



Global Learning Conference 2026 in Africa Future Ready Higher Education Leadership: The Role of Cifal Global Network in Transforming Institutions

People

Deadline: 19 Feb 2026

Type:	Side Event
Location:	Kigali, Rwanda
Date:	19 Feb 2026 to 20 Feb 2026
Duration:	2 Days
Programme Area:	Other
Website:	https://unitar.org/about/news-stories/news/leap-fast-high-level-roundtable-and-...
Price:	\$0.00
Event Focal Point Email:	ebru.sokullu@unitar.org
Partnership:	Villars Institute

BACKGROUND

Higher education institutions are facing unprecedented demands to respond to rapid technological change, evolving labour markets, public-sector reform, and sustainable development imperatives. Leadership within universities and public

administration schools must therefore be equipped with future-ready skills, strategic foresight, and strong governance capabilities.

LEAP-FAST is UNITAR' s flagship leadership programme designed to strengthen institutional leadership capacities across higher education and public administration systems. Anchored in partnerships with universities, CIFAL Centres, and international organizations, LEAP-FAST provides an ideal platform to connect global learning agendas with regional and local leadership realities.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

LEAP-FAST aims to create a movement of committed sustainability leaders in higher education to advance deep transformations and enable Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to fulfil their potential with regards to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The main objectives of the initiative are to:

- To present LEAP-FAST as a global leadership platform for higher-education and public-sector transformation
- To showcase CIFAL experiences and regional leadership models in higher education and capacity development
- To foster inter-CIFAL collaboration on leadership training, executive education, and institutional innovation
- To strengthen Africa-focused and South-South perspectives on future-ready higher-education leadership

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Agenda:

1. Scene-setting, Strategic Framing & Moderation
2. Opening Remarks
3. Keynote intervention: Future-Ready Leadership in Africa
4. Interactive Dialogue: Leadership in Higher Education for Sustainable Development
5. Closing Reflections and Next Steps for LEAP-FAST

Overarching Themes:

Theme I. Higher Education Leadership for Human Health and Sustainable Development: Strengthening university leadership to address health systems, social wellbeing, and sustainability transitions.

Theme II. Future-Ready Leadership Skills for Public Service and Academia: Executive leadership, institutional governance, and entrepreneurial mindsets for employability-driven education systems.

Theme III. Innovative Financing and Partnerships for Higher Education Transformation: Public-private partnerships, South-South cooperation, and blended finance models for learning innovation.

Theme IV. AI-Enabled Leadership and Digital Transformation in Higher Education: Responsible AI, digital governance, and exponential technologies shaping the future of universities and public institutions.

Theme V. CIFAL Centres as Regional Hubs for Leadership and Policy Learning: Leveraging the CIFAL Global Network to localize global learning agendas and scale leadership impact.

METHODOLOGY

Interactive Dialogue

TARGETED AUDIENCE

Sustainability leaders in higher education

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The side event is expected to strengthen strategic alignment between higher education leadership, global learning priorities, and sustainable development objectives by positioning LEAP-FAST and the CIFAL Global Network as platforms for future-ready institutional leadership. It will foster cross-regional exchange among CIFAL Centres and academic partners, highlight practical models for leadership development, digital transformation, and innovative financing in higher education, and generate concrete pathways for collaboration, including

joint programmes, regional cohorts, and partnerships in Africa and beyond. The dialogue will also contribute to shaping forward-looking leadership competencies that respond to emerging challenges in health, employability, and AI-enabled learning systems.