Global University Leaders champion Knowledge Diplomacy in an increasingly fragmented world

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University associations belonging to the Global University Associations Forum (GUAF) have called for continued and renewed global academic cooperation and partnership, promoting transformative approaches to higher education in response to growing geopolitical, economic, technological, and environmental challenges. The call emerged from the Fifth Meeting of the GUAF held in Accra, Ghana, under the theme: "Knowledge Without Borders: Collaboration in a Fragmented World."

The meeting emphasized the critical role universities play in fostering international understanding, and generating solutions to shared global challenges, as well as in advancing collaboration that transcends geographical, political, and cultural boundaries.

The meeting highlighted the value and importance of partnerships and cooperation in research, innovation, education, and institutional capacity building. Special attention was given to addressing barriers to academic mobility, research collaboration, and equitable access to knowledge.

Participants agreed that no institution, association, or region can effectively undertake digital transformation and artificial intelligence, promoting lifelong learning opportunities address in isolation and that sustained international cooperation remains essential for the future of higher education.

In this context, the discussions also underscored the importance of open science, knowledge sharing, recognition of qualification, quality assurance, and the growing role of micro-credentials in expanding learning opportunities and supporting workforce development.

The meeting acknowledged the Bologna Process as a collaborative European higher education framework that promotes policy development, quality assurance, degree comparability, student mobility, and institutional cooperation and emphasized the importance of fundamental values such as academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and inclusive governance, alongside broader internationalization efforts beyond mobility. This is important for Europe itself, but also relevant a global context.

Recognizing the value of collective action, the representatives of the attending university associations reaffirmed the role of GUAF as a platform for facilitating global dialogue and promoting practical collaboration.