQFHE; 78% programmes aligned to EAQFHE, 84% reported smooth qualification recognition, 175 QA officers trained across 6 cohorts, national sensitization forums in all Partner States, and momentum was strong and measurable. The establishment of EAQAN as a regional network of quality assurance is one of the commendable outcomes of the regional QA Initiative. However, its sustenance is challenged by the limited administrative and financial capacity to ensure sustainable engagement of the network in achieving its goal and objectives. One of the administrative challenges is coordination. There is no central

administrative office for the network as had been envisaged during its establishment in 2012. The Regional Quality Assurance Framework has made significant strides in harmonizing HE standards across the East African Community, but gaps in: enforcement, institutional adoption, and resource allocation persist.

7.2 Survey Report on the HAQAA3 (Harmonization, Quality Assurance and Accreditation) Mapping of the Tools and Practices used by National Quality assurance Agencies (NQAAs) in Africa to Evaluate and/or Accredite of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) and/or Online Teaching and Learning in Africa

The presentation was made by Abdou Lahate Cisse (Secretary General, RAFANAQ), Dr. Sylvia Demas (President SAQAN), Prof. Paul Muoki Nzioki (President EAQAN). Prof. Charles Kihampa (President, AfriQAN) and Prof. Maria Liusa Lope Chikote (President, RAAQES) were not available to give the presentation. The following were highlighted:

The Project objectives were: i) To conduct a comprehensive mapping of tools and practices used by the NQAAs in the evaluation and/ or accreditation of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) and/or Online Teaching and Learning in Africa; ii) To explore how these tools are used by the NQAAs in the digitalization of evaluation/ accreditation of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) and/or Online Teaching and Learning in Africa; iii) To identify best practices and the challenges faced by NQAAs in the evaluation and accreditation of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL), and/or Online Teaching and Learning in Africa; and iv) To propose recommendations to address the identified challenges.

An exploratory and descriptive study. Data collected through online surveys. The questionnaire developed in English and translated into French and Portuguese languages. Target group: 30 National Quality Assurance Agencies (NQAAs) within the regional Networks; the NQAAs were sensitised on the Project through online webinars: i) Anglophone NQAAs on 27 June 2025, ii) Lusophone NQAAs on 4 July 2025, and iii) Francophone NQAAs on 8 July 2025. Data was collected from 15 July to 8 August 2025. Data analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques. The response rate was 77%.

The findings of the study were: 87% of agencies are independent agencies; 65% of agencies have included accreditation of online programmes in their strategic plans; 48% of agencies have well defined tools for programmes offered in ODEL. Tools were developed in collaboration with other stakeholders; Agencies do not have specific standards for ODEL programmes (68.2%); The tools used included QA to a high extent; There is minimal training of agency staff in the accreditation process; 67% of the agencies reported they receive through basic tolls like email/PDFs; 47% of agencies have physical site visits; There is low adoption of AI, blockchain, Big Data Analytics or

Cloud Platforms have been adopted; and monitoring and compliance with accreditation recommendations is done through regular monitoring through site visit.

The criteria used when selecting reviewers are technology expertise, conflict of interest, mastery of ODEL/teaching and learning standards, subject matter specialization, international experience, stakeholder balance/diversity – academia and industry, gender balance, cultural balance, other, and experience in ODeL.

The key recommendations to enhance the application of tools and practices in the evaluation/accreditation of Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) and/or Online teaching and learning by the NQAAs included: Policy and standard development; develop evaluation tools and processes to support digital learning; collaboration through benchmarking; invest in digital infrastructure; advocate for resource allocation, policy support and partnership; harmonized guidelines; and provide infrastructure readiness.

7.3 Implementation of HAQAA3 Initiative and the next steps and opportunities in the initiative's work areas

The presentation was given by Ms. Apiyo Okwiri. She highlighted the HAQAA3 work areas: i) Transversal Work Area – Policy and Capacity for Regional Integration; ii) African Credit Transfer System – ACTS; iii) African HE Data Capacity; iv) PAQAA/ PAQAA Technical Unit; and v) IQA/EQA Training and Capacity building. Noted that the funding of the different initiatives is by the European Commission. The HAQAA3 initiative was focusing on: IQA/EQA – Training – Based on ASG Guidelines – QA Actors, HAQAA ambassadors (graduates). ii) HAQAA Technical Unit – to take care of qualifications network; iii) African Higher Education Data Capacity; iv) African Credit Transfer Systems – ACTS – currently being piloted; and v) Transversal Work Area – Policy and Capacity for Regional Integration.

The Agencies undergoing HAQAA3 reviews in 2025-2026 included INAAREES, Angola; NAQAAE, Egypt; ANAQ-GN, Guinea; ANAQESR, Ivory Coast; CHE, Lesotho; ANAEQ, Morocco; NCHE, Namibia; and ANAQ-SUP, Senegal. The consultancy visits were CIAQE/MESRS, Algeria; DAQES, Burkina Faso; ARES, Cape Verde; ATAQ, Chad; CSAQES, Gabon; ANAQAES, RCA; and ATEA, Tunisia. HEI and authorities, as well as RECs, would work together to 'pilot' ACTS under HAQAA.

SESSION 8: ENHANCING QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE COMPETENCE – BASED EDUCATION FOR EAST AFRICA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The sub-theme had three presentations:

- i) Enhancing Quality Assurance Mechanisms to Strengthen Competence – Based Education for Sustainable Regional Development in East Africa;
- ii) Analysis of Internal Quality Assurance Systems used in Competence-Based Curriculum: A Case of Three Privately Owned Universities; and
- iii) Reengineering Quality Assurance to Power Competence -Based Education for Sustainable Regional Transformation in East Africa.

The session was chaired by Professor Rachel Akimana.

8.1 Enhancing Quality Assurance Mechanisms to Strengthen Competence-Based Education for Sustainable Regional Development in East Africa

The presentation was made by Dr. Milton Rwiita Nuwabimpa, Bishop Stuart University – Uganda. The other co-author was Ms. Monica Karungi, the Head Quality Assurance, Kabale University - Uganda. The following key issues were highlighted:

Competence Based Education (CBE) has emerged as a key element of educational reform in East Africa, shifting from theory driven instruction to practical skills. The change aligns with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. In Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda, CBE aimed at shifting the focus from knowledge acquisition to the development of applicable skills, attitudes, and behaviors essential for 21st Century challenges. The success of CBE depends on strong quality assurance mechanisms that ensure curricula relevance, effective teaching, and well-prepared educators.

The study reviewed how QA mechanisms supports CBE in East Africa, exploring challenges and strategies linking reforms to regional goals. The methodology employed by the study included a critical literature review of research studies, policy documents, and reports on quality assurance and CBE in East Africa, focusing on peer-reviewed articles, government publications, and regional frameworks from 2014 to 2025. Thematic analysis was used.

Quality assurance mechanisms ensure higher education institutions meet standards in teaching, research, and administration, promoting improvement, transparency, and social-economic relevance. These are internal quality assurance, such as curriculum development, teaching, and assessment; and external quality assurance which includes accreditation and audits by external audits by external agencies. Effective quality assurance systems bring standard alignment in CBE implementation. Adoption of regional quality assurance frameworks such as the East African Qualifications Framework ensures comparable, coherent quality of CBE programmes. Capacity

building and quality assurance culture, training of quality assurance officers and academic staff builds institutional capacity. Establishment of the EAQAN supports collaboration among quality assurance practitioners for sharing of best practices and strengthening quality assurance culture. Development of quality assurance tools and guidelines guide institutions in aligning curriculum design, teaching, learning, and assessment with competency outcomes. Internal quality assurance systems and external assessments promote ongoing curriculum review and quality improvement in CBE programmes.

The challenges in quality assurance and CBE in East Africa included misalignment of curricula and assessment, infrastructure and ICT limitations, resistance to pedagogical and assessment change, weak/fragmented quality assurance frameworks, rapid top-down policy reforms without local adaption, and discontent between education and employer needs. The mechanisms for effective quality assurance mechanisms in implementation of CBE included: Institutional audits and accreditation must inspire genuine improvements beyond formality; curriculum reviews should align with national development but allow institutional flexibility; harmonizing Regional quality assurance systems; continued training and support for quality assurance personnel, institutions, and academic staff; and development of contextualized tools for CBE implementation emphasizing learner-centered outcomes.

8.2 Analysis of Internal Quality Assurance Systems used in Competence-Based Curriculum: A Case of Three Privately Owned Universities

The presentation was made by Mr. Amos Gitta, Director Quality Assurance, Ndejje University. The other co-authors were Christopher Mugimu, and Badru Musisi. The following key issues were pointed out:

The objectives of the study were: i) To determine degree of alignment between internal quality assurance mechanisms and CBE requirements across three private universities; and ii) to Map and test internal quality assurance linkages that transform competency data into improvements, staff development/appraisal, and feedback to students.

The methodology included qualitative multiple-case, directed content analysis. Three private Ugandan universities were involved in the study. The participants were 15, and these were quality assurance officers, administrators, and academics.

The findings of the study included: Policies existed but were difficult to access. There were visibility gaps and fragment implementation. The 75% rule was being used for examination eligibility. There was active continuous and summative assessment, but moderation/second marking were inconsistent. External examining lapses weaken comparability. There were routine appraisals, and student evaluations. One of the institutions was better resourced, and the other two were faced binding constraints, such as laboratories and e-resources). Data systems track grades/pass rates; competency-tagging rare.

The recommendations of the study were: Make policies, competencies, rubrics & appeals reliably public. Map attendance to competency activities; design compensatory tasks with feedback. Reinstate cycles for vetting, second marking, calibration and external examining. Convert evaluations into assessment literacy via rubric workshops and co-marking. Resource authentic assessments (laboratories/studios/simulations) and document compromises. Build competency-tagged dashboards.

9.3 Reengineering Quality Assurance to Power Competence-Based Education for Sustainable Regional Transformation in East Africa

The presentation was made by Mr. Fred Odhiambo (Online). The other co-author was Dr. Kipkosgei A. Kibet. The key issues highlighted included: The success of CBE requires robust quality assurance systems. CBE is key to employability and social economic transformation. Quality assurance in universities in East Africa remain traditional and input (based facilities, staff credentials, curriculum vetting) rather than competence- and outcome-based. Regional quality assurance systems face coordination, capacity, and enforcement gaps, leading to uneven CBE implementation across member states. The weak harmonization undermines qualification recognition, student/staff mobility, and regional integration. Without re-engineered quality assurance frameworks that emphasize competencies and regional benchmarks, East Africa risks producing graduates qualified on paper but unprepared for real-world demands.

The objectives of the study were to: i) Assess how current quality assurance frameworks reflect CBE principles, ii) identify gaps and challenges in aligning quality assurance with CBE goals, and iii) propose strategies for reengineering quality assurance to advance CBE and regional integration. Qualitative document analysis was used to explore quality assurance frameworks in East Africa and their alignment with CBE. Policy-relevant documents interrogated systematically to reveal gaps, misalignments, and weak assumptions.

The findings of the study were as follows: QA systems in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania emphasize compliance with infrastructure, staff qualifications, and curriculum approval. Policies mention competencies but lack operational rubrics. IUCEA and EAQAN guidelines exist but are inconsistently implemented. QA agencies face staff shortages, budget limitations, and weak stakeholder engagement systems. Policies emphasize compliance (fitness for purpose, value for money) rather than transformative learning. Limited involvement of employers, students, and communities. Fragmented interpretation of regional quality assurance benchmarks reduce comparability of qualifications.

The recommendations of the study included: embed competency frameworks in accreditation and audits; mandate competence-oriented assessments; conduct graduate tracer studies to monitor employability; establish and enforce regional competency benchmarks; facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications; coordinate capacity-building programs on competency-based quality

assurance; redesign quality assurance units for continuous improvement; train faculty on competence-based assessment methods; and engage stakeholders in quality assurance processes.

The discussion highlighted the need for quality assurance agencies to develop tools specifically aligned with CBE to ensure effective implementation across universities. It was emphasized that higher education institutions require targeted training in designing and delivering competence-based curricula. Additionally, quality assurance agencies should not only verify the universities' capacity to align with CBE principles but also provide necessary support to strengthen the transition. The participants further noted that most existing university policies remain predominantly knowledge-based rather than competence-oriented, underscoring the urgent need for policy reform to fully embrace the CBE approach.

SESSION 9: PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION FOR REALIZATION OF COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AREA IN EAST AFRICA

The sub-theme had three presentations:

- i) Benchmarking Curriculum Harmonization for East Africa's Common Higher Education Area: A Systematic Review of Best Practices;
- ii) Cross -Border Research Collaboration as a pillar of the Common Higher Education Area in East Africa; and
- iii) Toward a Common Higher Education Area in East Africa: Promoting Policy Integration; Curriculum Harmonisation; and Accreditation Alignment.

The session was chaired by Dr. Allier Maker Ghai.

9.1 Benchmarking Curriculum Harmonization for East Africa's Common Higher Education Area: A Systematic Review of Best Practices

The presentation was made by Presenter Prof. Isaac Naibei. The other co-authors were Fred Odhiambo, and Dr. Andrew Kipkosgei. The following were highlighted in the presentation:

The objectives of the study were: i) Map the landscape - document regional strategies, frameworks, and policies developed to drive harmonization; ii) spot success factors - highlight enablers and best practices in learning outcomes, credit transfer, and quality assurance alignment; iii) expose bottlenecks - examine the structural and contextual challenges that continue to hinder convergence; and iv) shape the way forward - Generate actionable insights and recommendations to guide universities, policymakers, and quality assurance bodies in realizing the Common Higher Education Area vision.

The methodology included systematic literature review guided by PRISMA 2020, to ensure transparency, reduce bias, and maximize credibility. Literature from 2015–2025 sourced from Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, ERIC, Google Scholar, IUCEA repositories, QA agency portals, and grey literature (policy briefs, reports) was considered.

The findings of the study included: i) Learning outcomes - shift towards outcome-based curricula in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda; ii) Credit transfer - IUCEA's CATS offers standardization but the adoption was inconsistent; iii) Joint academic programmes - there were Pilot initiatives for joint academic programmes in engineering, education, medicine; however, these were often donor-driven, small-scale, and unsustainable; iv) Regional Qualifications Framework - strong policy tool but partial adoption across countries; v) There is weak enforcement and largely symbolic compliance; and vi) Quality assurance alignment - regional peer-review and quality assurance initiatives emerging; however, quality assurance remains compliance-driven, under-resourced, misaligned across states.

9.2 Cross -Border Research Collaboration as a pillar of the Common Higher Education Area in East Africa

The presentation was made by Dr. Wardah M. Rajab – Gyagenda. The other co-author was Amaal Kinene N. Nsereko. The following were pointed out:

Cross-border research collaboration is a pillar of the East African Common Higher Education Area. It facilitates mobility, mutual recognition & cooperative learning.

The study had three objectives: i) Examine status and trends of cross-border collaboration; ii) identify best practices and challenges, and iii) propose policy and institutional framework to strengthen collaboration.

The methodology included qualitative, multi-case study design; methods of data collection were interviews and policy and institutional document reviews. Thematic, content, and comparative analysis were utilized. Seven institutions across Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania participated in the study. Data was collected from seven senior staff (lecturers, deans, and research directors).

The findings were included: i) Research collaboration had grown over past decade; ii) the drivers were funding access, networking opportunities, and awareness of benefits; iii) the key challenges included: Limited financial support, institutional bureaucracy and policy gaps, logistical and administrative hurdles, weak trust and coordination, and lack of central collaboration platforms. The best strategies emerging included faculty exchange programs, networking and regional journals, institutional support (time-off, guidelines), and digital platforms for applications and funding. The proposed framework for cross border research collaboration were EAC Regional Research Fund, harmonized research policies, shared digital collaboration platforms, institutional incentives and quality assurance/ranking integration, capacity building for weaker institutions, and staff/student research mobility schemes.

9.3 Toward a Common Higher Education Area in East Africa: Promoting Policy Integration; Curriculum Harmonisation; and Accreditation Alignment

The presentation was made by Dr. Ssemambo Hussein Kakembo. The other co-author was Nabukeera. The following were highlighted:

The general objective of the study was “To examine how quality assurance, benchmarking, and institutional collaboration can contribute to higher education integration in East Africa.” The specific objectives of the study were: i) Evaluate current quality assurance frameworks; ii) Assess benchmarking practices and identify gaps; iii) Explore models of effective institutional collaboration; and iv) Propose a regional framework for quality alignment and academic recognition.

The study employed qualitative methods and a comparative case study design across six EAC countries: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan. Data were collected through content analysis of secondary data and policy documents. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes.

The key findings were: All countries have national bodies, but audit criteria, evaluation frequency, and independence vary widely. IUCEA frameworks are referenced but not fully implemented. Less than 30% of institutions engage in cross-border benchmarking. Collaborations (staff exchanges, joint degrees) are often donor-driven and short-lived. Policy support and sustainable funding are needed. A proposed framework includes standardized quality assurance protocols, an IUCEA-hosted benchmarking portal, and institutional consortia with joint targets.

The key challenges faced included: i) existing quality frameworks are often on paper without enforcement or real evaluation; ii) lack of regionally agreed metrics makes cross-country comparison difficult; and iii) collaborations are often short-term and unsustainable without funding.

The recommendations of the study were: i) establish a Regional Accreditation Council, ii) develop a centralized benchmarking portal by IUCEA, iii) formalize institutional consortia for joint programmes, iv) secure political and financial commitment for mutual recognition legislation, and iv) and launch pilot projects in harmonized program delivery.

During the discussion, it was emphasized that quality assurance involves multiple stakeholders within universities; therefore, EAQAN was encouraged to include a broader range of university actors in its fora to enhance shared understanding and collaboration. Additionally, participants proposed the establishment of an EAQAN journal to publish research on quality assurance, and highlighted that advancing mutual recognition agreements would be a critical step toward realizing the vision of a unified East African Common Higher Education Area.

DAY THREE – WEDNESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2025

SESSION 10: OPENING SESSION FOR HIGH-LEVEL QUALITY ASSURANCE DIALOGUE EVENT

The session comprised:

- i) Anthems and Prayer;
- ii) Introductions;
- iii) Welcome remarks by Professor Paul Muoki Nzioki, President EAQAN;
- iv) Statement by Professor Ramon Torrent Macau, President OBREAL Global Observatory and Coordinator of the HAQAA Initiative;
- v) Remarks by Dr. Dorothee Weyler, Regional Director, DAAD;
- vi) Remarks by Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol, Executive Director, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Uganda;
- vii) Remarks by Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary, the IUCEA; and
- viii) Official Opening Speech by the Guest of Honour, Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, State Minister for Higher Education, Uganda.

10.1 Welcome remarks by Professor Paul Muoki Nzioki, President EAQAN

The following key issues were highlighted:

Emphasized that the Forum was more like a family gathering than just a conference, bringing participants together to share research findings and to reaffirm their collective role in harmonizing higher education in the region. Eighteen (18) research papers were presented out of 24 submissions, under three sub-themes of the Forum.

Appreciated the contributions of three keynote speakers who broadened participants' perspectives with both global and regional realities: Dr. Sylvia Ruschin (Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, Germany); Dr. Diana Andone (Politechnica University of Timisoara, Romania); and Dr. Vincent Ssembatya (Director of QA and Accreditation, NCHE Uganda).

EAQAN hosted sister networks RAFANAQ (North Africa) and SAQAN (Southern Africa). Together, under the HAQAA3 Initiative, they undertook a mapping of tools and practices used by NQAAs in accrediting Open, Distance, and e-Learning (ODEL). He stressed that this demonstrated continental solidarity, as ODeL is here to stay.

IUCEA presented a status report on the realization of the EACHEA, the flagship project for regional integration in higher education. While progress was encouraging, he stressed that persistence, resources, and political will remain crucial. EAQAN's inspiration from Obreal Global, which, under HAQAA3, provides opportunities in capacity building, mobility schemes, and collaborative QA frameworks—resources participants should actively leverage.

Presented six key areas of focus moving forward: i) Scale up adoption and implementation of CBE across universities and higher education institutions; ii) collaborate with national councils and commissions to design and implement a harmonized CBE framework, advancing regional integration; iii) harness digital tools and disruptive innovations responsibly, ensuring they strengthen quality assurance integrity; iv) use evidence-based monitoring and reporting to continuously and scientifically evaluate progress on agreed actions; v) undertake structured advocacy and institutional capacity building, while mobilizing political support to entrench QA reforms, including engagement with registrars; and vi) support the establishment and strengthening of EAQAN country chapters, particularly in DRC and Somalia, to broaden participation and ownership.

Recognized the contributions of the former Presidents of EAQAN: Prof. Michael Mawa (2012–2014), Prof. Tashmin Khamis (2014–2016), Prof. Masood Muruke (2016–2018), Dr. Rita Makumba (2018–2021), and Dr. Abdalla Baguma (2021–2023). He stressed that commitments made during the Forum must translate into action in classrooms, senate meetings, regulatory frameworks, and in the lived experiences of students.

10.2 Statement by Professor Ramon Torrent Macau, President OBREAL Global Observatory and Coordinator of the HAQAA Initiative

Professor Ramon Torrent Macau was represented by Ms. Apiyo Okwiri, who conveyed OBREAL Global's appreciation for being part of the 14th EAQAN Forum. She highlighted that OBREAL Global continues to play an active role in advancing quality assurance across regions by facilitating inter-regional dialogues, supporting quality assurance in doctoral education in collaboration with RAFANAQ, strengthening quality assurance systems in Burkina Faso, and contributing to the implementation of the HAQAA initiative, which promotes harmonized and sustainable higher education quality frameworks across Africa.



10.3 Remarks by Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary, the IUCEA

Professor Michael Mawa, Chief Principal for Quality Assurance and Qualifications Framework at IUCEA, represented the Executive Secretary and highlighted IUCEA's instrumental role in nurturing EAQAN from its early stages into a key engine for harmonizing higher education across the region. He underscored EAQAN's pivotal contribution to the realization of the EACHEA by promoting mutual recognition, academic mobility, and global competitiveness. As the EAC continues to expand, he emphasized that quality assurance systems must evolve accordingly, expressing confidence in EAQAN's capacity to meet emerging demands. He commended the leadership and partnership of key stakeholders, including the Chief Guest Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, the Government of Uganda, Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol and NCHE–Uganda, the Forum of CEOs of National Councils and Commissions, Professor Nzioki and the EAQAN leadership, as well as partners such as DAAD and OBREAL Global for their technical and financial contributions. He also appreciated the IUCEA Quality Assurance Department and the Organizing Committee for their meticulous planning and execution of the Forum and the 1st Regional Ministerial Conference on EACHEA.

Professor Mawa outlined three key thematic pillars guiding the Forum's deliberations: CBE, emphasizing the alignment of quality assurance with labor market needs to produce employable graduates; Technology in Quality Assurance, focusing on leveraging AI, digital platforms, and data analytics to modernize systems; and Best Practices for EACHEA, aimed at accelerating the realization of a unified East African Higher Education Area through shared standards and academic mobility. While acknowledging persistent challenges such as resource constraints, digital divides, and curriculum misalignment, he called for collaborative, practical, and resource-conscious strategies to advance EACHEA's vision. Marking his final EAQAN Forum as IUCEA Executive Secretary, he reaffirmed his enduring commitment to the EAC Vision 2050 and AU Agenda 2063. He urged participants to actively engage, share innovations, and forge lasting partnerships, reminding them that universities remain vital engines for regional integration and socio-economic transformation.

10.4 Official Opening Speech by the Guest of Honour, Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, State Minister for Higher Education, Uganda

Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol, Executive Director of NCHE Uganda, represented Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo, who was unable to attend the Forum due to being out of the country. She expressed gratitude to EAQAN for organizing the event and to IUCEA for hosting it, noting that the Forum provides a practical platform for participants to enhance collaboration and strengthen regional integration, ensuring that qualifications across the EAC are trusted and recognized. She acknowledged the contributions of international partners, including DAAD and OBREAL Global, as well as representatives from Senegal and South Africa, and highlighted the critical role of students and employers in ensuring that quality assurance translates into tangible skills and values.

Professor Okwakol emphasized that higher education in the region and globally is undergoing transformation, and that harmonization is essential for comparability, quality enhancement, inclusivity, and mobility, while maintaining respect for regional diversity. She also commended the EAQAN Executive for engaging past Presidents, underscoring the importance of continuity for the Network's success.

She reflected on the recent 1st Regional Ministerial Conference on EACHEA held in Kampala, Uganda, and highlighted ongoing challenges, including varying standards, resource gaps, limited data sharing, and the emergence of new delivery modes. At the same time, she pointed to opportunities offered by harmonization, such as student and staff mobility, enhanced regional collaboration, joint research initiatives, digital integration, and knowledge sharing. She outlined three key priorities: placing students at the center by promoting activities that support mobility and employability, such as CBE; modernizing national frameworks to align with regional standards; and building partnerships and trust through closer collaboration with IUCEA, industry, and other institutions. She stressed that harmonization must be grounded in values, integrity, and equitable access, with transparent and inclusive systems to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from regional integration.

SESSION 11: KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

The session was chaired by Dr. Jean Bosco Shema. The session had a keynote presentation, and a presentation on the status of the East African Community (EAC) Common Higher Education Area: Progress, Promise and the Road Ahead.

The keynote presentation on “Enhancing East Africa Regional Integration through Harmonization and Strengthening of Higher Education Internal and External Quality Assurance Systems” was made by Dr. Vincent A. Ssembatya, Director Quality Assurance and Accreditation, NCHE, Dr. Ssembatya had earlier on 15th September 2025, delivered the same keynote, see section 2.0.

11.2 Status of the East African Community (EAC) Common Higher Education Area: Progress, Promise and the Road Ahead

Professor Michael Mawa, Chief Principal, Quality Assurance & Qualifications Frameworks, IUCEA has earlier on 16th September 2025, presented the status report. See section 7.1.



Professor Michael Mawa presenting a status report

SESSION 12: PANEL DISCUSSION

Promoting Best Practices in Higher Education for Realization of the Common Higher Education Area in East Africa

The session had six panelists as per the Forum and Conference programme: Prof. Mary J. N. Okwakol, Executive Director, NCHE, Uganda; Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary, IUCEA; Prof. Rose Clarke Nanyonga, Vice Chancellor, Clarke International University; Prof. Aloys N. Mvuma, Vice Chancellor, Mbeya University of Science and Technology, Tanzania; Dr. Dorothee Weyler, Regional Director DAAD; and Ms. Apiyo Owiri, Obreal Global. Prof. Mary J. N. Okwakol was represented by Dr. Vincent A. Ssembatya, the Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, NCHE – Uganda while Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary, IUCEA, was represented by Prof. Michael Mawa, the Chief Principal, Quality Assurance and Qualifications Framework, IUCEA. Prof. Aloys N. Mvuma and Dr. Dorothee Weyler, were not available.

The discussion highlighted strategies for ensuring alignment of national higher education qualification frameworks with the East African (EA) vision of a common education area. NCHE and other commissions were encouraged to map programme learning outcomes and credit transfer

systems to regional standards to facilitate automatic recognition of qualifications across Partner States. IUCEA plays a central role in strengthening collaboration by facilitating the Forum for CEOs of Councils and Commissions, which operates under an MoU to share information and address common challenges, and by engaging professional bodies in dialogue for joint problem-solving. Vice Chancellors noted the benefits of benchmarking across institutions using IUCEA tools, while also emphasizing the need for training of Deans and Associate Deans, sensitization, more agile regulatory frameworks, and support for joint degrees and online programmes to ensure inclusive and harmonized higher education delivery. IUCEA's contribution to harmonization includes developing programme benchmarks collaboratively, along with credit accumulation and transfer guidelines, to standardize curriculum and assessment across the region.

Participants also explored the role of development partners like OBREAL in long-term capacity building, noting that partners should align their interventions with institutional strategies, support collaborative training programmes, and promote dissemination strategies. Universities were encouraged to prepare students for employability and regional integration through scholarships for students from different Partner States and curricula that incorporate digital skills across disciplines. The forthcoming IUCEA strategic plan (post-2026) will prioritize continuous capacity building, leadership training for new Vice Chancellors, quality postgraduate supervision, mobility programmes, and digitalization to enhance activities. Participants emphasized that trust in quality assurance is built through transparency, well-established systems, and adherence to national and regional frameworks, reinforcing that QA should be a tool for transformation rather than policing. The discussion also noted the future of TVET at IUCEA, with a new strategy in place to guide its development within the regional harmonization agenda.

SESSION 13: PANEL DISCUSSION

The session had five panelists as per the Forum and Conference programme: Prof. Mike Kuria, CEO, Commission for University Education, Kenya; Prof. John Mugisha, Vice Chancellor, Bishop Stuart University, Uganda; Prof. William John Senkondo Mwegoha, Vice Chancellor, Mzumbe University, Tanzania; Dr. James Ajuong Arou, Vice Chancellor, Star International University, South Sudan; Dr. Jamil Serwanga, Vice Rector, Academic Affairs, Islamic University in Uganda, Uganda. Prof. Mike Kuria, CEO, Commission for University Education, Kenya was represented by Mr. Benson Kimani. Two panelists, Prof. William John Senkondo Mwegoha, and Dr. James Ajuong Arou were not available. The session was chaired by Dr. Mukirae Njihia.

During the session, the CEOs of National Councils and Commissions discussed the alignment of accreditation and evaluation frameworks to CBE. Mr. Benson Kimani emphasized the importance of focusing on learning outcomes to produce employable graduates, noting that industry input is considered during curriculum reviews and new programme accreditation. However, the Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya has not yet developed a comprehensive framework to guide universities in CBE curricula, focusing mainly on education programs to ensure sufficient teacher capacity. Pedagogical qualifications are not required for university

academic staff, though they are for TVET instructors. To support student mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications, the CUE references IUCEA tools and guidelines and will implement resolutions from the 1st Ministerial Conference on the EACHEA. Challenges include shifting regulatory frameworks, aligning competencies with labor market needs, preparing faculty for CBE, and addressing resource constraints such as modern classrooms and digital laboratories.

Vice Chancellors shared their experiences in redesigning curricula and pedagogy for CBE. Prof. John Mugisha of Bishop Stuart University highlighted the AgrCBE project, which involved training faculty, engaging industry to identify core competencies, and monitoring implementation in faculties and departments. The university had achieved over 65% implementation of CBE, with continuous monitoring and alignment to the NCHE roadmap. Dr. Jamil Serwanga of IUIU noted that CBE is not new, as learning outcomes have always been part of accreditation, but is now being formally augmented. He commended NCHE and IUCEA for minimum standards and emphasized that universities conduct mandatory program reviews every five years, integrating crosscutting courses to develop societal competencies.

The discussion also focused on collaboration between universities, professional bodies, and industry. Prof. Mugisha explained that engaging alumni and industry is critical for identifying necessary competencies, validating curricula, and assessing students during internships. National Councils and Commissions were encouraged to develop QA frameworks that support practical implementation of CBE rather than merely compliance. Flexibility, staff capacity building, and sharing best practices were highlighted as key mechanisms to ensure alignment with labor market needs. Dr. Serwanga added that institutions should support each other in harmonizing curricula and quality assurance across East Africa, recognizing that resource and workload constraints make full realignment challenging. Early and continuous engagement with industry in curriculum development, rather than only during internships, was emphasized as crucial for producing graduates who meet regional competency standards.

13.1 Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony comprised:

- i) Statement from Prof. Paul Muoki Nzioki, President, EAQAN.
- ii) Statement from Prof. Mary J. N. Okwakol, Executive Director, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Uganda.
- iii) Vote of Thanks – Quality Assurance Director appointed by the EAQAN Members.
- iv) Closing remarks by Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary, IUCEA.

13.1.1 Statement from Prof. Paul Muoki Nzioki, President, EAQAN

The President noted that the past three days had yielded significant gains, describing the gathering not merely as a meeting but as a family coming together for dialogue and collective reflection. He

expressed gratitude to the Government of Uganda, particularly NCHE Uganda, its Executive Director, and the Ministry of Education and Sports, for their hospitality, support, and commitment to placing quality assurance at the heart of regional integration, which has contributed to the growth of EAQAN. Appreciation was extended to Vice Chancellors for enabling staff participation, to UUQAF for supporting and planning the Forum, and to paper presenters and keynote speakers whose insights enriched discussions. Sister networks, SAQAN and RAFANAQ, were acknowledged for their engagement, while partners including DAAD and OBREAL were commended for sponsorship and enabling participation of key speakers. Special recognition was given to the outgoing IUCEA Executive Secretary for attending his final Forum, and participants were encouraged to leave with concrete action points, with the hope that by the next meeting in September 2026, they would have tangible stories demonstrating the impact of the recommendations.

13.1.2 Statement from Prof. Mary J. N. Okwakol, Executive Director, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Uganda

Dr. Vincent A. Ssembatya, representing Prof. Mary J. N. Okwakol, highlighted that over the past three days, the Forum had strongly focused on CBE and best practices for strengthening quality assurance, evolving discussions from dialogue into concrete decisions. He noted that the resolutions of the 1st Regional Ministerial Conference of EACHEA would be implemented as endorsed by the Education Ministers of EAC partner states, with key priorities including the adoption of digital QA tools, building trust in higher education institutions, and enhancing employability and relevance to foster a more coordinated regional education system. Appreciation was extended to IUCEA, EAQAN, DAAD, Obreal Global, and all participants for their contributions and coordination. The Forum underscored that continuous innovation in QA, supported by strong political backing, will position the EAC competitively in the global economy, and participants were encouraged to carry forward and implement the commitments made during the deliberations.

13.1.3 Vote of Thanks – Quality Assurance Director appointed by the EAQAN Members

Ms. Doreen Mujaasi Kyalikoba, Senior Quality Assurance Officer at Insurance Training College, Uganda, delivered the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all who contributed to the success of the Forum. Special appreciation was extended to NCHE – Uganda for hosting, supporting, and actively participating throughout the sessions, while IUCEA was commended for facilitating the Forum and EAQAN for developing the concept note that guided meaningful dialogue. Vice Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors were thanked for enabling their teams' participation, and UUQAF, IUIU, Kampala University, and various National Councils/Commissions were acknowledged for their technical and logistical support. Participants were appreciated for sharing their expertise, enriching the discussions and lessons learned, and the organizing committee was commended for its dedication in planning the event. Attendees were encouraged to champion

quality assurance, regional integration, and the harmonization of higher education, with warm wishes extended for safe travels.

13.1.4 Closing remarks by Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary, IUCEA

Gratitude was extended to all participants for their active engagement throughout the Forum, including paper presentations, dialogue sessions, and panel discussions, which offered deep insights into CBE and competency-based systems as essential pathways for producing quality graduates. Discussions also emphasized the integration of AI into quality assurance systems and the adoption of best practices for harmonizing standards across East Africa, providing strategic direction for the region's educational development. Key challenges were noted, including misalignment of regional frameworks, the digital divide, and integration difficulties, while potential solutions highlighted the need for strong partnerships and collaboration to achieve a harmonized, globally competitive higher education area. Special appreciation was given to NCHE – Uganda and the Ministry of Education and Sports for hosting, EAQAN for its leadership in advancing quality assurance, and partners including DAAD, Obreal Global, and supporting institutions for enabling team participation, with recognition also extended to Professor Alexis Ndabarushimana and the IUCEA team for their tireless organizational support. IUCEA reaffirmed its confidence in ongoing meaningful change, its commitment to supporting EAQAN, and engagement with key stakeholders to ensure the network's lasting impact, officially declaring the 14th EAQAN Forum and Conference closed and announcing that the next Forum would be hosted in Rwanda.

13.1.5 Ministerial Communiqué of the 1st Regional Ministerial Conference on the East African Community Common Higher Education Area (EACHEA)

Prof. Michael Mawa, the Chief Principal, Quality Assurance and Qualifications Framework, IUCEA, presented the Ministerial Communiqué to the participants, with emphasis on the resolutions:

(A) We, the Ministers, hereby:

1. Reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the full operationalization of the EACHEA as a mechanism to strengthen academic excellence, facilitate knowledge mobility, and serve as an engine for deepening regional integration, socio-economic transformation, and global competitiveness of the EAC region.
2. Resolve to align the respective national higher education systems with the regional higher education framework requirements, without imposing uniformity.
3. Commit to enhancing mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications through development of relevant *Regional Frameworks for Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications* to promote seamless mobility of students, staff,

and professionals across the region in line with the EAC Common Market Protocol - by 2027.

4. Resolve to harmonise national higher education policies, legislation, and regulatory frameworks including accreditation frameworks with the EAC regional instruments - including the EAQFHE, RQAF, EAC-CATS, REFHE-EA by 2030.
5. Promote the integration and regulation of digital, open and blended learning systems, including cross-border e-learning platforms and virtual exchange programmes, to widen access, improve quality and learning outcomes, and enhance resilience against disruptions in the delivery of higher education.
6. Mobilise sustainable financing for higher education through national and regional resource pooling mechanisms, development cooperation, commercialization of research and private sector engagement.
7. Implore the IUCEA to work with the Commissions and Councils for Higher Education to develop mechanisms to monitor and report on alignment of institutional frameworks with regional frameworks.

(B) Directives to Stakeholders

1. **IUCEA** in collaboration with the Forum of CEOs of National Commissions and Councils for higher education, to develop and disseminate detailed guidelines to assist HEIs in integrating EAC regional frameworks into their institutional policies and academic programmes. IUCEA shall report annually to the Sectoral Council for Education, Science, Technology, Culture and Sports on the status of EACHEA implementation.
2. **IUCEA and the Forum of National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education** to fast-track the full implementation and periodic review of the EACHEA and to establish and maintain a Regional Database of accredited institutions and programmes, publicly accessible across Partner States.
3. **IUCEA** in conjunction with the Forum of CEOs of National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education in EAC Partner States to develop proposal for the establishment of a regional mobility fund.
4. **National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education** to designate national focal points to coordinate EACHEA activities, monitor progress, and ensure effective linkages between national and regional structures.
5. **National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education** to ensure the full implementation of the Council of Ministers' directive to charge the same fees for students coming from other EAC Partners States as locals and that the fees are charged in local currency.

6. **National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education** to engage the relevant national authorities to expedite the removal of visa requirement charged on students and other professionals from another EAC Partner States to promote regional mobility.
7. **National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education** to ensure that Higher Education Institutions oversee institutional alignment of education systems with regional frameworks.
8. **Development partners** are encouraged to align their investments in higher education with EAC regional priorities, focusing on capacity building, infrastructure development, digital transformation, and research collaboration.

(C) Follow-up Mechanism

We agree that the **Regional Ministerial Conference on the EACHEA** shall be convened biennially, with national Councils/Commissions for higher education driving the coordination at the national level and IUCEA serving as the Secretariat, to review progress, share best practices, address emerging issues, and adopt new policy directions.

The next Ministerial Conference will be hosted by the **Republic of Rwanda** in **2027**.

(D) Matrix on Implementation of Resolutions:

S/N	Resolution	Timeline
1.	IUCEA , in collaboration with the Forum of CEOs of National Commissions and Councils for higher education, to develop and disseminate detailed guidelines to assist HEIs in integrating EAC regional frameworks into their institutional policies and academic programmes. IUCEA shall report annually to the Sectoral Council for Education, Science, Technology, Culture and Sports on the status of EACHEA implementation.	1 year
2.	IUCEA and the Forum of National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education to fast-track the full implementation and annual review of the EACHEA and to establish and maintain a Regional Database of accredited institutions and programmes, publicly accessible across Partner States.	1 year
3.	Partner States to designate national focal points to coordinate EACHEA activities, monitor progress, and ensure effective linkages between national and regional structures.	6 months
4.	Partner States to ensure the full implementation of the Council of Ministers directive to charge students the same fees for students coming from other EAC Partners States as locals and that the fees are charged in local currency.	Immediate

5.	Partner States are requested to expedite the removal of visa requirement charged on students and other professionals from another EAC partner states to promote regional mobility.	Immediate
6.	National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education to ensure that Higher Education Institutions establish internal compliance committees to oversee institutional alignment with regional frameworks.	1 year
7.	IUCEA in conjunction with the Forum of CEOs of National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education in EAC Partner States to develop proposal for the establishment of a regional mobility fund.	2 years

DAY FOUR – THURSDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 2025

SESSION 14: 13TH EAST AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK GENERAL ASSEMBLY

14.1 Constituting the 13th General Assembly of EAQAN

The President of EAQAN, Professor Paul Muoki Nzioki, officially constituted the 13th General Assembly of EAQAN, after confirmation of the quorum by the General Secretary. The Secretary General of EAQAN, Amaal Kinene Nsereko, was out of the country and was represented by the Head of the Uganda Chapter, Mr. Ronald Okoth Othieno.

14.2 Opening Remarks and Report on EAQAN Activities

The President welcomed members to the 13th General Assembly of EAQAN and presented the achievements of the Network. Key accomplishments included adherence to Article 10 of the Constitution in presenting the activity report, progress toward enabling financial transactions via mobile devices, and the formation of Chapters in Somalia and South Sudan, with IUCEA support sought for approval in South Sudan. Preparations for a DRC Chapter were ongoing, with engagement from the University of Lubumbashi despite language challenges. Financial mobilization efforts included securing USD 5,000 from Obreal Global to support the 13th Forum and Conference in Nairobi, and working with sister networks to obtain USD 30,000 for the HAQAA3 Mapping Project; the money was not deposited into the EAQAN account. Membership in the Network increased among institutions, though individual membership declined. EAQAN actively participated in high-level regional and international activities, including EACHEA monitoring, training cohorts, conferences, and workshops. Members were encouraged to apply for opportunities to promote EAQAN and share its success stories, and active members were issued e-certificates of appreciation. Continuous review of the EAQAN website was undertaken to enhance visibility, and proposed constitutional amendments were prepared for ratification to align with prior GA resolutions.

The proposed activities for the upcoming period were: i) To scale up the adoption and implementation of competence-based approaches across higher education institutions in East Africa; ii) To collaborate with national councils and commissions to design and implement a harmonized framework on CBE, thereby advancing regional harmonization and the realization of EACHEA, iii) To work with universities to harness digital tools and disruptive innovations responsibly, ensuring that technology integration strengthens the integrity and efficiency of internal and external quality assurance systems; iv) Access and evaluate the progress on the actionable steps agreed upon, using evidence-based monitoring and reporting mechanisms to deepen EAC higher education integration; v) To advocate for inclusive institutional capacity building on EACHEA framework and quality assurance reforms across the region; vi) To support the establishment and strengthening of EAQAN country chapters, with particular attention to emerging chapters in the DRC and Somalia. As a means of broadening participation and ownership in the regional QA agenda; vii) Organize regional quality assurance fora and webinars on QA matters, and they were planning to invite the Romanian; viii) Continue to pursue mechanisms of income diversification; ix) Pursue collaborative and network's research projects related to quality assurance with sister networks; x) To develop 2025/2026– 2029/2030 EAQAN Strategic Plan using available expertise within our membership; xi) and Pursue acquisition of a home in IUCEA.

A copy of the report is attached as **appendix 20**.

14.3 Receiving a report of the Executive Committee – Resolutions

The report was presented by Mr. Othieno Okoth Ronald, on behalf of the Secretary General. The resolutions were presented as follows: The 12th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the EAQAN was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 9th to 13th September 2024, under the theme: “Advancing Quality of Higher Education through International Cooperation and Networking, Harmonization, and Integration.” The AGM brought together Vice Chancellors, Rectors, quality assurance practitioners, and higher education stakeholders to deliberate on strategies for strengthening quality assurance in higher education.

The following key resolutions were adopted:

- i) Teaching, Learning, and Assessment: Adopt student-centered, flexible, and inclusive teaching approaches; promote practical and technology-driven assessments; streamline quality assurance from admission to graduation, with mentorship and support for disadvantaged groups and female PhD students; encourage blended and digital PhD supervision; and foster inter-institutional collaboration in quality assurance and accreditation.
- ii) Curriculum Development: Develop flexible, competence-based curricula with student involvement; address digital literacy gaps through reforms; and conduct regular and mid-term reviews aligned with regional benchmarks.
- iii) Infrastructure: Invest in ICT infrastructure and connectivity and strengthen Quality Assurance Centres within HEIs.

- iv) Capacity Building: Train quality assurance professionals and PhD supervisors in ICT tools; and engage students actively in QA processes.
- v) Policies and Regulations: Revamp strategic plans with risk management considerations, and ensure management support for QA officers and inclusion of all staff.
- vi) Networking and Collaborations: Participate in HAQAA3 initiatives for training and dialogue; strengthen partnerships with regional and continental QA platforms, such as RAFANAQ, SAQAN, and RAAQES; and promote harmonization of policies and programmes across the region.

The AGM reaffirmed EAQAN's commitment to advancing quality assurance in higher education through collaboration, innovation, and harmonization of practices. Members resolved to align institutional priorities with both regional and global quality frameworks while addressing local challenges.

14.4 Resolutions for the 13th AGM

The following proposed resolutions for the 13th AGM were presented by the Secretary General

- i) Scale Up Competence-Based Approaches: Enhance the adoption and implementation of competence-based approaches across universities and higher education institutions in East Africa, ensuring graduates are truly fit for purpose and responsive to the socio-economic development needs of the region.
- ii) Collaborate on a Harmonized Framework: Work with national councils and commissions to design and implement a harmonized framework on CBE, advancing regional harmonization and the realization of the EACHEA.
- iii) Harness Digital Tools Responsibly: Collaborate with universities to responsibly harness digital tools and disruptive innovations, ensuring that technology integration strengthens the integrity and efficiency of internal and external quality assurance systems.
- iv) Evaluate Progress on Actionable Steps: Access and evaluate progress on actionable steps agreed upon, employing evidence-based monitoring and reporting mechanisms to deepen EAC higher education integration.
- v) Advocate for Inclusive Capacity Building: Promote inclusive institutional capacity building on the EACHEA framework and quality assurance reforms across the region.
- vi) Establish and Strengthen EAQAN Country Chapters: Support the establishment and strengthening of EAQAN country chapters, particularly the emerging chapters in the DRC and Somalia, to broaden participation and ownership in the regional QA agenda. Facilitate the formation of Somalia, DRC, and South Sudan chapters in alignment with Article 6(a) of the Constitution, supporting the development of national quality assurance networks and fora through capacity building.

- vii) Organize Regional Quality Assurance Fora and webinars on QA matters, planning to invite Romanian experts.
- viii) Sources for Funding: Identify and secure funding sources to support the development and dissemination of innovative quality assurance practices.
- ix) Pursue Collaborative Research Projects: Engage in collaborative and network research projects related to quality assurance with sister networks.
- x) Create a Register of Quality Assurance Experts: Develop a register and pool of quality assurance experts in the region and internationally.
- xi) Diversify Income Mechanisms: Continue to pursue mechanisms for income diversification.
- xii) Develop the EAQAN Strategic Plan (2025/2026 – 2029/2030): Formulate the EAQAN Strategic Plan for 2025/2026 to 2029/2030, utilizing available expertise within our membership.
- xiii) Work towards establishing a home in the IUCEA.

A copy of the detailed resolutions is attached as **appendix 21**.

14.5 Receiving Financial Status Report

The report was presented by the Finance Secretary, Dr. Jean Bosco Shema. The following were highlighted in the report:

- i) The report covered a number of activities that were carried out in 2025 and were related to the revenue collected and expenses incurred.
- ii) Revenue collected came from membership fee, subscription fee and annual conference participation fee.
- iii) Incurred expenses related to website maintenance, zoom account subscription, 14th Annual Forum organization expenses and bank charges.
- iv) The overall performance indicates an increase in revenue collected and minimization of expenses.
- v) EAQAN is officially registered under the Laws of Uganda by the registrar of companies on 14th January 2015 and a Dollar account was opened on 1st April 2015 with KCB Bank, Uganda.

- vi) The EAQAN membership and subscription fees were as follows:

S/N.	Particulars	Amount (USD)
1	Institutional Membership Fee	100.00
2	Institutional Annual Subscription Fee	150.00
3	Individual Membership Fee	100.00
4	Individual Annual Subscription Fee	50.00
5	Bank Charges	5.00

- vii) The statement of revenue and expenditure was provided as follows:

YEAR	2025	2024	Variance	%
REVENUE				
Institutional Subscription and Membership	7,820	3,650	4,170	53.3
Individual Subscription and Membership	2,627	2,640	-13	-0.5
Pin sales	245	140	105	
Conference Participation Fee	1,000	0	1,000	100.0
Obriel Global Direct Support	0	5,028	-5,028	0.0
Total Revenue	11,692	11,458	234	2.0

- i) The statement of revenue and expenses were as follows:

YEAR	2025	2024	Variance	%
EXPENSES				
Zoom Link Fee	118	290	-172	-145.1
Website Fee	190	116	74	38.9
Conference Perdiems	970	0	970	100.0
Bank Charges	542	627	-85	-15.6
Conference and Forum Expense	10,166	13,931	-3,765	-37.0
Taxes	50	45	5	9.4
Total Expenses	12,036	15,008	-2,973	-24.7
Net Surplus/Deficit	-344	-3,550	3,207	-933.2
Opening Balance	2,070	4,415	-2,345	-113.3
Net Cash	1,726	865	862	49.9

- i) The lessons learnt from the financial report (revenue collection) were: A net increase in institutional membership and subscription fee; a slight decline in the individual membership and subscription fee; other sources of revenue that needed to be explored were pin sales and participation fee; the collection almost increased without any direct support

from partners; and EAQAN accounting period runs from January to December each year, hence payment of subscription fee should be done during that period.

- ii) The lessons learnt from the financial report (incurred expenses) were: All expenses slightly declined with a specific emphasis on the Conference organization, the only noticeable increase was in the attendance of conference per diem; the overall expenses declined due to the minimization of expenses given the available cash when the Conference was being organized; and the conference was organized with all expenses covered by revenue collected, and expenses covered by EAQAN, without any direct transfer.
- iii) The lessons learnt from the financial report (membership and revenue collection) were that the database indicated that there were 90 individual members and 72 institutional members; and the bank statements indicated that only 25 individuals and 20 members were active, which raises the challenge of financial sustainability and service to members.
- iv) In view of the above lessons, the following recommendations were proposed: strengthening the diversification of EAQAN revenue, such as participation and sales of EAQAN branded products; being aggressive in partnerships and grants writing; mobilizing new members via online marketing strategies, and webinars organizations; identification of all universities in EAC; and actively engage existing members in EAQAN activities.

A copy of the detailed report is attached as **appendix 22**.

14.5 Discussion of the reports of the Executive Committee

- i) Members noted that the report did not indicate the status of implementation of the resolutions of previous AGM. The Executive agreed to include the status of implementation of the resolutions in the subsequent reports. However, the Executive Committee highlighted that the report of the President included implantation status of the resolutions but were not aligned.
- ii) The Executive Committee noted that some of the resolutions of the previous AGM were beyond their mandate, hence could not be implemented. The resolutions were for implementation by the IUCEA; Councils/Commissions, and universities.
- iii) Members noted that the proposed resolutions of the 13th AGM were comprehensive. However, the responsible stakeholder(s) for each resolution and the timeline for implementation of each resolution were not indicated. Members highlighted that the Executive Committee could consider conducting surveys on the implementation status of the resolutions.
- iv) Dr. Wardah M. Rajab- Gyagenda committed that a draft strategic plan of EAQAN would be ready by the next AGM. Members agreed that the strategic plan should align to the resolutions of the 1st Ministerial Conference of EACHEA and the strategic plan of the IUCEA.

- v) It was observed by some members that the Executive Committee at times delays to send them invoices, which affects payment. The Executive Committee committed to always send the invoices by February every year.
- vi) It was clarified that few Vice Chancellor turned up for the high-level quality assurance dialogue event the previous day because many of them had attended the 1st Regional Ministerial Conference on EACHEA the previous week.
- vii) It was noted that engaging Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academics is a good idea; however, both the EAQAN and the IUCEA were constrained with resources. It was agreed that they could be engaged online on targeted topics. The Executive Committee committed to organize webinars to train Vice Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors, and the IUCEA would identify the facilitators.
- viii) It was reported that biggest challenge faced in implementation of various activities was lack of a secretariat.
- ix) The Executive Committee stated that they had a proposal for recruiting an adhoc staff experienced in matters of EAQAN for the proposed office in the IUCEA or engaging a student. A recommendation on the same would be made to the AGM.
- x) It was proposed that an instrument be developed to get views of members on different strategies for increase membership to EAQAN.

Members adopted the Resolutions of the 13th AGM of EAQAN with amendments to include the responsible stakeholder(s) for each resolution and the timeline for implementation of each resolution.

14.6 Proposed Constitutional Amendments

The following proposed Amendments were presented, as resolved in the previous Assembly:

- i) Article 6 (g) making a correction on the language, to read Promote National Quality Assurance Networks of universities and higher education institutions within the Partner States.
- ii) Article 9(b). Advisory Board was added.
- iii) Article 10: correction of the word was made: Extra-ordinary.
- iv) Article 11, 12, and 13: The tenure of office for the Executive Committee was adjusted to three years.
- v) Article 15: Provides for the details of the Advisory Board, in terms of establishment and composition, roles and responsibilities, meetings and procedures, and review and termination.
- vi) Article 16(ii) – was revised to read: The fiscal year of the Network shall run from 1st January to 31st December every year.

After the deliberations, the proposed constitutional amendments were passed by the 13th General Assembly of EAQAN.



The EAQAN Executive Committee, during the General Assembly

14.7 Receiving the report of National Chapters – Focusing on achievements and challenges faced in the last year

14.7.1 Burundi

The report was presented by Prof. Rachel Akimana, the President of Burundais d'Assurance Qualité (FOBAQ). The key issues highlighted included: i) FOBAQ was established in 2015 ; ii) the Network had a Constitution revised during the General Assembly held on 22nd January 2025; ii) Under the revised Constitution, both individuals and institutions are full members, previously individuals were only associate members. FOBAQ had an Executive Committee ; and iv) FOBAQ had an annual workplan.

The achievements of FOBAQ were: i) Held one General Assembly and two Executive Committee meetings; ii) made a presentation on programmes accreditation process, iii) participation of five FOBAQ members in 6th Cohort QA Training by the IUCEA; iv) participation of two FOBAQ members in a training of programmes assessor; v) participation of the FOBAQ President in the third session of the sixth Cohort of QA training as facilitator; vi) participation of FOBAQ in the 14th EAQAN Forum 2025; and vii) an MoU with CNES was being drafted. The challenges

included limited funding and resources. The areas of strengths were strong commitment from FOBAQ members, Good collaboration with the HEC, and a growing pool of QA experts.



Presentation by the President of FOBAQ, Prof. Rachel Akimana

14.7.2 Rwanda

The report was presented by Dr. Abdallah Baguma from the Rwanda Quality Assurance Network (RWAQAN), highlighting that the network is governed by an Executive Committee of seven members. In terms of registration, RWAQAN secured collaboration with local government in January 2024 and resubmitted its application to the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB). Feedback was received mainly regarding the new law governing NGOs, and RWAQAN updated its statutes and application accordingly, with plans to resubmit and follow up with RGB.

The engagements/achievements were (i) participated in HEC-organized events and RWAQAN meetings; (ii) contributed to national stakeholder events, including the ICT Chamber forum on Digital Transformation in Higher Learning Institutions; (iii) engaged in IUCEA conferences and trainings, notably the 13th APPPF held in Kigali (March 2025); (iv) supported IUCEA assignments, including the EACHEA survey and magazine development; (v) attended EAQAN

webinars and trainings; (vi) took part in DAAD National Multiplication Trainings in Berlin Germany; (vii) participated in HAQAA3 events, including the PAQAA Validation Session; and (viii) strengthened linkages with regional stakeholders, such as DOLPA – EA.

The report further highlighted challenges faced by RWAQAN, including the heavy workload of QA practitioners limiting their availability for network activities, high staff mobility affecting continuity and engagement, and the lack of registered paid-up members, with current financial contributions being ad hoc rather than formalized. The future plans of RWAQAN were (i) strengthen membership drive at individual and institutional levels; (ii) expand collaborations with HLIs, HEC, IUCEA, EAQAN, and other QA chapters; and (iii) promote proposal writing to secure funding from diverse stakeholders.



Presentation of the report by Dr. Abdallah Baguma, President RWAQAN.

14.7.3 Tanzania

The key issues were highlighted in the report of the Tanzanian Quality Assurance Forum (TUQAF) included: TUQAF organized a meeting with the theme “Building Stronger Quality Assurance Systems” from 15th to 16th September 2025. The achievements were TUQAF held an AGM, and its members attended training workshops organized by TCU; represented in EAQAN (2024–25) with members on the Executive Committee; sought formal collaboration with Ministry of Education Science and Technology; approved the TUQAF Financial Regulations document; and conducted general elections. The challenges were limited financial and human resources, and high

turnover of QA directors/coordinators/officers. The planned activities for 2025-2026 were expansion of membership, expanding collaborations, QA capacity building, improvement of TUQAF website, holding of Annual Forums, and review the TUQAF Constitution to deal with emerging issues.



14.7.4 South Sudan

Dr. Allier Maker Ghai, Director of Quality Assurance at Rumbek University of Science and Technology and Country Representative to EAQAN, reported on the establishment of the South Sudan Chapter. The idea originated during the 12th EAQAN Forum in Bujumbura, Burundi, in September 2023, and was approved by the Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Technology, contingent on the formal creation of a chapter. The progress made included: South Sudan QA Framework was stakeholder's validation stage, the South Sudan Chapter has a Country representative to EAQAN, quality assurance awareness had increased, most universities had fully functional QA directorates, and most universities had QA policies, especially all public universities and two private universities. The challenges faced included the Constitution was not yet approved for operationalization, the validation workshop was taking too long, QA directors lack trainings, most QA directors lack support at the level of their universities due to financial constraints, and frequent change of ministers of higher education.



Presentation by the South Sudan Representative to EAQAN

A copy of the presentation is attached as **appendix 26**.

14.7.5 Kenya

The following key issues were highlighted in the annual report of Kenya Universities Quality Assurance Network (KuQAn):

The role of KuQAn in quality assurance in universities includes to (i) facilitate capacity building at both individual and institutional levels, (ii) foster partnerships at national and regional levels through KuQAn and EAQAN, respectively, and (iii) the CUE collaborates with KuQAn members for quality audit inspections of universities, curriculum reviews, and quality assurance training. KuQAn had collaborations with, CUE, DAAD, EAQAN and local universities, and AARUK (Association of Academic Registrars of Universities in Kenya) to entrench quality continues. Membership had grown significantly from 187 members in 2024 to 228 in 2025. KuQAn continued to build the capacity of its members. The chapter held two Quality Assurance Workshops: Strathmore University in January 2025, and Murangá University in July 2025. KuQAn trained over 75 faculty members drawn from Murangá University of Technology and other universities between 16-17th July 2025. This was followed up with a meeting on 18th July 2025, to present and approve the revised KuQAn Constitution.

The Chapter members continued to actively champion quality assurance matters through research, conference presentations, training and consultancy activities nationally, regionally, and continentally. The chapter held an international quality assurance conference in November 2024,

where several papers were presented. Several members of KuQAn received promotions at their workplaces, with some advancing from lecturers to Associate Professors or Associate Professors to full professors: Prof Fredrick Ngala- Appointed DVC (Academic and Student Affairs) - Garisa University, Dr. Naomi Kathula – appointed DVC (Academic and Student Affairs) - Management University of Africa, and Prof. Hellen Wangeci Kamiri - appointed Deputy Principal (Academic and Student Affairs) - Turkana University College.

The challenges faced by the Network were inadequate finances, high turnover of members in QA positions dormant individual membership, and slow institutional membership. The planned activities were: strengthen collaborations and foster closer ties with the IUCEA, CUE, and other bodies on QA matters; hold more sessions of institutional and member training and sensitization on QA matters, CBE and AI; and approve the code of conduct of the KuQAn.



Presentation of the report by KuQAn

14.7.6 Formation of the Somali Universities Quality Assurance Network (SuQaN)

The key issues in the report included:

In April 2025, two QA officials from Somalia participated in the IUCEA Quality Assurance Training held in Bujumbura, Burundi, from 28th April to 1st May 2025. During the training, the importance of establishing a national platform for Somali universities to collectively strengthen QA practices was highlighted. Building on this momentum, and with a specific mandate entrusted

to him, he took the lead in initiating the formation of the (SuQaN). The network seeks to foster collaboration, promote best practices, and align Somali higher education with regional and international quality frameworks.

The achievements included establishment of a constitution drafting Team; and holding meetings with vice-chancellors, senior administrators, among others, to highlight the importance of institutionalizing QA, share insights gained from the IUCEA training, demonstrate the benefits of collective action through SuQaN, and encourage commitment from institutions to actively participate in the network. Preparations are ongoing for the SuQaN Inaugural Conference, scheduled for November 2025.

The next steps were to finalise the draft constitution and circulate it to universities for feedback before the inaugural conference; secure funding and logistical support for the November 2025 SuQaN Inaugural Conference; strengthening communication channels (website, mailing list, social media platforms) to enhance visibility and stakeholder engagement; establish strong partnerships with other EAQAN country chapters to secure technical and professional support; and prepare a three-year strategic plan (2026–2029) to guide SuQaN’s priorities and activities.



Presentation by officials of the proposed SuQAN

14.7.7 Uganda

The report was presented by Sr. Prof. K. Maria Goretti, the President of the Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF). The following were highlighted:

UUQAF is a registered Association with the Laws of the Republic of Uganda. Its headquarters of UUQAF were in Kampala, the Capital City of the Republic of Uganda, and hosted by Kyambogo University, the second largest University in Uganda. UUQAF had been in existence for 15 years. The purpose of UUQAF was to establish a Network of Quality Assurance practitioners in order to enhance quality assurance in higher education institutions in Uganda and beyond”

The achievements were: The family of UUQAF continued to grow from 24 to 45; Bench Marking; UUQAF President visited the First University in the World; online meetings & trainings increased; winning HAAQ3 dissemination project; continuous rotational trainings; promotion of QA officers

to upper positions; updated UUQAF Audited Books of Accounts; UUQAF had a permanent home; support to UUQAF from member Ugandan universities & individuals greatly improved; positive attitude of QA officers in moving the Forum's agenda forward; increased publicity through the website, availability of willing partners to support UUQAF activities, such as DAAD, NCHE, IUCEA, VCF; ability to engage the country in wide training to raise awareness; and participated in Cohort six IQA training in 2025, by the IUCEA in Bujumbura, Burundi. The challenges encountered included lack of permanent staff; promotion of QA Officers; limited funds; and lack of publications in QA matters.



Presentation of the report by UUQAF

14.7.8 Democratic Republic of Congo

There was no presentation from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

14.8 Presentation and adoption of the Resolutions of the 13th EAQAN General Assembly

The General Assembly adopted the resolutions presented under 14.4, with amendments to include the responsible stakeholder(s) for each resolution and the timeline for implementation of each resolution.

14.9 Excursion – Visiting the IUCEA Headquarters and UUQAF Offices

The last activity for the 13th EAQAN Forum and Conference was a visit to the IUCEA headquarters and UUQAF offices.



Participants in front of the IUCEA Headquarters, New Building



Participants cutting cake to inaugurate the new office of UUQAF



S/N.	Name	Designation	Signature
1	Dr. David Musiimaami	Principal Higher Education Officer, National Council for Higher Education - Uganda	
2	Ms. Florence W. Githinji	Quality Assurance Officer, Clarke International University - Uganda	
3	Ms. Jane Mugo	Quality Assurance Manager/Strategy & Quality Assurance, Strathmore University - Kenya	



Rapporteur Team, From left to right : Ms. Jane Mugo, Quality Assurance Manager/Strategy & Quality Assurance, Strathmore University – Kenya; Dr. David Musiimaami, Principal Higher Education Officer, National Council for Higher Education – Uganda and Ms. Florence W. Githinji, Quality Assurance Officer, Clarke International University - Uganda