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*Knowledge Economy Network, Brussels*

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## ***Pan-African University formally launched***

***On the 14th of December 2011, the African Union Commission (AUC) formally launched the Pan-African University (PAU) at a twin event, which included the African Union Kwame Nkrumah Awards for Outstanding Women in Science. The first three of five thematic institutes were launched although the establishment has lagged far behind initial plans. The Chairperson, Dr. Jean Ping, expressed that it is incumbent on Africa, as the cradle of humanity, to cultivate excellence and strive to take its rightful place on the world stage.***

Already back in 2002, the African Union Commission created eight technical departments including the Department for Human Resources, Science and Technology, whose mission includes leading, promoting and coordinating the AU's science and technology programmes. This was followed by the creation of the African Ministerial Conference of Science and Technology (AMCOST), as a forum for regular debates on the importance of science and technology in Africa.

The major challenges to Africa's development is the lack of highly qualified human resources, which has slowed down progress towards the achievement of Africa's Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The lack of adequately trained academic staff has also rendered African universities globally less competitive, which is linked to serious brain drain from Africa. The continent experiences the highest brain drain in the world, which affects particularly middle and low income countries (see graph on next page). According to Academic Ranking of World Universities 2011, only four African universities featured among the top 500; three of which are in South Africa. Equally of concern - despite the influx of students into African universities – is that only 6% of Africans have access to higher education (versus a world average of 30%). Given the correlation between education levels and economic progress, the Pan-African University aims to create institutions for excellence in science, technological innovation, social sciences, humanities and governance, which will constitute a solid foundation for higher studies and research, and begin to foster a knowledge economy.

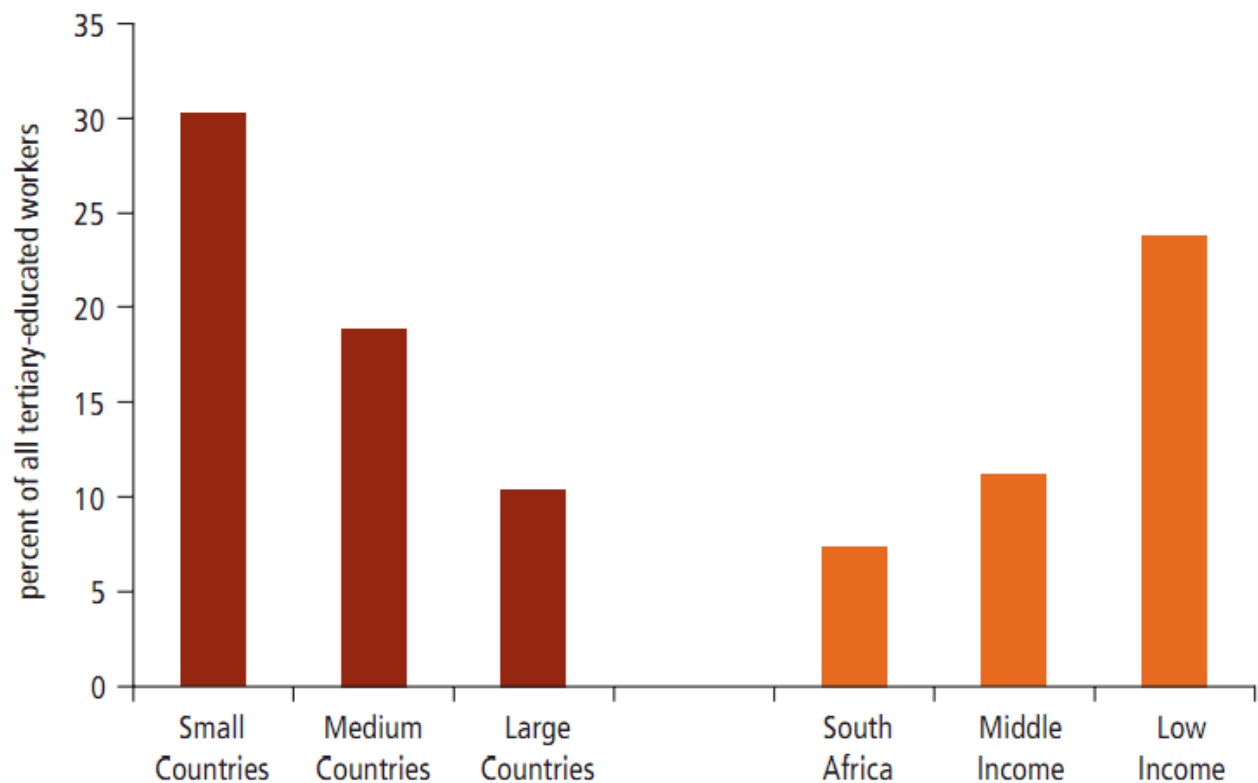
Of the five institutions envisaged, the three presently launched are:

- The Institute for Governance, the Humanities and Social Sciences of Central Africa, based at the University of Yaoundé II, in Soa, Cameroon;
- The Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation of East Africa, based at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Juja, Kenya;

- The Institute for Life and Earth Sciences (including Health and Agriculture) of West Africa, based at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

The Chairperson, Dr. Jean Ping, expressed his immense appreciation to the five Partners – Germany, Belgium, Sweden, the European Union and India – for their concrete commitments to support the Pan-African University.

### High-skill Migration rates in Africa, by country size and income level



Source: [Leveraging Migration for Africa](#)

### Further information:

- [African Union launches Pan-African University](#)
- [The Millennium Development Goals in Africa: Progress and Challenges](#)
- [African Ministerial Conference of Science and Technology \(AMCOST\)](#)
- [Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities 2011](#)
- [Data visualization and mapping dashboard for exploring country, regional and global performance on 19 key education indicators through interactive, animated world maps, charts and tables](#)

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