

5th Annual General Assembly HBCU Side-Event, September 2024

Theme: *Mobilizing Africa's Sixth Region – Helping Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century*

Date: Monday 23 September 2024

Hosting institutions: Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the UN, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Africa, African Union Mission to the United Nations, and Office of HBCU Development and International Cooperation (OHBCUD).

Participants: Senior African leaders, prominent scholars, development practitioners, development partners, leadership from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the USA, and civil society representatives will be invited to participate in-person and virtually. Consistent with previous iterations an audience of 1500 is anticipated.

Background and Context

Africa is a development paradox. A continent rich in minerals, natural resources and enormous human potential, but also home to 33 of the world's 46 Least Developed Countries and two-thirds of its extremely poor population. The above cited and hosting institutions remain fully cognizant of this challenging paradox. They now stand collectively committed to support the timely implementation of UN Agenda 2030, African Agenda 2063 and cognate initiatives especially designed to address the call to educate an Africa, with special focus on the needs of its youth, in a manner that is fit for the 21st Century.

This side event, being held at the margins of the 79th Session of UNGA represents the *fifth-year* anniversary of the historic MOU and productive partnership established between UNDP Africa and OHBCUD, Inc. Similarly, since May 2023, OHBCUD, Inc has a successful MOU and partnership established with USAID. Therefore, we fully support and purposefully align the central topic of this event in a manner best captured by the African Union's (AU) timely theme for 2024 – ***“Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century”***. Additionally, major attention will be extended to USAID's noteworthy EdTech Africa Initiative with the HBCU community (Spelman College).

Accordingly, this year's event shall represent a rallying cry for innovation, inclusivity, resilience, international partnerships and mobilization of resources in our education systems in Africa and throughout the African Diaspora.

Africa has the world's youngest population with a median age of about 19. In 2023 the International Labor Organization (ILO) and cognate UN agencies confirmed that “more than one in four young people in Africa – around 72 million – are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Two-thirds of them are young women”. Such NEET rates were on the rise for African youth even before the COVID pandemic. Thus, following a global summit on transforming education convened by the UN Secretary General in 2022, the African Union (AU) proposed its theme of the year for 2024. The AU declares its intent on “building resilient systems for increasing access to inclusive, lifelong, quality and relevant learning in Africa”. Similarly, USAID aims to help “sustain a global community that values diversity, collaboration, and innovation thereby

catalyzing positive change in realms of STEM and academia”. All partnering hosts agencies remain focused on driving socio-economic development for all, particularly throughout Africa and the African diaspora. Therefore, we fully support this critical initiative, as Africa continues to face significant challenges in achieving SDG4.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the USA, and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) of higher education, are strategically and uniquely positioned to help address these challenges. Thus, one way to be supportive of the AU’s 2024 education initiative, while also recognizing the synergistic and complementary concerns of international agencies such as UNDP Africa and USAID, is to leverage Africa’s Sixth Region – its diaspora – to help realize the continent’s promise. While people of African descent live in many countries, the African-American diaspora is uniquely positioned to unlock the continent’s educational, economic and financial potential.

A 2021 McKinsey study showed that African-American graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the US have higher socio-economic mobility than those who attend other institutions. Twenty-five (25%) of African American graduates with STEM degrees come from HBCUs. These schools also include centers of excellence in business, agricultural development, and many other fields relevant for the AU’s initiative 2024, and Africa’s progress towards Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. Similarly, these institutions can serve as a means of collaboratively ensuring the effective implementation of USAID’s EdTech Africa Initiative.

In short, HBCUs are thus strategically positioned to work with UNDP, USAID, the African Union and African countries to unlock the continent’s intelligence development code, facilitate regional integration, improve agricultural productivity and food sovereignty, help meet the concerns of African youth, and make the most out of education in African institutions.

Event objectives

This event aims to convene systematize and scale-up the ongoing alliance among HBCUs, UNDP Africa, African Union, USAID, Member States, people of African descent, the private sector, and civil society to facilitate and create new opportunities for leveraging HBCUs to accelerate Africa’s development.

Specifically, it will:

- I. Showcase UNDP’s, AU’s and USAID’s analytical work in the African diaspora, and explore partnership opportunities in education, finance, trade and agriculture in particular
- II. Identify ways and means of being collaboratively supportive of the African Union’s (AU) 2024 Education Initiative, UNDP Africa’s Timbuktoo/UNIPODS Initiative and USAID’s EdTech Africa(AUA) Concept
- III. Review progress to date by HBCUs as a function of their respective MOUs and partnerships with both UNDP Africa and USAID, including the International Distance Learning Initiative (IDLI)

- IV. Toward establishing an operational baseline of collaboration, an identification and highlight will be provided of current exchange programs and partnerships already existing between HBCUs and various African institutions of higher education
- V. Establish and maintain ongoing working partnerships of interested UN Member States, educational institutions serving predominantly persons of African descent, UNDP Africa and Finance Sector Hub, USAID, AU, and development finance institutions, private sector, NGO/CSOs and cognate organizations

Proposed Agenda

The event will be in hybrid format to allow for maximum participation. High-level dialogue will be conducted. The framework for a joint plan of action shall be initially agreed upon by African Mission, UNDP Africa, USAID, AU, HBCU representatives and supportive experts on education/training/youth empowerment, finance, agricultural development and regional integration.

Venue: UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa Headquarters (UN-NYC), Conference Room, 24th Floor
One UN Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017

Date: Monday 23 September, 2024

Time: 1:00 – 2:30PM EST

Agenda: The eight (8) part event agenda will provide a complete “Run of Show” including a listing of many in-person and virtual participants. Detailed instructions regarding ***in-person attendance*** and compliance with UN Security procedures will be provided in advance to all ***confirmed*** and attending guests. The ***assigned location*** and advance ***timing of group arrival*** of in-person guests will be shared.

Here is the registration link: <https://bit.ly/HBCUevent2024>

Confirm ***In-Person*** Attendance: chairman@cpghbcu.org