

# THE PARTNERSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA

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## **U. S. FOUNDATIONS AFFIRM COMMITMENT TO AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEYOND 10-YEAR MARK OF CURRENT PARTNERSHIP**

### **\$350 Million for Strengthening Universities by 2010.**

*New York, New York, October 6, 2008*—Presidents of the seven U.S. foundations comprising the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa today announced their unanimous decision to continue both their collaborative and individual grantmaking aimed at strengthening higher education in Africa beyond their original ten-year commitment. Their agreement follows the annual meeting held in June at which they reviewed the foundations' individual and collective accomplishments since 2000 and assessed the challenges ahead.

Today's announcement coincides with the start of a new academic year in many countries on the African continent.

The Partnership was created to strengthen Africa's institutions of higher education so that they can better contribute to poverty reduction, economic growth and social development in their respective countries. Outcomes from partners' investments range from more and cheaper Internet bandwidth for universities and the establishment of research and training networks in the sciences and social sciences to the launch of a new Internet gateway for the collection and dissemination of research.

In re-affirming their commitment to fund African higher education, the presidents expressed their gratitude for the excellent progress achieved by their program staff members as well as the members of the Partnership's coordinating office, the latter of which began operations in 2002 and will continue, as planned, to operate until January 31, 2010. During the next phase of individual and collective foundation support for African higher education, which will begin in 2010, collaborative funding will be coordinated by the executive committee of participating foundations' program staff that currently supervises the coordinating office.

The presidents noted with great pride that by 2010, \$350 million in Partnership grants will have assisted universities and other African institutions and programs dedicated to improving higher education access, excellence, research and diversity for men and

women at select universities in Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The foundation presidents—Paul Brest, Hewlett Foundation; Jonathan Fanton, MacArthur Foundation; Vartan Gregorian, Carnegie Corporation; Don Randel, Mellon Foundation; Rip Rapson, Kresge Foundation; Judith Rodin, Rockefeller Foundation and Luis Ubiñas, Ford Foundation —also announced their decision that the next phase of their cooperative activities will consist of bilateral and multilateral funding, in tandem with other alliances, while individual grantmaking will continue at each of their respective foundations. The presidents stated that their foundations will continue to work in partnership with African universities to enrich their ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to the men and women who are integral to the progress and development of sub-Saharan African countries.

Speaking on behalf of the seven foundation partners, Vartan Gregorian, the current rotating chair of the Partnership said, “By strengthening a core group of universities through collective and individual investments, the foundation partners have helped to nurture a rising generation of women and men who will contribute to the further development of democracy and civil society on the African continent. To enable universities to continue to address Africa’s many complex challenges, however, demands that we affirm our long-term commitment to build upon this progress.”

Individually and collectively, the seven foundations have advanced the Partnership’s core goal of strengthening universities by providing direct support to individual universities, and by funding activities on a national, regional, and continental level.

To date, joint investments by partner foundations have included the creation of a consortium of sub-Saharan universities to purchase a significant increase in satellite bandwidth and share Internet capacity at lower rates. The purchasing consortium not only provided the universities with more bandwidth at cheaper prices, but it also influenced broader market pricing, encouraged increased hardware acquisitions by universities, and contributed to an increase in the use of ICT in teaching, learning and research.

During the past eight-and-a-half years, independent foundation awards made under the auspices of the Partnership have included grants supporting institution building of individual universities, specific departmental activities, and strengthening national and regional higher education institutions and networks. In addition, foundation support has enabled university leaders to modernize their organizational structures in cooperation with academic institutions not only in the United States and the United Kingdom, but also in other African countries. These resources and networks have allowed participating African universities to bolster their operational processes and infrastructure in areas ranging from admissions and registration to fundraising, communications and governmental relations.