



PRESS RELEASE

FIRST EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SALON OF AFRICAN STUDENTS FAIR



N'djamena, Chad – 24 February, 2017. The African Union Commission co-organized the first edition of the International Fair for African Students from 23 to 25 February, 2017. The event aimed to provide a platform to promote educational excellence and guidance for the youth of the continent by galvanizing experience sharing, creating awareness of youth-led programs and providing career guidance to students. The event was anchored under the theme *“Educational guidance and the key to professional integration and success of young people in Africa.”*

The International African Students Fair brought together various stakeholders from secondary and higher education, as well as from the private and public sectors, for the purpose of informing, guiding and advising young people on the training courses and their outlets. Over the course of the three-day fair, young Africans met with policy makers, universities and institutes, innovators and employees. They also attended various workshops, debates and lectures, which enabled them to learn about the offerings of various youth-oriented academic and professional training institutions across the African continent, and explore the various issues in this area. All the activities were accompanied by crossroads-trades, to help young people understand the requisite skills required for certain job markets.



During a plenary session on continental initiatives around the harmonisation of qualifications, Dr. Yohannes, Senior Education Expert, underlined the need to bridge the gap between disparate educational systems in Africa, and to develop regional harmonization initiatives for the advancement of curriculum development and recognition of qualifications to promote intra-African academic mobility. He also presented the 'Tuning Initiative' that has involved 109 institutions from 42 African Countries, engaged in developing curricula

through the identification of learning outcomes and create a basis for developing an African Credit Transfer System.

In his remarks, H.E. Dr. Martial De-Paul Ikounga, noted that harmonization is directly linked to the demographic dividend and outlined the four pillars. The first pillar was employment and entrepreneurship, and the second was education and skills development. With these two pillars he underscored the youth's key role in working to become job creators and not simply job seekers. He also highlighted on the other two pillars of the Demographic Dividend Road-map focused on Health and Well-being and Rights Governance and Youth Empowerment. He went on to reiterate the important role of TVET, asserting the need to change perceptions of TVET, and stating that 'creating professions at every level of the chain is important, it is not only about formal education.' H.E. Dr. Ikounga, also highlighted the imperative of improving teacher development issues, including their living and working conditions.

Overall, the First Edition of the International African Students Fair' successfully addressed diverse range of important topics through high-profile sessions such as *"innovation, entrepreneurship and African integration."* The three (3) day event was concluded with exhibitions and career guidance workshops, where young people could interact with policy makers, employees and academics in charting their future forward.

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