# THE 6th ACDE TRIENNIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE

**6TH ACDE CONFERENCE ENDS SUCCESSFULLY**

The 6th African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) conference ended successfully with a call to stakeholders within the education space to consider the enormous potential of Open and Distance learning (ODL) in changing the face of pedagogy in Africa. The two-day virtual conference touched on almost all the teething challenges facing education in Africa and how these challenges can be tackled.

In a welcome address delivered by Prof Goski Alabi, President of ACDE, she intimated the need to consider distance and open learning as a viable complement to contact learning in a post-COVID era. Her rallying address was important, considering the awful disruption that the COVID-19 has dealt to teaching and learning not only in Africa, but globally.

A cursory observation of the conference participants indicated that the organisers carefully selected the speakers and the participants to reflect the theme of this year’s conference, dubbed, ***“Open and Distance Learning Amidst COVID-19: the Continental Strategy for Africa (CESA) and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)***

Present at the conference were Dr. Teresa Mwona, the Executive Director of ACDE; Prof Jonathan Mba, Director of Research at the Association of African Universities (AAU); Prof Peter Okebukula, Chairman of the Council, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) and Prof Mohammed Salifu, Director General – Ghana Education Commission.

In its sixth year, ADCE has cultivated and a nurtured a pool of partner institutions who have shown tremendous admiration to the Council, its leadership and initiatives. ACDE has enjoyed enormous support from these institutions in collaborative learning, case sharing and problem solving. The two day even had representation from H.E Peter Kwasi Kodjie, Secretary General, All-Africa Students Union (AASU); Professor Asha S. Kanwar, President and Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth of Learning; Prof. Prof. Etienne Ehouan Ehile, Secretary-General Association of African Universities, (AAU) and Prof. Paul Wainaina, ACDE Secretary-General & Vice-Chancellor Kenyatta University. The rest are H.E. Sarah Anyang Agbor, African Union Commissioner for Human Resources, Science & Technology; Prof. Moeketsi Letseka, UNESCO Chair on Open Distance Learning UNESCO; Prof. Boubakar Barry, African Research and Education Network (AFREN) and, Mr. Tao Zhan, Director UNESCO IITE.

The Minister of Education of Ghana, Dr. Yaw Adutwum presented the complements of the Government of Ghana to the Council and assured the conference that Ghana is in the process of hybridizing education to reflect the new pedagogical shifts occurring across the education landscape.

A major activity that punctuates academic conferences are paper presentations. This formed an integral part of the 6th ACDE conference. Scholars and researchers presented papers on differing issues on higher education, qualifications, open and distance learning and other related areas. The Council in recognizing the importance of research to the growth of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) awarded some individuals and groups for the best conference paper presented.

In addressing the conference, the guest honour, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria H.E Olusegun Matthew Okikiola Aremu Obasanjo, hailed the consistency of ACDE in promoting open and distance learning in Africa. H.E Obasanjo paid glowing compliments to all the stakeholders who are adding their shoulder to the wheel in working towards the design of other alternative educational frameworks.

The Council conferred a distinguished service award on H.E Olusegun Matthew Okikiola Aremu Obasanjo for his works in promoting open education and distance learning in Africa. The citation that accompanied the award reads:

“…..*You have been exceptional in founding the National University of Nigeria (NOUN). By this singular action, you demonstrated to the rest of Africa that ambition and determination are twin pillars of success. Through your exemplary leadership, you have been pivotal to the orderly progress of NOUN. Your willingness to share ideas and selflessly give off your time to help others draw us all to you. From the military to politics, and now to education, you have proven to be a legendary leader. Today, we present the first ACDE Strategic Leadership Award to you for your strategic leadership, which has provided over half a million Africans access to education through lifelong learning opportunities. Your foresightedness and commitment to inclusive education set you far apart before it became a global necessity. As a leader, you walked the talk of inclusive education and human development. Your initiative and personal development has been exemplary and lights the path for others to follow.* ***Your Excellency Olusegun Matthew Okikiola Aremu Obasanjo,*** *today, the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) recognizes your contribution to human development in Africa. Please accept the heartfelt thanks of the Open and Distance Education Community,* ***THE ACDE AFRICA STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AWARD…* ”**

The other award was conferred on the University of South Africa (UNISA) for being a reputable, comprehensive, flexible and accessible open distance learning institution that is motivating a generation towards a vision of shaping futures in the service of humanity that can solve Africa’s educational and developmental problems.

The African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) is a continental educational organization comprising African universities and other higher education institutions, which are committed to expanding access to quality education and training through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) including e-Learning. It is a unifying body of distance education providers and practitioners in Africa. ACDE and was formally launched in January 2004 at Egerton University, Kenya. In August 2005 ACDE held its Inaugural Conference and General Assembly at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, during which it was resolved to establish a permanent Secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya. The mandate of the ACDE, as a unifying body of ODL providers in Africa, is primarily to promote research, policy and quality in open and distance learning to increase access to education and training in Africa.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Elorm Mawuli-Kwawu

©Communications Lead

The 6th ACDE Triennial Conference