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**THE AFRICA-AMERICA INSTITUTE HOSTS ITS FIFTH ANNUAL STATE OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA CONFERENCE IN DAKAR, SENEGAL**

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The Africa-America Institute (AAI) will host its fifth annual State of Education in Africa conference (SOE) from November 14-15, 2019 at the King Fahd Palace Hotel in Dakar, Sénégal.

Over the course of the two-day conference, under the theme ***African Emergence***, panelists and presenters will share their vision, collaborate alongside education stakeholders, and charter enterprising ideas for transforming Higher Education that responds to Africa’s emerging markets, developing middle class and changing demographic.

According to the United Nations, by 2050, the number of African youth will triple, making education a priority in terms of access and mobility. SOE panel topics will explore the role of indigenous African knowledge systems as the foundation for local and global innovation and discuss the skills development required to support a globalizing “Made in Africa” brand.

Global economy and development expert **Dr. Ahmadou Aly Mbaye,** a Senegalese Professor of Economics at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD) and a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute (USA) and the Centre for Development Research (ZEF, University of Bonn, Germany) will lead panelists to investigate pedagogical design for employability in the formal and informal gig economy.

“We are excited to be in Senegal for our 5th annual SOE conference because, for 400 years, the people of Senegal have had deep ties to the U.S. Senegal is at the forefront of creativity and educational innovation and, most importantly, has a leader who is focused on education,” says Kofi Appenteng, President of AAI.

Notable confirmed speakers for this year’s conference include: the First Lady of Niger, **Her Excellency Aïssata Issoufou Mahamadou**; **Dr. Ebrima Sall,** Executive Director of TrustAfrica, world-renowned Ghanaian novelist, **Ayi Kwei Armah**; acclaimed Senegalese designer of Tongoro Studio, **Sarah Diouf**; and the first African-American to hold the position of Chancellor for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), **Dr. Phil Clay**.

AAI’s SOE conference will also convene sixty students from public and private universities in Senegal and Niger, alongside students from partner institutions in Ghana and Nigeria, for AAI’s inaugural Student Summit. This forum will create a space for students to speak candidly about challenges in higher education and develop their own innovative solutions in response. The SOE will welcome participants from the Student Summit as presenters and panelists, as well as include students from local communities as attendees to the conference.

The conference, hosted previously in New York City, Lagos, Nairobi and Abidjan, continues to attract high level representatives from notable international universities, governments, development agencies and foundations including: the African Union Commission, the World Bank, Bloomberg Philanthropies, TRECC/Jacobs Foundation, IBM, Ford Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, PASGR, Orange, Microsoft4Afrika, ESSA and Citibank. Leading academics and administrators from Ashesi University, Institut National Polytechnique Félix Houphouët-Boigny (INP-HB), Rutgers University, the United States International University (USIU-Africa), Harvard University, Pan-Atlantic University, IE University, International University of Grand Bassam, Arizona State University, Cornell University, have participated as well as government officials from each of the host countries and across the West African region.

For more information about AAI’s State of Education in Africa conference and to register visit <https://www.aaionline.org/what-we-do/state-of-education-in-africa-conference/>

**ABOUT**

The Africa-America Institute (AAI) is the flagship U.S. organization connecting Africa to America. Since its founding in 1953, over 16,000 Africans have received scholarships and fellowships from AAI. These Africans are now an esteemed network of alumni, many of whom are leaders and influencers across public, private, and governmental sectors in Africa and around the globe. This network includes current heads of state H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa; H.E. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire; H.E. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger; and H.E. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia. Additionally, many of AAI’s alumni have left an indelible imprint, including the late Barack Obama, Sr. and 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Mathaai.

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