



Brighton Barugahare (left), a policy analyst, listening to Saidou Jallow, the chief of the education sector UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa during a meeting at Kampala Serena Hotel recently. Photo by Denis Dibebe

Uganda to ratify convention on academic qualifications

By Vision Reporter

Uganda is in advanced stages of ratifying a United Nations Convention on recognition of academic qualifications at higher institutions of learning.

Once this convention on the recognition of studies is signed, Uganda will ably equate its higher education awards to other African countries.

For a long time, students in Africa have faced a challenge of moving from one university to another to complete the courses they were studying or to even upgrade their studies. This is because there were no uniform awarding standards in higher institutions of learning.

Last week, the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa in co-operation with the education ministry and the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM), organised an information sharing meeting at the Kampala Serena Hotel to sensitise participants on the relevance of the convention.

The convention lays down basic principles for recognition of higher education qualifications,



Rosie Agoi

including increased information sharing and transparency in order to smoothen the cross-border mobility of students, academics and professionals within the region.

According to the Secretary General of the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, Rosie Agoi, with the ratification of the convention, it will be easy for students in Uganda to access universities in other countries.

"In some countries, it is hard for students from a different country to access higher education. But this convention will ease the mobility of students," Agoi says.

She says harmonisation of

qualifications is a problem that governments and institutions alike recognise and some African states have been taking new steps to address the issue.

According to UN statistics, tertiary students from Sub-Saharan Africa are the second most mobile in the world, after students from Central Asia.

"The convention will enable parties adopt measures to eradicate all forms of fraudulent practices regarding higher education qualifications," adds Agoi.

Upon ratification of the convention, Uganda and other countries will have to set up a competent qualification recognition body which must fully meet the requirements and have the right information to link the entire continent.

The Addis convention replaces the Arusha Convention that was adopted more than 30 years ago by ministers of education in Arusha, Tanzania to promote academic mobility and international and regional co-operation.

Uganda's state minister for primary education Rosemary Seninde commended the efforts

by UNESCO to have qualifications harmonised across Africa.

Ann Theresa Ndong-Jetta, the UNESCO director of the Multi-Sectoral Office for East Africa, says the Addis Convention requires 10 countries to ratify it in order to come into force.

Currently, only seven countries have ratified it. These are Djibouti, Togo, Mauritius, Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia and Congo.

In Uganda, qualifications from other countries have to be assessed and equated by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE).

The convention may be adopted in November.

TOP TIP ✓

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