

PAN-AFRICAN HYBRID REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION FUND (RSIF)-  
UNIVERSITY MOHAMMED VI POLYTECHNIC (UM6P) CONFERENCE

**DRAFT COMMUNIQUE**

**Theme:** *African-led science, technology, and innovation for contributing to the SDGs and stimulating global development*

1. The 2022 Pan African hybrid Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (RSIF)- University Mohammed VI Polytechnic (UM6P) Conference held from 28-29 June, 2022 in-person at UM6P campus in Ben Guerir, Morocco, and virtually for the larger audience was organised jointly by RSIF's Regional Coordination Unit, the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*) ([www.icipe.org](http://www.icipe.org)), and UM6P, ([www.um6p.ma](http://www.um6p.ma)), which is an RSIF International Partner Institution in Africa.
2. **NOTING** that the 2022 conference builds up on the RSIF 2021 virtual Pre-Conference that was held virtually from 15-17 November 2021;
3. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that the 2022 RSIF Conference achieved its objectives of:
  - i. Showcasing the RSIF model to key stakeholders aiming to strengthen quality and quantity of connections.
  - ii. Sharing emerging lessons from the initiative on how to strengthen doctoral training, research and innovation in Africa and sustainability of the RSIF.
  - iii. Discussing digital innovations in the context of climate change.
  - iv. Sharing lessons on how to link university applied research with industry needs.
4. **RECOGNISING** that the Conference was attended by 100 participants in person and over 300 connecting virtually around the world, who represented key science, technology and innovation stakeholders including government representatives, African university vice chancellors, faculty and students, the private sector, development partners and the media;
5. **FURTHER RECOGNISING** the important role of science, technology, and innovation in advancing Africa's development;
6. **COGNISANT** that the current global issues including geopolitical tensions, inflation, climate crises and COVID -19 pandemic situation call for greater cooperation in science, technology, and innovation worldwide;
7. **CONSIDERING** that science and innovation can provide solutions to these global challenges, and that Africa and African universities can be key players to provide these solutions;
8. **NOTING** the achievements of the RSIF program of the Partnerships for skills in Applied Science, Engineering and Technology, so far, which include:
  - a. **258 PhD students** from **24 countries** have been awarded scholarships to study in PhD programs in **15** selected African Host Universities in SSA. These scholarships are funded by African governments. Five Scholars have so far graduated
  - b. Memorandum of Understanding signed with **21 International Partners** to support capacity building and research focused on African challenges;

- c. **33 research and innovation grants** awarded to faculty and researchers of African universities to develop innovation capacity and research excellence, in partnership with international partners and private sector.
  - d. **Nine** African countries<sup>1</sup>, the European Union, South Korea, and the World Bank, are now directly contributing to RSIF, while many other African countries are in the process of joining.
9. The Conference collectively **AGREED** that there is a need for;
- a. Africa to build a strong digital skills foundation to unlock the opportunities in the global digital economy and to appreciate the importance of skills in internet of things (IoT), robotics, artificial intelligence (AI) and data science and their application in agriculture, health and education;
  - b. Continuous learning and adoption of new technologies and how they impact future and current work processes;
  - c. Develop science, technology and innovation policies that are complimentary to other related policies, like the trade, finance, education, and industry policies;
  - d. Stronger collaboration between academia and industry ensuring mutually aligned interests and partnerships;
  - e. Stronger scientific and research cooperation between the global north and global south based on values of equity and mutual respect.
10. The Conference collectively **RECOMMENDED** that:
- a. Networks should be established to facilitate collaborations and sharing information among experts in different sectors including private sector;
  - b. Science should be communicated more effectively to diverse groups of stakeholders including targeted end users and private sector;
  - c. Research on innovative climate change solutions should be adapted to the local context.
11. The Conference **AFFIRMED** commitment of RSIF partners to;
- a. Continue strengthening partnerships between African host universities and international partner institutes for PhD training, research and innovation;
  - b. Build an *Alumni Network* of RSIF PhD graduates to promote exchange of research ideas, experiences, and joint projects;
  - c. Support African Host Universities to become entrepreneurial universities;
  - d. Continue investing in RSIF and support RSIF's resource mobilisation efforts;

This Communiqué was issued this 29<sup>th</sup> day of June 2022 at University Mohammed VI Polytechnic (UM6P), Morocco.

Thank you for your participation and kind attention

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<sup>1</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Senegal