



**MINISTRY OF TECHNICAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION
NEW ENGLAND VILLE**

**JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON UNACCREDITED UNIVERSITIES AND AWARD OF
FAKE DEGREES IN SIERRA LEONE**

In light of the recent developments relating to unaccredited universities conferring fake degrees and awarding fake certificates and diplomas in Sierra Leone, contrary to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Act 2001 and the imperative to restore academic integrity and address public concerns, the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) convened a meeting of key stakeholders in Government at the MTHE office in New England, Freetown on 20th April 2022. The following government officers attended; the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission and the Director General of the Human Resource Management Office. On the side of the MTHE, the Minister who chaired the meeting, the Deputy Minister, the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Technical and Higher Education Officer and other senior staff.

The meeting acknowledged press releases made by the TEC informing the public that the Dominion Christian University and African Graduate Universities are not accredited to confer degrees (i.e. Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate Degrees) in Sierra Leone and that such degrees are null and void. The meeting further commends efforts by the Academic Staff Association of the University of Sierra Leone and the Conference of Vice Chancellors and Principals for condemning the conferment of fake degrees in Sierra Leone by unaccredited institutions.

In the joint meeting, the stakeholders recognized the adverse effect of the conferment of degrees by unaccredited universities to undeserving persons who have not pursued approved academic programmes, and the adverse effect on the country which has been a beacon of quality education over the years.

As a consequence, it was resolved that:

1. All degrees awarded by the Dominion Christian University, African Graduate University and all other unknown unaccredited universities in Sierra Leone are declared null and void and should not be considered valid for employment or as a criterion for further studies.
2. The Public Service Commission, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Human Resource Management Office, Health Service Commission, Parliamentary Committee on Appointments and Public Service, Local Government Service Commission, Judicial and Legal Service Commission, Teaching Service Commission, Tertiary Education Commission and all public universities are encouraged to conduct a system's audit of all academic awards to ascertain their validity. All employees and/or appointees should be requested to produce their certificates for audit before 31st May 2022.

3. All those who have been awarded Honoris Causa PhDs should make this explicit in all public documents.
4. Collaborative efforts will continue with the TEC, law enforcement agencies and other relevant bodies to identify all unaccredited academic institutions in Sierra Leone that are currently awarding fake degrees.
5. The MTHE will work with the TEC to develop a policy on online courses and the conferment of degrees and the award of other qualifications.
6. The MTHE will establish a Directorate for the verification of all qualifications awarded by international universities and/or other institutions.
7. The MTHE will undertake urgent action with the TEC to review the TEC Act 2001 with the aim of strengthening its enforcement and regulatory powers for Higher Education Institutions in Sierra Leone.
8. The MTHE and TEC will engage the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) to provide list of all institutions registered with the CAC in order to determine their eligibility to provide training and award degrees, diplomas and certificates.
9. The TEC and CAC will develop an agreement that will require both parties to collaboratively register institutions as training and business entities.
10. The Ministry of Technical and Higher Education will with immediate effect establish a **help desk** for members of the public to report the operations of all unaccredited universities engaged in the award of fake certificates.

Signed on 26th April 2022:

Hon. Minister, Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
Dr. Alpha Tejan Wurie (Assoc. Prof) -----

Head, Civil Service/ Cabinet Secretariat
Mr. John Sumaila -----

Chairman, Public Service Commission
Mr. K.O. Bah -----

Director-General, Human Resource Management Office
Mr. Ansu Tucker -----

Chairman, Tertiary Education Commission
Prof. A.M. Alghali -----