



Leaders of Africa and Leaders of Africa Institute Statement on the Recent BBC Documentary Released October 9, 2019

As a stakeholder in knowledge production in Africa, the Leaders of Africa and the Leaders of Africa Institute are very concerned by the extremely disturbing findings shared in the “Sex for Grades” documentary aired by BBC Africa Eye. The short film documented instances of sexual harassment and assaults of female students by faculty members at the University of Ghana and the University of Lagos. We commend Ms. Kiki Mordi and her production crew for the due diligence and the risks taken to produce the documentary.

Educational institutions should be safe spaces for students to learn and for faculty members to teach and do their research. Although select professors at the University of Ghana and the University of Lagos were mentioned in the documentary, we know that abuse may become rampant in any institution without adequate accountability mechanisms with profoundly negative consequences for students. Safe universities are a concern for all universities globally, not just at prestigious institutions in West Africa.

Given the allegations put forth by the documentary, we commend the University of Lagos for acting swiftly to suspend Dr. Boniface Igbeneghu and Dr. Samuel Oladipo, who were two of the lecturers allegedly engaging in sexual harassment and assaults in the documentary. We also applaud the decision of the University of Lagos to shut down the ‘Cold Room’ at the institution’s Staff Club, which the documentary revealed is allegedly a space for sexual harassment and assaults by some senior faculty members of the university. We consider the immediate reactions of the University of Lagos to the documentary as reassuring necessary first steps. However, these short-term measures will not be enough if the necessary follow up steps are not taken to investigate the matter and dispense justice. In the context of righting the wrong, we encourage the University of Lagos to be transparent and engage students - with the proper protections required - on a range of concerns regarding sexual harassment and assault on campus.

We call on the University of Ghana to take a cue from the immediate reactions of the University of Lagos, as this will guarantee their students and the international community of their readiness to combat sexual harassment and assaults on their campus. We are encouraged by the investigations launched by the University of

Ghana in recent days and support a thorough investigation of all alleged claims of abuse. If there are incidents of criminal wrongdoing, we ask that these allegations be addressed through national legal channels.

Of great concern is the assertion by some of the accused faculty that the documentary is politically motivated or designed to defame the name of African educational institutions and African faculty. We encourage observers and investigators to stay focused on the allegations and the concerns raised by students in the documentary.

It is understandable that universities will choose to confront sexual harassment and assault in different ways. But, new efforts are required to be proactive in the future, including designing clear sexual harassment and assault policies that are enforceable and respect the privacy of victims. In this moment of reflection, it is also important that stakeholders for advanced knowledge production in Africa should collaborate to exchange ideas and resources on how best to fight sexual harassment and assaults in universities. We recognize that sexual harassment and assaults are not exclusive to universities in Africa, as the menace is a big problem in universities across the world. Our Leaders of Africa organization and Leaders of Africa Institute are willing and ready to collaborate with both the University of Lagos and the University of Ghana, or any interested institution on the continent, to strengthen the existing institutional and support mechanisms that they have in place to fight and curtail sexual harassment and assaults.

With the right policies and support, we believe that it is possible to create a safe and productive learning space for our present and future scholars, as well as members of the faculty and community.

On behalf of the Leaders of Africa Collaborative Team,



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