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*“Quality is in the Eye of the Beholder:
Relevance, Credibility and International Visibility”*

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The Changing Landscape of Higher Education in Developing Economies: Challenges for Quality Assurance

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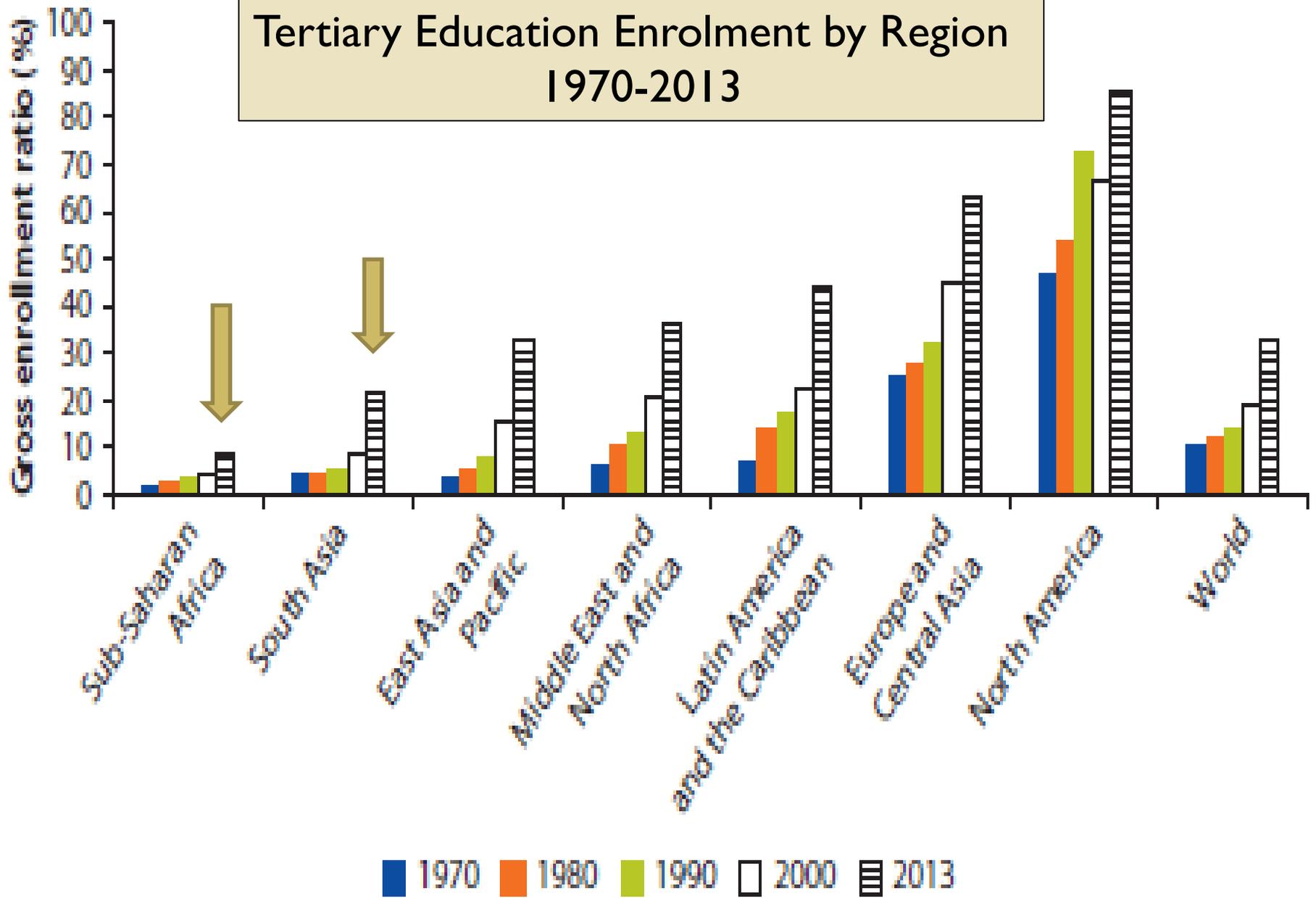
Dramatic Changes in HE Landscape Taking Place in Developing Economies

Three main reasons:

1. Explicit recognition that HE is vital for development
 - Strong positive relationship between GTER & GDP
 - Increase in GTER in developing countries has even greater impact on GDP
2. Demographic structure: rapid increase of youth population in search of education
3. Improved access (and success) at primary & secondary levels: creates huge demand for tertiary education

Hence huge pressure to increase tertiary enrolment in developing countries

Tertiary Education Enrolment by Region 1970-2013



Strategies for Increasing Tertiary Enrolment

1. Increasing enrolment in existing public HEIs
2. Creating new public HEIs
3. Using ODL – blended learning or create dedicated ODL institutions (mostly public)
4. Facilitating creation of local private HEIs (public funding insufficient to meet growing demand)
5. Facilitating Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE) – inward mobility of programmes and institutions

All the above, however, have implications for Quality Assurance - External & Internal



Issues to be Addressed through Quality Assurance while Implementing the Strategies

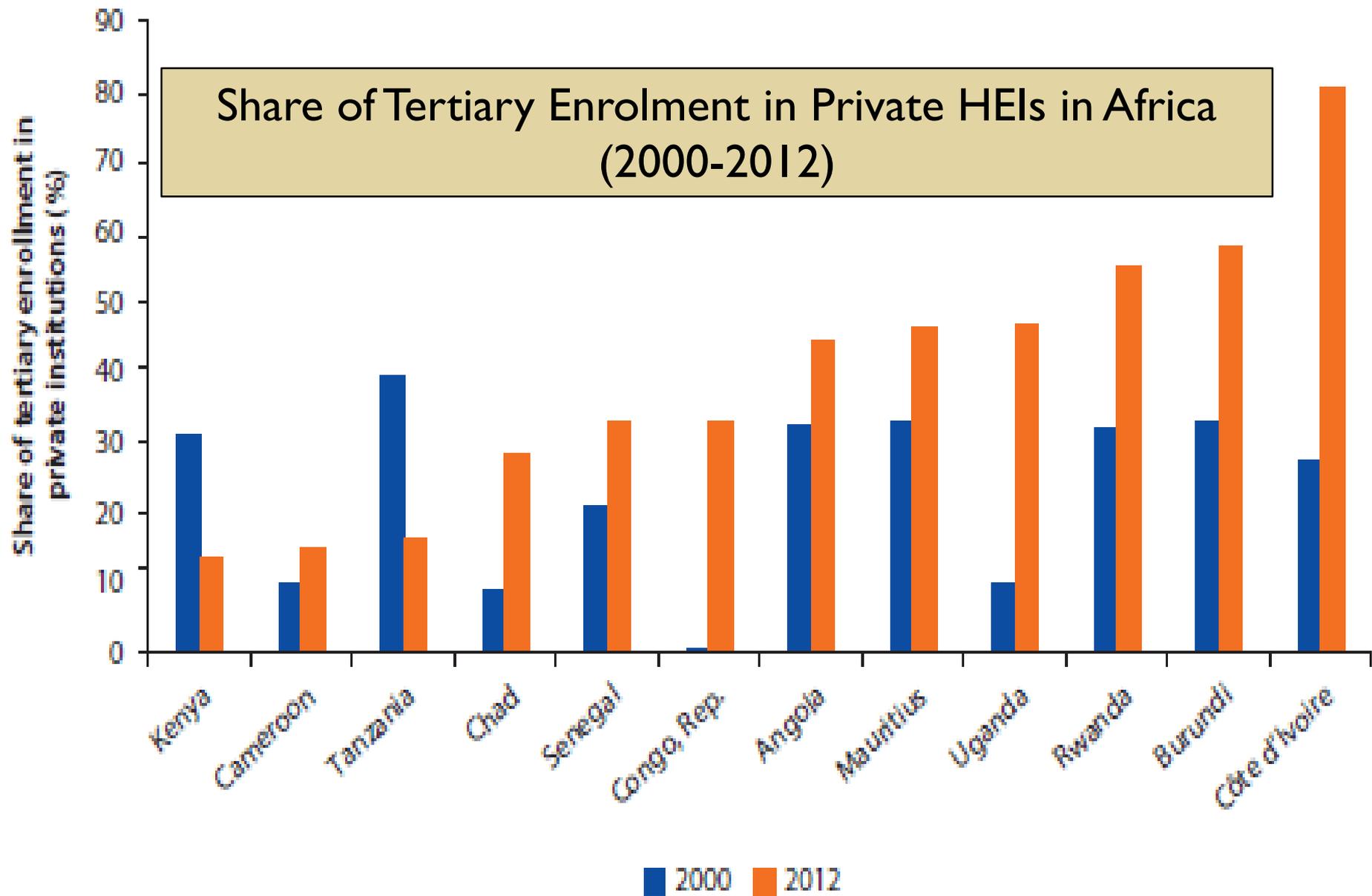
1. Massification in Public HEIs
2. Proliferation of Private Institutions
3. Proper Control of CBHE
4. Lack of Qualified Faculty
5. Lack of Accurate Institutional Data
6. Combatting Corruption in Higher Education
7. Achieving the SDGs

I. Massification of Public HEIs

- Institutional Massification – far greater student enrolment than carrying capacity of institutions [*Worse in Francophone countries*]
- Increase in government grants in public HEIs not commensurate with enrolment
- Inadequate teaching & learning infrastructure & materials: lecture rooms, labs & equipment, students' residences, etc.
- Poor maintenance of existing infrastructure & facilities
- Current 5-year cyclical External QA review of public HEIs inadequate to bring about improvement
- QA agency should specify clear carrying capacity standards for students, staff, infrastructure, etc. – also to be monitored regularly

2. Proliferation of Private Institutions

- Rapid expansion of private HEIs in developing countries, as public HEIs unable to meet rising demand for HE
- In most countries, number of private HEIs exceeds public ones although private enrolment still lower than public (*see next slide*), but is rapidly increasing
- Main concern is Quality of private HEIs. There are some good private univs (e.g. faith-based ones) but the majority are for-profit, operating as business enterprises, having no academic structure, employing very few qualified staff and running mostly market-driven courses
- Currently private HEIs are initially licensed for operation, then programmes are accredited, with little subsequent follow-up
- How can large and increasing numbers of private HEIs be effectively quality assured?



Source: Calculations are based on UIS data.

Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/01/10/>

Note: UIS = United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics.

3. Proper Control of CBHE

- CBHE not as widespread in developing countries, and enrolment still relatively low, but it is increasing rapidly
- Many modes of CBHE but the most common ones in developing countries are:
 - Franchising of courses through private organisations (not always HEIs)
 - Offering courses through ODL (including online)
 - Setting up independent HEIs with no 'home' tertiary institution
 - Branch campuses
- Generally, most CBHE providers operate as for-profit HEIs, usually outside public HEIs – they compete with them
- Again, major concern is Quality of CBHE providers
- Existing QA guidelines for CBHE established from an OECD/European perspective, targeting specific regions such as Asia-Pacific and the Middle East

4. Lack of Qualified Faculty

- Large enrolment and shortage of faculty have resulted in large staff:student ratios – in some cases 1:100 – causing deterioration in quality of teaching & learning
- Heavy teaching load leaves no time for research, and many faculty do P/T teaching in private institutions after work
- Difficult to attract/retain qualified faculty, poor salaries; existing ones about to retire or are heavily in administration
- Proportion of staff with PhD very low: upgrading existing staff to PhD will take many years & quality of PhD may be questionable
- Should all faculty in all departments have a PhD? Need for differentiation of HEIs – horizontally & vertically
- It is important for QA processes (institutional review or programme accreditation) to ensure an adequate number of trained faculty in the institutions.

5. Lack of Accurate Institutional Data

- Institutional data vital for assessing Quality, but most HEIs do not keep comprehensive and consistent institutional data: student enrolment, dropout and completion rates, faculty levels and qualifications, graduate employment, etc.
- Often records are kept manually in registers and data from different sections do not corroborate
- Where available, data rarely analysed for policy making and planning
- Currently, World Bank's Benchmarking of African Universities project experiencing difficulties in collecting reliable data. WB in the process of setting up a Regional Higher Education Data Hub for Africa
- QA agencies must ensure that HEIs have a special unit to collect and record reliable data and analyse them for policy making

6. Combatting Corruption in Higher Education

- Corruption in HE has always existed but in 2013 Transparency International alerted that “corruption has invaded whole systems of HE...”
- Corruption in HE is prevalent in both developing & developed countries, but factors & actors may be different
- Corruption occurs at all levels: setting up of HEIs, appointment of leaders and faculty, student admissions, examinations, finance, research & publications, etc.
- It is vital for both EQA and IQA to stipulate specific guidelines for combatting corruption in HE
- July 2015: CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) Policy Brief on how QA can fight corruption in HE
- July 2016: CIQG & UNESCO-IIEP Advisory Statement on Combatting Corruption and Enhancing Integrity

7. Achieving the SDGs

- Most developing countries, especially in Africa, did not achieve the MDGs, and their univs hardly made any direct contribution towards their attainment - partly because the way the MDGs were formulated & publicised
- The 17 SDGs (2015-2030) are different – well-articulated & better known to HEIs. Specific targets under each goal enable HEIs to easily relate to them
- HEIs must not consider SDG4 (ensuring quality education for all) as the only one relevant to them – they must mainstream ALL SDGs in their main functions – teaching, research, CE
- SDGs provide a unique opportunity to HEIs to demonstrate their ability to contribute to development of their country
- QA agencies must ensure that there is a coordinated institutional approach to SDGs in all HEIs under their purview

Challenges for QA agencies in Developing Countries

- Several countries have not yet established a dedicated HE QA agency – this should be a top priority
- In Africa in 2013, only about 50% of countries had a QA agency
- Where set up, QA agencies lack trained staff & capacity for undertaking External Evaluation of HEIs; they also lack funds
- Few QA agencies have developed guidelines and standards for External QA – vital for effective External QA
- External Evaluation process rarely used for private HEIs – mainly programme Accreditation; yet this is the expanding sector
- Similarly, QA agencies have little experience in evaluating ODL and CBHE

Credibility & Acceptability of QA Agencies

- Most QA agencies operate under a Ministry – how independent are they?
- Known cases of QA agencies having been subjected to political pressure to recognise/certify a HEI
- Also known cases of staff of QA agencies or external reviewers accepting gratification
- Equally known cases of HEIs falsifying their internal review report, which goes undetected by the QA agency
- Who quality assures the QA agency in a developing country?
- These issues undermine the credibility & acceptability of QA agencies

Developing countries can learn from experiences of other regions e.g. Europe, America, Asia-Pacific & the INQAAHE Forum is the ideal place to do so



THANK YOU