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MEDIA RELEASE

UP and Afrobarometer to collaborate on boosting research skills among young African researchers

PRETORIA – The University of Pretoria (UP) and Afrobarometer (AB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for a collaboration to boost research and analysis skills among young African researchers.

The agreement was signed by UP Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Tawana Kupe and Afrobarometer CEO Joseph Asunka at a virtual event.

Afrobarometer is a non-partisan, pan-African research network. Headquartered in Ghana, it is the world's go-to source for reliable data on African citizens' experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance and quality of life. Through an extensive programme of analysis and communications, it makes its findings accessible, visible, and policy relevant.

Under this three-year agreement, the institutions commit to co-hosting the annual Afrobarometer Summer School, where African researchers are trained in introductory and advanced statistics and their application to the analysis of Afrobarometer survey data. UP academics, students, and other stakeholders will also be introduced to Afrobarometer survey research.

The partners will co-develop training materials and tools to introduce students to the collection, analysis, and communication of public opinion data. They will also cooperate on analyses and publications, thematic seminars, fundraising for joint activities, mentorship, and other capacity-building initiatives.

Prof Kupe said, "We are pleased to be partnering with Afrobarometer, a leading source of reliable data on what Africans are thinking, and we look forward to increasing our networks and collaborations with them and other like-minded institutions, nationally and internationally. Research is important in informing policy and I believe our students and academics can only benefit from Afrobarometer's experience and expertise."

Asunka said the collaboration advances Afrobarometer's strategy of partnering with leading African universities on a range of initiatives, including encouraging the use of Afrobarometer data in teaching and learning. "Globally, there is an emphasis on evidence-based policy making to address challenges of poverty, unemployment, and crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, and this requires both the availability of high-quality data and the capability to analyse and communicate the findings to key stakeholders, policy makers, and advocates.

"Through this partnership, we will lay a strong foundation and inspire a cohort of young researchers and analysts to contribute to African development through research. It will also help ensure that data about Africa is collected, analysed, and communicated by Africans." – ENDS

Media enquiries

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on the Hatfield Campus, Pretoria. This 113-year-old institution is also the largest producer of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country that has a Faculty of Veterinary Science which is ranked top in Africa, and overall has 120 academic departments, as well as 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 55 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes.

UP is one of the top five universities in South Africa, according to the 2019-2020 rankings by the Center for World University Rankings. It is also ranked among the top 100 universities worldwide in three fields of study (veterinary science, theology and law), and among the top 1% in eight fields of study (agricultural sciences, clinical medicine, engineering, environment/ecology, immunology, microbiology, plant and animal sciences and social sciences).

In May 2020, the annual UK Financial Times Executive Education Rankings once again ranked GIBS as the top South African and African business school. The University also has an extensive community engagement programme with approximately 33 000 students involved in community upliftment. Furthermore, UP is building considerable capacities and strengths for the Fourth Industrial Revolution by preparing students for the world beyond university and offering work-readiness and entrepreneurship training to its students.

As one of South Africa's research-intensive universities, UP launched the Future Africa Campus in March 2019 as a hub for inter- and transdisciplinary research networks within UP and the global research community to maximise 4IR innovation and address the challenges and stresses our continent and world is facing. In addition UP also launched the Javett Art Centre in September 2019 as a driver of transdisciplinary research development between the Humanities and other faculties. In November 2020 UP launched Engineering 4.0. as a hub not only for Smart Cities and Transport, but also to link the vast resources in technology and data sciences to other faculties via Future Africa. These initiatives are stimulating new thinking at the frontier of 'science for transformation'.

For more information, go to www.up.ac.za

ABOUT AFROBAROMETER

Afrobarometer is a non-partisan African survey research network headquartered in Accra, Ghana, that provides reliable data on citizens' experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Its goal is to give the public a voice in policymaking by ensuring access to high-quality public opinion data and analysis for policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans. In addition to collecting, analyzing, and widely disseminating data on Africans' lives, priorities, and political behaviors, Afrobarometer works to strengthen the capacity of African institutions for democratic governance survey research, analysis, and communications.

Eight rounds of surveys have been completed in up to 39 countries since 1999, including just-concluded Round 8 surveys in 34 countries. Afrobarometer's national partners in all regions of Africa conduct face-to-

face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of 1,200-2,400, which yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Regional coordination of national partners in about 35 countries is provided by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi in Kenya. Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) provide technical support to the network.

Over the years, Afrobarometer has continually strengthened research skills of Africans, both within and beyond the network, through its capacity building initiatives including anglophone and francophone summer schools; thematic seminars; training in data use for national partners, civil society, and media; technical assistance and mentorship.