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PAN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY RECEIVES 45 MILLION DOLLAR BOOST



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 21 August 2013- The Pan African University received a major boost on Tuesday this week when a grant agreement for support from the African Development Bank, AfDB was signed by the AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union, Mr Martial de Paul Ikounga, and the Vice President for Agriculture, Human Development and Governance, Mr Aly Abou-Sabaa of the AfDB in Tunis.

The agreement covers the bank's support to the Pan African University amounting to 45 million USD.

The Pan African University is a flagship programme of the African Union, which aims at ensuring that the African University is re-established at the core of Africa's development, as a veritable instrument for achieving the AU vision of prosperity, peace and integration. The PAU's mission is to exemplify excellence and nurture quality in African Higher Education and Research. This will be done through world class programmes at Masters and PhD level, organized under five thematic areas, and hosted in existing Universities in AU Member States. Already, three of the PAU thematic hubs have admitted their first batch of students in Kenya, Cameroon and Nigeria. These first three as well as the central governance of the PAU will benefit from the current support of the AfDB. The fourth and fifth hubs are expected to begin in 2014 in Algeria, and by 2015 in the southern Africa region.

At the grant signing ceremony, the AfDB Vice President explained that the Bank's human resource development programme has a strong focus on addressing unemployment among youth, seeing that African youth account for 60% of the unemployed. He mentioned the lack of technical and entrepreneurial skills and information on the job markets as the major cause for this situation, hence the AfDB would invest over 2 billion dollars in this area of skills development. This is the reason the AfDB is happy to support the Pan African University. The AfDB current grant

agreement will support the first three institutes as well as the central governance of the PAU from the AU headquarters and the PAU Rectorate. The Bank VP called on the AUC to continue to ensure quality as well as gender equity in the PAU, towards meeting Africa's development agenda.

On behalf of the Chairperson of AUC, the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology said the AU is keen to build the PAU into an institution of first choice for Africans and other youth around the world, and to ensure it operates at par with the best universities in the world. The Commissioner also explained the linkage between the PAU and the revised AU Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy, to ensure internal coherence in continental programmes to address key development issues. The PAU will be one of the implementing instruments of the new Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy, whose operational framework will involve bringing together all African sectorial Ministries. This will ensure that higher education, research and human resource development are intimately linked to and informed by actual needs in the various sectors in order to demonstrate the central role of higher education, Science, Technology and Innovation in addressing Africa's challenges and achieving Africa's collective, ambitious vision.

The Commissioner was accompanied by the Director for HRST, Hakim Elwaer, and the Head of Education Division, Beatrice Njenga, while the AfDB Vice President was accompanied by Director Agnes Soucat; Manager for the Division of Education, Science and Technology, Mr. Sawadogo; Lead Education Specialist Mr. Ettiene Porgo, and Chief Education Specialist Michel Guedegbe among other senior officials.

