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## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION OFFICE

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### SANORD 2017 CONFERENCE

**Date: 29 November – 01 December 2017**

**Venue: Elephant Hills Hotel, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**

#### **Narrative Report**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The 10<sup>th</sup> SANORD Conference was hosted by NUST at Elephant Hills Hotel in Victoria Falls. The main theme of the SANORD 2017 Conference was “The Role of Universities in Research and Technology Transfer to Improve Livelihoods in Southern Africa.”

#### **2.0 Opening Ceremony**

The Opening Ceremony was held on Wednesday 29 November in the Kalala Room.

A local school, Mosi-Oa-Tunya High School, sang the National Anthem and entertained the guests with song and dance.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor of NUST, Professor Samson Sibanda welcomed the delegates before Prof. Yohana J. S. Mashalla gave the keynote address followed by Prof. Francis P. Gudyanga, who officially opened the Conference. Prof. Gudyanga was the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development (Zimbabwe). The Chairperson of SANORD, Prof. Eva Akesson, gave a vote of thanks.

It is important to mention that the Opening Ceremony was also attended by the Honourable Dr Naledi Pandor, Minister of Science and Technology, South Africa, Prof. Brian O'Connor and Pro. Sigmund Cromo. The Opening Ceremony was colourful.

### 3.0 Oral Sessions

The papers presented in the oral sessions covered a wide range of themes, including North-South collaborations in education, research in post-colonial contexts, challenges faced by higher tertiary institutions in attracting research funding, health, climate change challenges in Africa and the role of research in improving livelihoods.

The oral presentations were presented under 7 sub themes, and 60 presentations were delivered (Table 1).

**Table 1. SANORD 2017 Oral Presentations**

Room	Theme	No. of Presentations
<i>29 November</i>		
Kalala Room	Theme 6 - <i>New epistemologies and new forms of knowledge within the North-South dialogue and collaboration</i>	5
Gwayi Room	Theme 8 - <i>Studies of science, technology and society in post-colonial contexts</i>	7
Matetsi Room	Theme 1 - <i>Challenges faced by universities in attracting international funding for research</i>	6
<i>30 November</i>		
Kalala Room	Theme 7 - <i>Adding value to North South collaborations</i>	10
Gwayi Room	Theme 9 - <i>Understanding health and well-being: Contributions from the social sciences and medical humanities</i>	12
Matetsi Room	Theme 5 - <i>The role of research in improving livelihood and addressing inequalities / access to opportunities</i>	10
<i>01 December</i>		
Kalala Room	Theme 4 - <i>Challenges to SADC and Nordic countries in commercialization and implementation of research outputs</i>	6
Gwayi Room	Theme 10 - <i>Climate change – challenges and opportunities for Southern Africa</i>	4

Matetsi Room		
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>

The presentations were presented over 3 days, Wednesday (1000 – 1300hrs); Thursday (0845 – 1300hrs and Friday (0845 – 1030hrs). Each presenter was allocated 15 minutes, questions for the presenters were asked after 3 – 5 presentations. Each parallel session was allocated a session chairperson. The duties of the session chair included time keeping, controlling question sessions and being a rapporteur of his/her session. The session chairs reported that all the sessions ran smoothly. Each room had a dedicated projectionist, laptop and projector. Presentations were uploaded onto the laptop before the commencement of each session.

The presenters for the 2017 SANORD Conference came from 11 countries, i.e. 6 from the South (Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and 5 from the North (Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland).

## **2.1 Plenary Sessions**

Two plenary speakers presented during the Conference. Prof Yohanna Mashalla from Botswana presented on Thursday. The title of his presentation was “Health systems strengthening through Leadership Training: Afya Bora Consortium Fellowship Programme”. Ms Oddny Osk Sverrisdottir from Sweden presented on Friday. The title of her presentation was “Initiating and formalizing collaboration: EU, Nordic and Swedish funding opportunities”.

## **2.2 Challenges and problems encountered**

No major challenges were experienced during oral presentations. One of the minor ones is that the Kalala Room was not ideal for parallel sessions that had small groups of participants.

## **4.0 Workshops and Special Interest**

### **4.1 Views on the concept of SIGs and their value to the future of SANORD plans**

The initiative to welcome proposals on Special Interest Groups originated from ideas at the SANORD conference at Uppsala University, Sweden, in September 2016. At the conference a special interest group was formed around educational science and an open brainstorm meeting indicated an interest to increase the relevance of SANORD with explicit proposals on groups. The intention of the SIG is to gather SANORD partner staff (researchers/teachers/administrators) around a theme, such as a research area or administrative area, to discuss possible ways of collaboration and projects. By building from bottom up on the interest of member institutions, SANORD is expected to become more relevant to member institutions and more attractive as a platform for interaction.

Each SIG proposal is reviewed and nominated for the conference programme, and also open to any person from a SANORD partner institution.

During the Uppsala conference in 2016, a group was formed around educational science. There were four SIGs on the programme for the 2017 conference: a) international managers and key administrators, b) academic freedom and freedom of academic choice, c) higher education and research for economic development in Africa, and d) educational research in health and social care education – across borders. It will be interesting to see which of these will be active at the Jyvaskyla conference in 2018.

#### **4.2 The value of workshops at SANORD meets**

The initiative to open up for workshop proposals stems from a brainstorm session at the SANORD Uppsala conference in September 2016 where different ideas on workshops were raised such as workshops for doctoral students or on how to run an international office. The intention of the workshop is to allow SANORD member institutions to engage in SANORD, to share knowledge and experience, and discuss different type of issues, academic as well as administrative. The format may be a hands-on exercise or a scientific panel. At the 2017 conference, six workshops were scheduled: a) academic freedom, b) demonstrating and assessing excellence in university teaching using a scholarly teaching portfolio as the central qualitative document, c) critical thinking and transformative learning, d) achieving stakeholder consensus to strengthen primary health care, e) comparative perspectives in teacher education: learning from each other, and f) un-packing intellectual property and technology transfer in universities.

#### **4.3 The relative interest for these activities compared to a 'routine conference'**

The SANORD conference in Zimbabwe in Nov/Dec 2017 was the first time to open up in a systematic way for proposals on SIGs and workshops. The intention was to increase engagement in SANORD from bottom-up. Although the number of SIGs and workshops was not that high, they were appreciated and relevant. In particular,

#### **4.4 The scope of these two activities in future conferences.**

4.4.1 The 2017 conference was the first attempt to engage SANORD members in the conference through the SIGs and workshops. Since this was new for many SANORD members, it would be wise to sharpen the format and sustain the possibility for a few conferences so that the concept and the possibility will be better known to a wider range of SANORD member staff.

4.4.2 A third separate option should be to allow for proposal to arrange scientific panel discussions. Some of the SIGs and workshops tended to be more like a regular scientific panel.

4.4.3 Another possibility would be to allow pre-meetings of different SANORD groups before the official programme starts. However, it is wise to request that such groups then need to have an activity during the conference to allow for all SANORD members present to be able to take part of the activity, and to report back to SANORD about the achievements.

## **5.0 Closing Ceremony**

The SANORD 2017 Closing Ceremony went on very well. The first presentation was a report back by Prof Svensson. He gave feedback on how oral presentations, special interest groups and workshops had progressed. No major challenges were experienced during all the presentations and deliberations. Mr Moyo (Chairperson, LOC) and Prof Naik (Vice Chairperson, LOC) thanked delegates for coming and LOC members for organizing a well-run Conference. The next session was presented by Prof Sibanda (Acting VC of NUST). He thanked all delegates for gracing the occasion and hoped that SANORD would continue to grow. Prof Akeson (Chairperson, SANORD Board) thanked NUST for hosting a well-organized conference. The delegates were also treated to a presentation by the 2018 hosts. A concern was raised about the "expensive" Registration Fee, it was noted that the Conference was held at an International Tourist Resort and a World Heritage Site (Victoria Falls). Therefore, the costs involved in hosting the event were high.

## **6.0 Feedback from Delegates**

At the end of the Conference, delegates completed a Conference Evaluation Feedback Form. Sixty four delegates completed the form. The delegates were rating the administration, organization and quality of facilities either as "Poor, Fair, Good" or "Satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Dissatisfied" or "Too many, Ideal, Too few". The majority of delegates responded positively to the statements or questions (Table 2).

**Table 2. Delegates' responses for the survey (n = 164)**

<b>Question/Statement</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
How would you rate the relevance of the conference sub themes?	75%	25%	0
The quality of the pre-event administration was	60%	32%	8%
How was the quality of practical information you received about the accommodation and other facilities prior to the event?	56%	38%	6%
How would you rate the relevance of information provided on the SANORD 2017 Conference website?	58%	37%	5%
How would you rate the registration process during the SANORD 2017 Conference?	73%	27%	0
How would you rate the SANORD 2017 Conference Venue/Facilities	91%	6%	3%
How would you rate the quality of catering services offered during the Conference?	75%	22%	3%
How would you rate the quality of social events?	91%	9%	0
How would you rate the general quality of Oral presentations and Discussions?	58%	42%	0
Overall, my satisfaction with the administration of the event	72%	28%	0
	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
Please indicate your overall satisfaction with the conference	86%	14%	0
	<b>Too many</b>	<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Too few</b>
Rate opportunities for participants to interact	7%	73%	20%

The delegates indicated that the Conference had been well administered, organized and the venue was ideal. Opportunities during the Conference for delegates to interact and network was the only aspect that might need to be improved in the future.