



# 2024 High-Level Policy Dialogue in Africa Operationalising Strategies for Quality Higher Education in the AI Era

13 December 2024  
Dakar, Senegal

## Concept Note

(Version of 13 December 2024)



## Meeting Background

Higher education serves as a powerful catalyst for development in Africa, playing a central role in the realisation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the rapidly evolving technological landscape, strategically integrating digital and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into higher education systems represents a crucial step towards achieving quality education for all and nurturing innovation-driven societies. The African Union has declared 2024 as the “Year of Education,” which provides a vital opportunity to take stock of the progress made and accelerate efforts to leverage the full potential of technological advancements. This will optimise governance, management, teaching, and learning in Africa's higher education sector, aligning with the continent's broader development goals.

Against this background, the 2024 High-Level Policy Dialogue in Africa, themed **Operationalising Strategies for Quality Higher Education in the AI Era**, will convene senior officials from government agencies overseeing higher education, higher education institution (HEI) leadership and teaching personnel, private sector entities, industry professionals and experts, representatives from international and regional organisations, and other partners to explore the transformation of Africa's higher education in the AI era. The outcomes of the meeting are intended to provide a valuable reference for policymakers and other stakeholders in the region and beyond, catalysing collective actions and supporting the enhancement and implementation of relevant policies, strategies, and action plans for AI-driven higher education development.

The Policy Dialogue draws on the African Union's [Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy](#) and [Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025](#), as well as UNESCO's [Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029](#). Importantly, it is convened under the framework of UNESCO's Priority Africa Flagship Programme “Campus Africa,” with the aim of building integrated, inclusive, and quality tertiary education systems and institutions for the development of inclusive and equitable societies on the continent.

## Meeting Outcomes

The meeting aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Provide a platform for multi-stakeholders to examine policy frameworks and explore implementation strategies towards the effective integration of digital and AI technologies into higher education systems in Africa and beyond;
- Showcase good practices, transformative approaches, and lessons learned from HEIs, international and regional organisations, and private sector entities to facilitate higher education development in the AI era;
- Strengthen collaboration among stakeholders in relation to Africa's higher education sector, especially industry-academia cooperation and South-South and triangular cooperation, to nurture knowledge-based and innovation-driven societies;
- Launch UNESCO-ICHEI's key initiatives in Africa, new GenAI courses, and smart classroom projects; support the operationalisation of UNESCO's Priority Africa Flagship Programme "Campus Africa"; and share information on enterprises' tools, applications, and solutions for supporting AI-driven higher education transformation in Africa.

## Meeting Time & Location

**Time:** 13 December 2024, 8.30 am – 5.30 pm, Dakar time

**Location:** Salle de Venue 1, Radisson Blu Hotel, Dakar Sea Plaza, Dakar, Senegal

## Meeting Participants

The meeting will bring together around 150 participants from all subregions of Africa and beyond, including:

- Senior officials from the ministries of education and other relevant government entities in charge of higher education;
- Higher education workforce, including HEI leadership, teaching personnel, and learning support staff;
- Industry professionals and private sector entities;

- Experts in promoting AI integration, as well as gender equality, in higher education;
- Representatives from UNESCO, the African Union, and other international and regional organisations.

## Meeting Format & Language

The meeting will be held in-person and live streamed via the ZOOM platform.

Meeting link: <https://zoom.us/j/88265031295>

The meeting will be conducted in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation services provided for both languages.

## Meeting Organisers

The meeting is organised by:

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO-ICHEI)
- Université Gaston Berger (UGB) - International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) National Centre in Senegal
- Université Amadou Mahtar Mbow (UAM)
- Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou KANE (UN-CHK)

The meeting is sponsored by:

- GuangZhou Dazzle View Intelligent Technology Co., Ltd.
- Meta Lingual Co., Ltd.

## Tentative Programme

08:00-08:30	<b>Registration</b>
08:30-09:15	<p><b>Opening remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Guillaume Husson, Head of Education Sector, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa</li> <li>• Mr. JIN Li, Director, International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO-ICHEI)</li> <li>• Mr. Firmin Edouard Matoko, Assistant Director-General for Priority Africa and External Relations, UNESCO [video message]</li> <li>• H.E. Mr. El Hadji Abdourahmane Diouf, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Senegal</li> </ul>
09:15-09:30	<p><b>Keynote address:</b> Reimagining Africa’s higher education in the AI era - key issues, trends, challenges, and policy responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Claude Lishou, Director, Higher Institute for Distance Learning, UCAD, Senegal</li> </ul>
09:30-09:45	<p><b>Keynote address:</b> Reinforcing higher education in Africa through UNESCO’s Priority Africa Flagship Programme “Campus Africa”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Guillaume Husson, Head of Education Sector, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa</li> </ul>
09:45-09:55	<p><b>Plan launch:</b> UNESCO-ICHEI’s three-year plan on supporting higher education transformation in Africa</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. JIN Li, Director, UNESCO-ICHEI</li> </ul>
<b>09:55-10:10</b>	<p><b>Keynote address:</b> Leading the innovative development of digital higher education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Tony Wu, CEO, GuangZhou Dazzle View Intelligent Technology Co., Ltd., China</li> </ul>
<b>10:10-10:50</b>	<p><b>Roundtable:</b> Transforming higher education in the AI era: Advancing UNESCO's Campus Africa Flagship Programme</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Bobir Tukhtabayev, Chief of the Relations with the United Nations and Intergovernmental Organizations Section, Priority Africa and External Relations Sector, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Anthony Adejumo, Deputy Director, ICT, National Universities Commission, Nigeria</li> <li>• Mr. Saliou Diouf, Vice Rector, Université Gaston Berger, Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. Idris A. Rai, Deputy Executive Secretary, Inter-University Council for East Africa</li> </ul>
<b>10:50-11:10</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>11:10-11:50</b>	<p><b>Panel discussion:</b> Supporting teacher professional development through open educational resources</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Ibrahima Cissé, Rector, Université Amadou Mahtar Mbow, Senegal</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Ousmane Sall, Vice Rector, Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou KANE, Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. SIT Fung, Assistant Director, UNESCO-ICHEI</li> <li>• Ms. Amélie Ekué, Academic Dean, Globethics, Switzerland</li> </ul>
<p><b>11:50-12:30</b></p>	<p><b>Panel discussion:</b> Empowering the higher education workforce with digital and AI skills</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Jean Bosco Ki, Principal Education Programme Coordinator, UNESCO Abidjan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Abdou Lahate Cissé, Administrative and Technical Coordinator, Francophone African Network of National Quality Assurance Agencies, Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. Nouredine Bali, Vice Rector, University of Science and Technology Houari Boumedienne, Algeria</li> <li>• Mr. Daniel Mashao, Executive Dean, Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, University of Johannesburg, South Africa</li> </ul>
<p><b>12:30-13:10</b></p>	<p><b>Case sharing:</b> Good practices of IIOE National Centres on planning and implementing teacher professional development programmes</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. BI Xiaohan, Deputy Director, UNESCO-ICHEI</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Muhammed Bashir Mu'azu, Professor, Department of Computer Engineering, Ahmadu Bello University (IIOE Nigeria National Centre), Nigeria</li> <li>• Mr. Hany Nady Yousef, Head of the Training Coordination Team, Ain Shams University (IIOE Egypt National Centre), Egypt</li> <li>• Mr. Jeilu Oumer, Academic Vice President, Addis Ababa University (IIOE Ethiopia National Centre), Ethiopia [online]</li> <li>• Mr. Michel Bakar Diop, Director, Institute of Open and Distance Learning, Université Gaston Berger (IIOE Senegal National Centre), Senegal</li> </ul>
<p><b>13:10-14:30</b></p>	<p><b>Lunch break</b></p>
<p><b>14:30-15:20</b></p>	<p><b>Panel discussion:</b> Accelerating the digital transformation and AI development of higher education through a gender lens</p> <p><b>Project plan sharing:</b> Strengthening digital and AI competencies for women in the higher education workforce in Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. CAO Zian, Chief (a.i.) of the Global Partnership and Programme Office, UNESCO-ICHEI</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Mona Laroussi, Director, Institute of the Francophonie for Education and TVET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Melisew Dejene, Associate Professor in Development Studies and Journalism, Hawassa University, Ethiopia &amp;</li> </ul>

	<p>Member of the UNITWIN Network on Gender, Media and ICTs [online]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Sarah Osei, Founding Partner, ESDEV Foundation Africa &amp; Regional Lead (West Africa), Instill Education, Ghana</li> <li>• Ms. Maryam Khadim Mbacke, President, Women's Association for the Promotion of Science and Technology in Senegal, Senegal</li> </ul>
<b>15:20-16:00</b>	<p><b>Industry-academia cooperation case sharing:</b> Solution launch, project launch, and/or case study sharing on empowering AI-driven higher education transformation</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. SIT Fung, Assistant Director, UNESCO-ICHEI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Muhammed Bashir Mu'azu, Professor, Department of Computer Engineering, Ahmadu Bello University (IIOE Nigeria National Centre), Nigeria</li> <li>• Mr. Cedric Saber, Regional Channel Director, Alibaba, China</li> <li>• Ms. Aicha Diack, Public Relation Manager, Huawei Technologies Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. Ibrahim Nour Eddine Diagne, General Administrator, Gainde 2000, Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. Roger Larsen, Co-founder &amp; CEO, Norvalid, Norway</li> </ul>
<b>16:00-16:10</b>	<b>Smart Classroom signing ceremony</b>
<b>16:10-16:30</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>

<p><b>16:30-17:10</b></p>	<p><b>Panel discussion:</b> Fostering South-South and triangular partnerships for improved higher education outcomes</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Bobir Tukhtabayev, Chief of the Relations with the United Nations and Intergovernmental Organizations Section, Priority Africa and External Relations Sector, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Mamadou Babacar Ndiaye, Vice President &amp; President (a.i.), Network for Higher Education Excellence in West Africa &amp; Rector, Université Iba Der Thiam de Thiès, Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. Brian Halubanza, Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology, Mulungushi University, Zambia</li> <li>• Mr. Dumitru Vasilescu, Research Specialist, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation [online]</li> <li>• Mr. Quentin Wodon, Director, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa [online]</li> </ul>
<p><b>17:10-17:20</b></p>	<p><b>Closing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Saliou Diouf, Vice Rector, Université Gaston Berger, Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. Ousmane Sall, Vice Rector, Université Numérique Cheikh Hamidou KANE, Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. Ibrahima Cissé, Rector, Université Amadou Mahtar Mbow, Senegal</li> <li>• Mr. Guillaume Husson, Head of Education Sector, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa</li> </ul>

