



**WEST AFRICAN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION (WARIMA)
15TH ANNUAL WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE
University of Lagos, Nigeria**

COMMUNIQUE

INTRODUCTION

The 15th Annual Workshop and Conference of the West African Research and Innovation Management Association (WARIMA) took place on 29th January - 1st February 2024 at the University of Lagos, Akoka-Yaba, Lagos Nigeria. The Keynote Address Titled *Research and Innovation Management in African Universities and Research Institutions – Operations to Strategy* was delivered by Prof Gordon Awandare of the University of Ghana. The conference had six plenary sessions, two panel discussions and six parallel sessions with 27 papers presented by members of the Association and ended with an Annual General Meeting.

The meeting was attended by the Vice Chancellor, University of Lagos, Prof Folasade Ogunsola who was ably represented by Prof Bola Oboh, the DVC Academic and Research, some Vice Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors of universities in West Africa, TETFUND, EDCTP, Conversation Africa, NIAID, WHO Essence, Association of Commonwealth Universities, the representative of Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) and the Executive Council and members of WARIMA ably led by the President, Mr. Dembo Kanteh.

Participants at the conference numbering 150 came from eight West African countries. These include Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea Bissau

OBSERVATIONS

The conference observed the following:

1. The global research landscape has remained unequal with many countries in Africa having minimal visibility in accessing global fundings, university-industry linkages, production of innovations and general impact on society.
2. External research funding is increasingly contributing to African research and innovations efforts, research management practices, capacity building of young researchers and attracting back home, African diaspora researchers.

3. Building the capacity of young researchers in the region is being hampered by weak mentorship and motivation programs, imbalanced allocation of time to research and teaching and weak university-industry relations amongst others.
4. Research and innovation management practices are at different levels in the region, and this provides an opportunity for experience sharing and collaboration amongst practitioners.
5. The research landscape is becoming complex with new regulations on compliance levels, and this calls for improved understanding of these emerging trends.
6. Artificial Intelligence is fast transforming the learning and research landscape in Africa, but it is also generating ethical concerns about its use.

RESOLUTIONS

The meeting therefore resolved to call on the governments, universities, research centres, think-tanks in West Africa to:

- set up research management eco-systems that fit their contexts.
- Facilitate the professionalization of research management through recruitment, capacity building and attractive conditions of service.
- promote impactful policy and innovation-based research.
- remain visible to national and international research and innovation communities.
- provide a productive environment for impactful research by strengthening policy, legal and institutional frameworks.
- sustain good levels of funding for research work through increases in national budgets.
- leverage on available funding sources from long-term partners in the region and globally.
- explore the use of AI in the management of research while ensuring high levels of integrity in the research process.
- create a consultative leadership style and celebrate result-oriented researchers.

WARIMA also resolved to:

- organize advocacy sessions with Vice Chancellors, Heads of Research Centers, and Think Tanks in the region to enable them to provide strong leadership for research and its management on their campuses.
- build the association by expanding its membership to Francophone and Lusophone countries.
- work with scientific and research communities in and outside the region for the promotion of impactful research cultures.

The leadership and members of WARIMA thank the host, Funders, and the local organizing committee for the success of the conference.



Mr Dembo Kanteh
President WARIMA