



CONTINENTAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

9-11 DECEMBER 2024
NOUAKCHOTT,
MAURITANIA

#ContinentalEducation

THE YEAR OF
EDUCATION



**Educate an African fit
for the 21st Century:**
Building resilient education
systems for increased access
to inclusive, lifelong, quality,
and relevant learning
in Africa



An Initiative of the
African Union



Host Country



In Partnership
With

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Continental Education Conference (CEC), held on 9th to 11th December in Nouakchott, Mauritania, was considered as a remarkable success not only in terms of participation – with approximately 400 participants including four Heads of States and almost 30 Ministers, Vice Ministers and Permanent Secretaries of Education – but also in terms of rich and comprehensive contents as well as dynamic discussions that took place during three days, encompassing themes ranging from Curriculum and Teachers, Evidence to Action, Technology and Skills, Equity and Inclusion, Conducive Learning Environment, Education Financing and Governance, Education in Armed Conflict, Education in Protracted Crisis, Education Resilience, and Financing of Education in Emergencies. It was a testimony of great partnership and collaboration between the African Union Commission, the government of Mauritania and the United Nations' Children Fund (UNICEF). Each entity at the leadership and technical levels contributed immensely to the success of the conference.

We would like to sincerely thank the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania steered by his Excellency President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, whose leadership and commitment enabled this conference to take place in an efficient and impeccable manner.

Special thanks to Professor Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI) for his vision and steer throughout the preparation and delivery of this conference. His oversight guided the Technical Committee coordinated by Professor Saidou Madougou, Director of ESTI. Members of the Technical Committee came from the Division of Education of the ESTI Department, UNICEF Office to the AU and UNECA, UNICEF Western and Central Africa Regional Office, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, UNICEF Mauritania Country Office and UNICEF Program Group at Headquarters. The efforts of these colleagues in the conceptualization of the conference are hereby highly appreciated.

Profound appreciation to the leads and co-leads of the 10 breakout sessions, namely Quentin Wodon of UNESCO IICBA, Adoumtar Noubatour of AU-IPED; Norman Khoza of NEPAD, Simone Yankey-Ouattara of AU-CIEFFA, Eline Versluys of UNGEI, Arpana Panday of UNICEF, Lydie Kouame of WFP, Lynette Okengo of AfECN, Raphaelle Martinez of Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Ali-Mohamed Sinane of UNESCO, Friedrich Affolter of the Global Education Cluster, Leandro Salazar of Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Noemi Robiati of Education Cannot Wait, Helena Murseli of UNICEF; Janaina Hatsue Barrozo Hirata of the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector, Petra Heusser of the Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies. Their tireless efforts to shape the breakout sessions in the most meaningful way, identify and mobilize the thought leading speakers, and coordinating with each of them to realize excellent sessions made CEC so rich in contents.

Finally, we convey our deep gratitude to over 100 speakers who joined the conference and shared the valuable research, insightful experiences and innovative thoughts, actively engaging in discussions and exchange of ideas during the conference. One important outcome of the conference was indeed building and strengthening the network among thought-leaders of education in Africa.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND



While Africa has made significant progress in expanding access to education over the past decades, the continent still faces myriad challenges to ensuring quality, equitable and inclusive education for all. Many African countries face continued challenges in reducing the number of out of school/training children and young people, as well as large numbers of children not acquiring basic foundational literacy and numeracy skills by the age of ten, upon which all future learning is built.

Other challenges include inadequate infrastructure, shortages of quality teachers, limited access and connectivity to digital technologies, emergencies, protracted crises, climate change, high dropout rates (particularly among girls), crises affected children, and other marginalized communities. Given these continued challenges, there is growing recognition of the importance of improving learning and skill development for all children and young people on the continent to drive sustainable development and economic growth in Africa.

The landscape for transforming education in Africa presents both opportunities and challenges. With the rapidly evolving global economy and the emergence of new skills and competencies required for the 21st century, there is a pressing need to re-evaluate and reinvent education systems across the African continent. This transformation must be driven by a holistic approach which addresses the diverse needs of learners, leverages technological advancements, and fosters collaboration between governments, educational institutions, and stakeholders. This shift towards a more responsive, crises-resilient, innovative, and inclusive education system, catering for all children is crucial to empower African children and youth, and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and the mindset to tackle the continent's pressing challenges, and seize its vast potential.

In line with the road map for the celebration of the African Union's Year of Education 2024, and as adopted by Ministers at the 5th Specialized Technical Committee held in September 2024, the Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) and the Government of Mauritania, in partnership with the United Nations' Children Fund (UNICEF) organized the Continental Education Conference from the 9-11 December 2024, in Nouakchott, Mauritania under the **Theme – 'Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century'**.



1.2 PURPOSE OF THE CONTINENTAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Continental Conference on Education (CEC) had 5 main objectives:

- 1** **To recognise and appreciate the current implementation status and progress** by the African Union (AU) member states of commitments and decisions made to transform education in Africa in recent years, including, but not limited to the Transform Education Summit (TES) plan of action and Transform Education in Africa (TeiA) side event declaration – acknowledging challenges where appropriate.
- 2** **To showcase, and advocate for, the scaling up of successful models**, and of innovative and sustainable solutions towards achieving quality and equitable education from across the continent, to meet the demands of the 21st century in Africa, and beyond.
- 3** **To strengthen partnerships and collaboration** to foster knowledge sharing among policy makers, researchers, educators, and civil society stakeholders.
- 4** **To explore and agree sustainable financing mechanisms for education in Africa**, through strengthened domestic resourcing and other innovative mechanisms for transforming education systems, and to advocate for the establishment of a Global Education Fund for Africa.
- 5** **To pave the way for a long-term vision for the transformation of Africa Education** through a proposal for the AU to declare 2025-2034 as Africa Decade of Accelerated Education.



2.1. DAY 1 - 09 DECEMBER

a. Opening ceremony

Speakers:



Mr. Gilles Fagninou

UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa



Honorable Mrs. Nancy Chaola Mdooka

Deputy Minister of Education, Malawi, Chair of Specialised Technical Committee (STC) for Education, Science and Technology



H.E. Professor Mohammed Belhocine

AUC Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Department



Honorable Dr. Houda Mint Babah

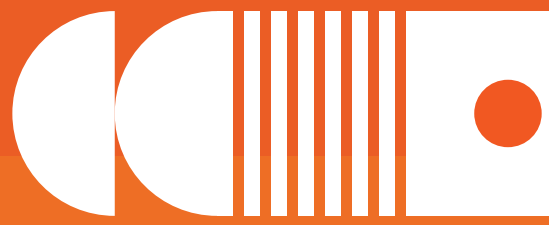
Minister of Education and Educational Reform of Mauritania



Professor Saidou Madougou

Director, AUC Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Department





Mr. Gilles Fagninou, UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa expressed gratitude to the AU and the Government of Mauritania for organizing and hosting the event. He highlighted data that make the case for urgent action to reduce the number of out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa with emphasis on the need for effective, efficient and strategic investment in education. He noted that good practices exist on the continent, citing success stories from North Africa and Rwanda in reducing the number of out-of-school children.



Honorable Mrs. Nancy Chaola Mdooka, Deputy Minister of Education, Malawi, Chair of Specialised Technical Committee (STC) for Education, Science and Technology highlighted the expansion of digital learning platforms and teacher training in Malawi as a good example for other African countries to emulate. She called for innovative and inclusive education models, stressing the importance of building skills for the future and partnerships. Hon. Mdooka reaffirmed Malawi's commitment to Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) goals to achieve universal quality education in Africa.



H.E. Professor Mohammed Belhocine, African Union Commission (AUC) Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI) stressed that education is a fundamental human right and the foundation for achieving broader development initiatives. He called on participants to lead focused discussions towards effective education sector reforms, increased funding, greater inclusion and resilience. He called for greater collaboration between development players, so that every child in Africa can “dream without limits”.



Honorable Dr. Houda Mint Babah, Minister of Education and Educational Reform of Mauritania called for sustainable investment in education, and shared the Mauritanian government's priorities for education, including teacher training, the use of digital tools, technical training, advances in science and technology, and improved governance. The Minister stressed the need for regional and international collaboration in the education sector.



Professor Saidou Madougou, Director, AUC Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Department, outlined the conference's five objectives, which included: 1) Understanding the current context and progress made, 2) Identifying opportunities for collaboration, 3) Agreeing on sustainable funding mechanisms, 4) Advocating for the scaling-up of innovative solutions, and 5) Engaging in reflection on education, youth and employability.





b. Situation analysis:

Challenges and opportunities for education in Africa and impact on learning outcomes and skills

The presentation was made by Ms Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education Division, AUC.

She praised the progress to date in Africa for school enrolment. She noted that challenges remain, such as gender disparities, marginalized groups and infrastructure gaps. Regarding education funding, she noted that per capita spending has fallen from \$257 to \$238 (2019-2020), and that many nations are failing to reach the agreed 4-6% of GDP or 20% spending. She said the continent needs 15 million teachers by 2030, and issues such as attrition, inequitable distribution and low salaries needed to be addressed. She noted that the policy environment had been improved with the adoption of several continental policies, including CESA 2025-2034, the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET 2024-2033) strategies and the AU strategy for teacher mental health. She called on governments to align their national strategies with these continental policy frameworks.

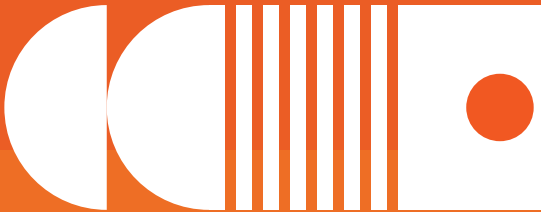
c. Technical breakout sessions

Breakout Session 1: Curriculum & Teacher

Session 1: Investing in Foundational Learning and Literacy: Rationale and Case Studies.

Chair: Mr. Jephthe Mve Mvondo, Education Policy and Advocacy Specialist, UNICEF Office to the AU and UNECA

Summary: This session presented the investments needed to ensure that all children, young people and adults in Africa acquire basic skills and become literate. It also explored approaches to achieving this. The first part of the session focused on the investment case for basic learning and literacy, documenting (1) the benefits of basic skills and literacy in labour markets, including for workers with no formal education; and (2) the additional benefits in areas related to health, nutrition, population and empowerment. In addition, the session explored innovative experiences in Africa, including the role of teachers, educators and school leaders in improving learning outcomes and promoting literacy on the continent.



Speakers:

Sophia Ashipala, African Union, and Dr. Quentin Wodon, UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)

Title: Foundational skills and literacy in Africa: investment case and the role of teachers, educators, and school leaders

Mr. Ahmed Ba, Ministère de l'éducation nationale de la Mauritanie

Titre : Améliorer les apprentissages fondamentaux en Mauritanie : Quelques initiatives récentes

Momodou Jeng, Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education of The Gambia

Title: Improving Mathematics Instruction through a Competency-Based Curriculum

Naomi Kamitha, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

Title: The Gender Responsive Pedagogy (GRP) as a core component of continuous teacher professional development for enhanced learning outcomes

Janix Asare, Ghanaian Just Commit Foundation

Title: Literacy teaching and learning through business story books: An award-winning initiative



2. PROCEEDINGS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Session 2: Teacher Professional Development, Education, and Well-being

Chair: Tomoko Shibuya, Education Regional Advisor, UNICEF West, and Central Africa Region

Summary: This session addressed (1) national frameworks of competencies and standards for teachers and headteachers in Africa and their implementation; (2) teacher training and (3) working conditions for teachers and headteachers. Presentations covered surveys from across Africa, and case studies of promising national experiences and gender-sensitive teacher training.



Speakers:

Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education Division, Department of ESTI, African Union Commission, and Dr. Quentin Wodon, Director of UNESCO-IICBA

Title: Investing in teachers: Professional standards, education, and working conditions

Valérie Lefèvre, Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

Title: Teaching staff revitalizing in the Democratic Republic of Congo through a better end of careers' management.

Wally Wane, World Bank

Title: Strengthening teachers' management to improve teachers' quality and end learning poverty

Fatimetou Cheikh Samba, Ministère de l'éducation nationale de la Mauritanie

Titre : Améliorer la scolarisation des filles et la formation des enseignants en Mauritanie

Sorie I. Turay, Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission

Title: Professional standards and careers for teachers in Sierra Leone: Recent Reforms

Mariama Chipkaou, Education International

Titre : Rendre la profession enseignante plus attractive: Perspectives de l'Internationale de l'éducation





Breakout Session 2: Evidence to Actions: Bridging the Gap for Foundational Learning Outcomes in Africa.

Chair: Mr. Noubatour Adoumtar, Pan-African Institute of Education for Development (AU-IPED)

Summary: Recognizing that evidence is essential to ensuring quality education, the session focused on the evolution of research methodologies that adapt to local contexts and align with government policies and strategies. The session brought together speakers who shared their experiences in translating evidence into actionable strategies, bridging the gap between academia and practice. Presentations focused on using existing data as evidence and delved into the types of data essential for tracking learning outcomes and understanding the drivers of learning. Evidence, including structured pedagogical practices that can be leveraged to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, was shared. In addition, the session made the case for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) as a gas pedal for SDG 4, presenting some examples of good practice in impact, capacity building and resource mobilization.

Key takeaways:

- **National Systems in sub-Saharan African countries must deliver at scale today and expand service delivery.** Data and evidence are critically important: Focus on complementarity and equity, shift from programme outputs, pilot models to impact at scale.
- **Use of local education data is imperative** to make informed decision making to address specific challenges.
- **It is critical to increase direct education investments** towards areas of high impact such as early childhood development (ECD) and tailored flexible learning methods (accelerated learning, catch-up classes, remedial programs), and the use of technology to support education.
- **Harmonizing multiple education data sources** can maximize usability and use of data in policy programming (learning outcomes, implementation measures, context indicators).
- Regarding the existence of multiple assessment tools and methodologies, **it is important that countries select the tools and methods that are most relevant** to their population and the specific policy to be assessed.
- **To improve learning (foundational literacy and numeracy) there is need to improve teaching.** To do so, there are several strategies including high impact strategies that can be implemented. These are evidence-based strategies such as safe and creative environment to support learning, student engagement in learning etc.
- **South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is becoming strategically important** to address the huge financial gap estimated at USD100 billion/year to improve learning outcomes in a complex, fragile and volatile environment.
- **Various good SSTC initiatives exist around the world** to inspire countries: initiatives to promote inclusive education using digital tools or Beta-Education among others.
- With **Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**, evidence shows that data availability has improved, yet coverage and quality of comparable data still need to be improved.
- **In the Gambia, the use of mobile application to monitor teachers' regularity has improved teachers' presence in class.** Data can be accessible through a dashboard by stakeholders.

Speakers:

Ms Linda Jones, Chief Education, UNICEF Innocenti

Title: Evidence in Education

Mr. Noubatour Adoumtar, AU-IPED

Title: AUC Efforts in Strengthening Education Data Production and Usage through the EMIS Norms and Standards –

Mr. Manos Antoninis, UNESCO

Title: Findings from GEMR Spotlight Mauritania

Mr. Joao Pedro Azevedo Deputy Director, UNICEF DAPM (virtual)

Title: Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) Data, unleashing household surveys to improve education quality on the Continent?

Ms. Sylvia Montoya, UNESCO UIS

Title: Translating Research Outcomes to Enhancing Policy Formulation: What strategies work? Africa missing data

Mr. Thomas W. Dreesen, Education Manager, UNICEF Innocenti (virtual)

Title: Evidence to Improve Education on the African Continent

Dr. Aysia Kamzi, Gates Foundation and Mr Tony Essien

Title: Evidence based Foundational Learning.

Dr. Laila O. GAD, UNICEF Representative to the AU and UNECA and **Dr. Abdoulaye Salifou**, UNESCO Liaison Office to the AU, panelist

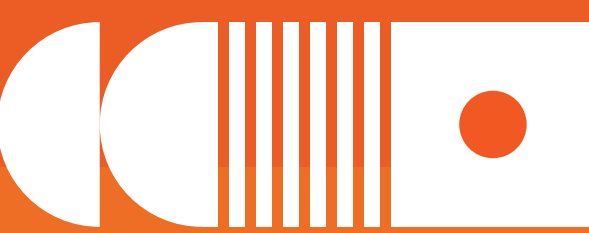
Title: South-South and Triangular Cooperation as accelerator to SDGs

Christine Hofmann, ILO

Title: Evidence in Technical Vocational Education and Training on the African Continent,

Mr. Sohna Foon, Ministry of Education of the Gambia

Title: Using Evidence to Improve Education Quality and Delivery in the Gambia.





Breakout Session 3: Technology and skills: Education in the 21st Century: leveraging innovation and technology for a resilient education and TVET systems for youth empowerment, job creation and entrepreneurship.

Chair: Mr Norman Khoza, Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) Principal Portfolio Manager: African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD)

Summary: The session focused on how digital innovations and technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), could be used to transform education and TVET systems in African countries. An overview was presented on how technology, AI and other emerging technologies, is shaping education and TVET systems in Africa, and the challenges and opportunities for the continent. The session also showcased successful innovative programs that leverage technology to address persistent educational challenges, promote equity, support lifelong learning and inspire young people and entrepreneurs across the continent. Emerging issues include the need to set standards for the security, interoperability and impact of innovations that can transform the continent.

Key takeaways:

- **There are over 100,000 educational technology (EdTech) platforms and tools throughout Africa.** It is very important to carry out an assessment of EdTech tools/platforms to evaluate impact.
- **There is a need to harmonise platforms**, particularly open source, to avoid duplication and re-invention of the wheel but assist in realising the economies of scale.
- **There is need to intensify advocacy and awareness at all levels** to demonstrate benefit of EdTech and especially leveraging AI for data analysis and for decision-making. It will be necessary to conduct training/sensitization on the benefits and ethical use of AI in education. The use of readiness assessment methodology (RAM) could contribute to ensure the ethical and safe use of AI.
- **Development of innovative financing mechanisms** to ensure the sustainability of EdTech investments.
- Governments providing incentives such as connectivity credits (tax breaks/waivers) to internet service providers providing internet access to remote schools can be encouraging for investors in the EdTech sector.
- **Addressing infrastructure gaps** through initiatives such as the digital acceleration project in Malawi that connects schools to the internet, and energy for schools' electricity are good examples that many countries can learn from.
- **Building the capacity of teachers and school administrators** (retool, reskill, and upskill) through refreshing trainings, training of trainers and peer-to-peer learning is equally critical.
- **Ensuring greater alignment between curriculum alignment with the job market needs** will reinforce the need for increased investment in EdTech.

Speakers:

Mr. Thomas Davin, Director, Office of Innovation, UNICEF

Title: How technology, including AI is shaping education and TVET: Opportunities for Africa

Prof. Yaye Kene Gassama, Chair of the African Union High-Level Panel

Title: Emerging Technologies (APET- Keynote speech: Leveraging the role of APET in the transformation of the education system through technology in Africa

Mr. Nicholas Ouma, Senior Youth Advisor, Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (ESTI), AUC

Mr Hamadi Bekaye, DG Emploi, Mauritanie (MAJESSC)

Dr William Wasswa, AI and digital technologies Lead of AU High Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET)

Thomas Davin, UNICEF Innocenti Director of Innovation

M. Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh, ILO in Mauritania

Dr. Chomora Mikeka, Director Ministry of Education Malawi

Dr Asyia Kazmi, OBE, Policy Lead, Global Education, Gates Foundation

Dr Nasir Sani-Gwarzo, PS, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria, on Use of technology in formal education in Nigeria

Mr Joseph Berkoh, Fixxies Technologies, Ghana, on Overview of the A to Z of AI platform experience, lessons and opportunities

Sabina Klaus, GIZ on the African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (ASPYEE)

Dr Asyia Kazmi, OBE, Policy Lead, Global Education, Gates Foundation & **Ahmad Jawad Asghar**, Edtech and AI Lead, Gates Foundation, on More Learning Per Minute: Effective approaches to improving the teaching of foundational learning at scale in sub-Saharan Africa



2. PROCEEDINGS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS



Breakout Session 4: Equity and inclusion:

Session 1: Schools as a driver for gender equality: leveraging the transformative power of education.

Chair: Ms. Catherine Asego, Senior Policy Officer Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

Session 2: Achieving Equity and Inclusion: Right to Education for Africa's Out-of-School Children.

Chair: Mr. Gordon Jonathan Lewis, UNICEF WCAR Deputy Regional Director

Summary: The first part of the session presented progress, failures and emerging challenges to gender equality in and through education in Africa. Participants shared good practices for advancing gender equality in and through education systems, with a call for political commitment and transformative action for gender equality in and through education. They called for the implementation of the Freetown Manifesto, the TES commitments, the Pan-African conference on girls and women's education (AU/PANCOGE) call to action and its recommendations. The session also discussed ways of strengthening solidarity and support between champions of gender equality and inclusion across the educational landscape - governments, civil society, religious and traditional leaders, youth activists and technical partners. A call was also made to strengthen advocacy for the #AfricaEducatesHer campaign among partners and stakeholders. Session 2, focused on advancing equity and inclusion and challenges faced in African education systems, with particular emphasis on girls and women's' education, out-of-school children, children with disabilities, those on the move, girls in rural and hard-to-reach areas, and ethnic/linguistic minorities. Innovative solutions were highlighted to inspire action towards bridging these gaps across the continent.



Key takeaways for sessions 1 & 2:

- **The African Union / International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (AU-CIEFA) Strategic Plan 2021-2025 focuses on 4 axes that emphasises gender equality and inclusion.** Notably, Gender-responsive Education, Curriculum Reform and Teacher Education, Steam and skills development and Education in emergencies and humanitarian context.
- **Gender inequality persists in Africa due to socioeconomic, cultural, and structural barriers,** including early marriage, traditional gender roles, and limited access to quality education.
- **There is a need for transformative leadership to champion gender-responsive education policies.** Unique regional and national challenges necessitate localized strategies. Social mobilization and policy-

level reforms need to align with local contexts and challenges.

- **Inclusion of religious and traditional leaders** is critical for addressing stereotypes and promoting gender equality in education.
- **Partnerships and the active involvement of men and boys** as allies are essential to combat school violence and stereotypes.
- **Sierra-Leone has taken important steps to advance gender equality and inclusion in the education sector.** Education budget allocation is 20%; enrolments have risen from 1.5 million to 3.1 million; comprehensive school safety policies and radical inclusion policies are in place and 33% of young women hold youth leadership positions.
- **Mauritania developed a national strategy to empower girls through education**, including support from religious scholars and imams, and inclusion-focused policies.
- **Côte d'Ivoire set-up administrative desks** for girls to report violence, rape, and early marriages
- **Advocacy for gender equity needs to leverage campaigns like #AfricaEducatesHer and frameworks like the Freetown Manifesto.** Inclusion of men and boys as allies is essential to challenge stereotypes and promote equality.
- **Collaboration among governments, civil society, religious leaders, and youth activists is crucial for achieving gender equality and inclusive and equitable education.** Government must reinforce collaboration with the private sector, to facilitate access to digital tools for education purpose, access to training for teachers on the use of digital tools and platforms, and the modernization of the school infrastructures.
- **Education must be seen as a fundamental right for all children**, regardless of their socio-economic status, gender or physical condition.
- **The importance of mother-tongue education** was strongly underlined for children's development, while respecting local cultures and ancestral knowledge. It was emphasized that government should consider including indigenous languages and recognizing local knowledge in the education curriculum.

Speakers:

Simone Yankey-Ouattara, Acting Coordinator, African Union International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (AU-CIEFFA), on Overview on gender equality and inclusion in education in Africa

Panelists on: Strategies for Promoting Gender Equality in and through Education

H.E. Savia N'Tehah, MASEF, Mauritania

Hon Aziz Kamara Sarjoh, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, Sierra Leone

Dr Brou Georgette, Director, Equity and Gender, Cote d'Ivoire

Ms. Alima Marcos, Education Specialist UNICEF/GCI, UNGEI

Solange Akpo, African Campaign Network for Education for All (ANCEFA)

Rolla Moumne, Senior expert on the right to education, UNESCO, on the current state of equity and inclusion in African education

Prof. Mathole Motshekga, Executive Director Kara Heritage Institute, on Identifying unfinished business in advancing equity and inclusion in education.

Panelists on: Barriers to education for Out of School Children: girls, minority groups, girls on the move, children with disabilities (CWDs); regional disparities and the impact of crises on educational access, and Innovative, sustainable models for inclusive education.

Madame Nadia Ayari, Director General, Ministry of Education, Tunisia

Hon. Dr. Habibatou Drammeh, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education, The Gambia

Selina Nkoile, Youth advocate/founder of Nashipai Maasai Project (Kenya).

Abderahmanne Diop, AU CIEFFA Youth Alumni- Mauritania

Breakout Session 5: Conducive Learning Environment: School health and nutrition; mental health and psychosocial support; and the learning environment.

Chairs: **Dr. Hameed Nuru**, Director of the World Food Programme Liaison Office to the African Union and ECA and **Ms. Elizabeth Gitonga**, Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN)

Summary: The session explored holistic approaches that integrate school health, nutrition and mental health services while incorporating supportive physical spaces and creative resources that could profoundly enhance student well-being, build resilience, and improve educational outcomes. An overview of policies and strategies governing supportive learning environments was presented. Innovative approaches to designing physical learning spaces that are safe, inclusive and enhance student engagement and well-being were discussed. Participants also discussed school health and nutrition services and school feeding programs that offer simple, safe and effective solutions. Participants shared innovative mental health and psychosocial support practices in schools, as well as success factors for their implementation.

Key takeaways:

- **For a conducive learning environment, a holistic approach** that integrates school health and nutrition, mental health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and violence against children is necessary. It is important to work with government to institutionalize this new approach in schools in Africa.
- **The African Union through the ESTI Department has developed a strategy that promotes a conducive learning environment on the continent.** The strategy has the following pillars: poverty alleviation and healthy lifestyle; disease prevention; safe learning environment for all; inclusivity and equity; productive health education. This strategy needs to be amplified and integrated in national education strategies.
- **The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has developed a new five-year education plan.** The Plan commits the government to implement safe learning environments to enable student retention and improve their learning.
- **In Mauritania, the government has developed a strategy of setting boarding schools through a partnership with the World Food Programme.** This follows a study that revealed the critical importance of boarding schools in the learning performance of students. Schools without boarding facilities have lower results. In 2024, the government programme funded 1,022 boarding schools benefiting 153,000 children.
- **In Central African Republic, the government is exploring ways to collaborate with the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the issue of mental health in schools.** The Country will host the continental celebration of the 10th African School Feeding Day (27-28 February 2025) hence demonstrating its commitment to working with partners towards the improvement of the learning environment despite experiencing multiple crises. The government is working to ensure the operation of school canteens. The number has increase from around 200 schools with canteens in 2023 to more than 400 in 2027.
- **In Togo, there is a law has been adopted on school meals and an agency created to regulate school canteens.** All schools must have vegetable gardens.
- **In Malawi, the government is implementing a Joint programme on girls education.** The joint programme brings together UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA and UNESCO) and relevant Ministries to address multisectoral issues affecting girls' education and promoting child protection, protecting children from violence, and many more. This includes girls' scholarship, provision of school nutrition, use of micro nutriment, establish policy structure against violence on children, provide hearing devices and sight, construction of water and promotion of menstrual hygiene, etc.

Speakers:

Dr. Caseley Olabode Stephens, Department of Education, Science Technology, and Innovation

Dr. Pia Britto, UNICEF Global Director, Education and Adolescent Development, on unpacking the conducive learning environment

Albert Saka, Chief School Health, and Nutrition Officer Ministry of Education- Malawi on Malawi Joint Programme on Girls' Education

Mr. Lamin Jobe, Principal Education Officer MoBSE and Secretary General of the ECD Network on Learning Through Play in The Gambia

Mr. Pascal Diro, Head of Programmes WFP CAR on, Education must go on – School Feeding in Fragile contexts

M. Sidati Hammeny, MERSE, Directorate of School health and nutrition – Mauritania on School Health and Nutrition Programmes, Mauritania

Ms. Phiona Koyiet, Senior Technical Advisor on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, World Vision International. Recorded presentation on addressing mental health and psychosocial support in schools, disability, and inclusion

Panelists on: Overview of Policy and Strategies that govern Conducive Learning Environments.

H.E. Mr Sidi Yahya Cheikhna Lemrabott, Minister of Islamic Affairs and Original Teaching (Mauritania)

Hon. Aurelien Simplicie Kongbelet, Minister of Education Central Africa Republic

Dr. Caseley Olabode Stephen, Senior Policy Officer, AUC-ESTI

Ms. Lucy Nyambura Murage, Partnership Officer – HHS

Ms. Tracy Ntumba, Partnerships Officer, MoE, DRC

Panelists on understanding what constitutes a safe, inclusive, responsive, and conducive learning environment.

Dr. Gilbert Miki, Research Consortium, School Meals Coalition

Mr. Mamadou, School Committee Member and parent, WVI, Mauritania

Elizabeth Gitonga, Programme Manager, African Early Childhood Network

Funlola Adegoke, The Fárigá Initiative Against Bullying in Schools



Breakout Session 6: Finance and governance.

Session 1: Financing and Governance for Educational Transformation.

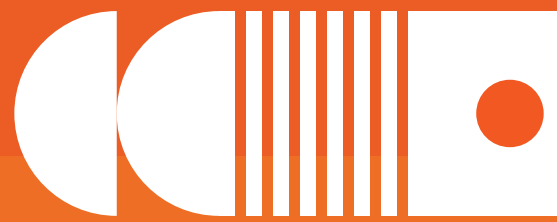
Chair: Mr Jeremy Hopkins, UNICEF Deputy Regional Director ESARO

Session 2: Leadership and accountability in education – what works and what’s next? (afternoon).

Chair: Dr. Pia Britto, Global Education Director, UNICEF

Summary: Drawing on the experience of member states, the sessions demonstrated the crucial importance of collaboration between ministries of education and finance to ensure adequate and effective financing of education within a coherent vision of sustainable development. Amid competing priorities and limited fiscal space, many countries have expressed difficulties in mobilizing resources to ensure equitable and well-distributed funding for education. Hence the need for early engagement with the finance ministry to ensure buy-in for education programs, demonstrating the strategic nature of education for productivity, efficiency, and long-term economic returns. In addition, the session showed that, given the persistent problems of insufficient, inefficient, and unequal spending on education, as well as inadequate state capacity and accountability structures, and disparities in access to education and learning outcomes, leadership and accountability in education are crucial to accelerating progress and overcoming these challenges. The session highlighted effective solutions and promising practices in promoting accountability for fulfilling education commitments and the continental accountability mechanism for facilitating government leadership in education. Discussions drew on the latest findings and recommendations on education leadership from key reports, including the Global Education Monitoring Report 2024/2025, the SDG4 Dashboard, the first continental report on SDG4/CESA and the forthcoming second continental report “Transforming learning and skills development to accelerate SDG4 and CESA commitments”. Drawing on the diverse perspectives of governments, the private sector, civil society, educators, researchers and student and youth representatives, discussions focused on the imperative and the way forward for establishing a robust and sustainable continental education accountability mechanism, rooted in national ownership. The persistent issues of insufficient, inefficient, and unequal spending on education were also addressed, as were ways to remedy shortcomings in state capacity, accountability structures and disparities in educational access and learning outcomes.





Key takeaways:

- **African countries fall into three distinct groups based on the levels of per-student expenditures**, all of which remain low relatively to global standards.
- **There are significant disparities exist between rural and urban regions** in terms of educational budget allocation and outcomes.
- **Despite budget constraints, some countries still fail to utilize their allocated education budgets fully**, due to administrative inefficiencies.
- **The AU is advocating for the increase of resources for education** through initiatives like the African Fund for Science, Technology, and Innovation.
- **Governments should address budget underutilization** and strengthening the alignment of education spending with national priorities.
- **Promote inclusive education financing strategies**, particularly through gender-sensitive budgeting, to reduce disparities.
- **Member States are encouraged to contribute to innovative funding mechanisms** to support science, technology, and education in Africa.
- **In Mauritania, the government is working on a long-term planning and innovative financing solutions to address structural gaps.** Recent initiatives include a 30% increase in teacher salaries and the establishment of funds for teacher housing and continuous training. Partnerships with the private sector is also being strengthened and exploration of revenue from mining operations aim to strengthen education financing.
- **In Tunisia, the government is strengthening engagement with the private sector** to accelerate equitable access to education through the promotion of digital education and the “second chance schools” .
- **In Rwanda, the government increased education budgets**, particularly for teacher salaries and school feeding programs, to address inequalities exacerbated by COVID-19. Digital monitoring systems has also been introduced to enhance transparency and efficiency in resource management.
- **Countries are encouraged to use result-based financing models** to ensure funding is tied to measurable outcomes.
- **It is important to adopt a data-driven approach to track education outcomes.** Prioritize governance reform to ensure accountability and alignment with national education goals and conduct annual updates to maintain a robust and adaptive monitoring framework.
- **It is important to strengthen institutional oversight mechanisms** to enhance accountability and maintain transparency through public reporting and stakeholder reviews.

Speakers:

H.E, Prof. Speakers:

Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, African Union, on fostering dialogue between education and finance sectors

H.E. Mr Codiore Moussa N’Guenore, Minister Delegate for Budget, Budget Prioritization for Education in Mauritania

H.E. Yacoub Moine, Minister of Higher Education and Research, Mauritania, on aligning Higher Education with Development Needs

Noureddine Nouri, Minister of Education, Tunisia

Min Jaong Kim, Director, Division of Education 2030, UNESCO, on Addressing Educational Challenges in Africa

Silvia Montoya, Director, UNESCO Institute of Statistics, on Monitoring Framework for Education

Manos Antonis, UNESCO, on Leadership in Education

Haogen Yao, Education Economist, UNICEF, on Supporting Foundational Learning

Mohamed Melainine Ould Eyih, Minister of Vocational Training, Craftsmanship, and Trades, Mauritania, on Political Commitment to Education in Mauritania

Salimane KARIMOU, Minister of Education, Benin, on Accountability in Education Management

Solange Masumbuko, RDC, on Leadership and Accountability in Education

Brad Olsen, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institute, on Bridging the Gap Between Policy and Implementation



2.2. DAY 2: 10 DECEMBER

Technical Discussions on Education in Emergencies (EiE)

Summary: On the second day of the conference, experts, partners and key organizations convened for discussions and debates on the themes of Education in Emergencies. This was done through 4 distinct but inter-related specific discussions, notably: Education in Armed conflicts, Education in protracted crisis, Resilience in the education systems and Resources for education in emergencies. Experts made a strong case for urgent attention of policy makers on the issue of education in emergencies. Experts called for greater and continued political leadership to support innovative and scalable solutions for the education of children affected by crisis and displacement.

Specifically, it was noted that:

- **In emergencies, education is frequently one of the first services to be disrupted**, and one of the last to restart. Meanwhile, for every day that schools are closed, children and youth face more risks including abuse, exploitation, recruitment, child marriage, sexual violence and child labour.
- **Approx. 120 million or 54% of crisis-affected children worldwide live in Sub-Saharan Africa**, which has seen a multi-million increase in the number of crisis-affected children. (ECW, 2023)
- **Approx. half of all out-of-school children in emergencies, or about 36 million, are concentrated in only eight countries**, including Ethiopia, Sudan, DRC, Mali and Nigeria. (ECW, 2023)
- **Attacks on education have a profound impact**, with for instance in West and Central Africa, more than 14,000 schools having been forced to close due to violence and insecurity, impacting the learning of hundreds of thousands of children. (ECW, June 2024)
- **EiE remains chronically underfunded** - the need to mobilise greater financial resources is more urgent than ever. Humanitarian funding alone will not be sufficient to close the funding gap.
- **The countries where children's education is at greatest risk are the most underfunded** in terms of humanitarian funding, including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia. (EiE Hub, 2024)



Breakout Session 7: Impact of armed conflicts on education: Impacts of armed conflict on education access, learning, mental wellbeing; and opportunities to leverage education to strengthen vertical and social cohesion.

Chair: Ms. Nadia Khammari, AUC

Speakers:

Chantal Mutamuriza, Sr Humanitarian & Education Advocacy Advisor, Save the Children African Union Liaison and Pan Africa Office, on: Children and Armed Conflict in Africa: key findings.

Mama Esther Achire Akumu, Director General, Gender Equity, and Inclusive Education. Ministry of General Education and Instruction, Republic of South Sudan, on: South Sudan Education and Armed Conflict Scenarios

Aisha Lawan, UNICEF Child Protection Specialist and local community member of Maidugri, Nigeria, on: Schools and girls threatened by Boko Haram

Leandro Salazar-Liévano, Education Adviser for Central and West Africa; and Co-Lead of the EIE working group for Western and Central Africa, Norwegian Refugee Council [NRC], on: Cognitive and mental consequences and responses on children learning in armed conflict.

Mahmédou Mané, Institut National de Promotion de la Formation Technique et Professionnelle INAP / FTP, Mauritanie, on : Promoting social cohesion through skills development for refugees and host communities in the Moughataa of Bassikounou

Friedrich Affolter, retired Manager of Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (UNICEF), on: Exploring the Linkages between Education Sector Governance, Inequity, Conflict, and strengthening social cohesion.

Key takeaways:

- **Education is a pathway of creating safe and non-violent societies.** Education opportunities should be provided to every child to break the cycle of conflicts.
- **Psychosocial support should be integrated in all education interventions in conflict areas** to support the resilience of children, young people and communities affected by conflicts.
- **Conflict sensitive education policies are needed in most countries** to ensure that children are protected and learn in a safe environment. Fostering a culture of peace in curriculum helps to equip children with peace building skills.
- **Each additional year of schooling reduces the chances for children to join armed groups** and engaged in conflicts.
- **Empower children and communities with alternative learning pathways**, adult functional literacy programmes, and vocational education for employment.





Breakout Session 8: Education in protracted crisis: Successful approaches of advancing education in protracted crisis in the African continent, with emphasis on teachers, community engagement and localization, continuity of learning, protective and safe environments.

Chair: Mr Jeremy Hopkins, UNICEF Deputy Regional Director Eastern and Southern Africa Region

Speakers:

Noemi Robiati, Programme Manager, Education Cannot Wait (ECW)

Mr Judicael Mokole, Deputy Director of the Fondation Ahdieh (FoNaHA) in Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR)

Integration of refugees into national systems – Hon Mamadou Gana Boukar, Education Minister of Chad

Ms Umma Yero, Volunteer teacher from Nigeria – Maidiguri, Borno State

Importance of integrating protection into education interventions in protracted crisis – Camilla Jones, Global Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Context

Key takeaways:

- Governments should endeavor to address the humanitarian and development nexus by considering refugees and people affected by crises including host communities in a systematic manner.
- The international community interest to emerging global conflicts must not overshadow Africa protracted crisis;
- The involvement of local communities is a key and determinant aspects of finding sustainable solutions to protracted crisis. The government of the Central Africa Republic recently adopted a national community engagement strategy. This strategy provide platforms for better engagement of community structure in finding solutions to education problems.
- It is extremely important to integrate protection into education interventions in protracted crisis. Children learn best when they are safe and protected. The following interventions reinforce the correlation between child protection and education especially in a crisis context: Social and emotional interventions, Child safeguarding: protecting children from arm caused by education staff, share messages on child protection to children, train teachers to recognize, respond to and refer children to protection structures, provide service of social child support, advocate to protect education under attack and listen to children when designing and evaluating programmes.

Breakout Session 9: Resilience in Education: Safe and Resilient Schools in Climate Crisis Contexts: An All-Hazards, All-Risks Approach.

Chair: Dr. Helena Murseli, UNICEF, Senior EiE Advisor

Moderators: Helena Murseli (UNICEF) and **Grace Armstrong** (UNICEF)

Speakers:

UNESCO – **Min Jeong Kim**, Director of the Division for Education 2030

GADRRRES – pre-recorded video – **Ms. Janaina Hatsue Hirata Barrozo**, GADRRRES Coordinator (UNESCO)

Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria – **Dr. Nasir Sani-Gwarzo** (represented by Obianuju Joannes Anigbogu, Director, Educational Planning, Research, and Development)

International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC Africa) – **Dr. Sadrack Bertrand Matanda**, Delegate Disaster and Climate Crises, West & Central Africa Anticipatory Action Coordinator

International Rescue Committee – **Ms. Geneviève Kebe**, Senior Policy Advisor, Education

Centre for Education and Sustainable Development in Africa (CESDA) – **Professor Jackline Nyerere**, Director, Centre for International Programmes and Collaboration, Kenyatta University and Secretary of CESDA

Key takeaways:

- As of 2023, 224 million crisis-impacted children urgently need quality education, with 72 million out of school due to armed conflicts, forced displacement, the negative impact of climate change and other disasters.
- Since 2020, climate shocks have disrupted the education of 62 million crisis-affected children and adolescents across 27 countries (ECW, 2023). Nearly one billion children are now living in countries vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (ECW, 2023).
- Evidence highlights a clear link between climate change risks and educational outcomes: approximately 83 percent of out-of-school children in emergencies and 75 percent of those attending school but experiencing learning deprivation live in countries with a Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI) higher than the global median.
- Key frameworks and instruments exist to support countries handle these major barriers to education. This includes the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) and the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD), the Green School Quality Standard (GSQS) and Greening Curriculum Guidance (GCG), the INEE Revised Minimum Standards and Climate and Anticipatory Action (AA) approaches.
- Innovative financing, including debt relief and leveraging climate funds, is an urgent priority to increase funding allocations to the education sector, particularly for preparedness and response to climate-related emergencies.
- Utilization of data in sector planning and monitoring the implementation of policies and interventions/innovations will enable governments to better understand gaps and scale-up what works.
- Community engagement and integration of climate awareness and action into the education system (i.e., curriculum, teacher training) underpins successful uptake and ownership of climate resilience.
- Mainstreaming safety and climate change into national education plans and strategies (including EMIS) is foundational to sustainability.
- Research and evidence-based approaches and information sharing between countries with similar contexts (South-South) on what works and what doesn't promote coordinated approaches.



Breakout Session 10: Resourcing Education in Emergencies: Overview of the governance and financing of EiE in Africa, identify key needs and challenges, and explore innovative, scalable solutions.



Chair: Mr Jeremy Hopkins, UNICEF Deputy Regional Director Eastern and Southern Africa Region

Speakers:

Mr. Christopher Okonji, Programme Officer-STI, African Union Development Agency - NEPAD

Ms. Nancy Chaola Mdooko, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, Malawi

Dr. Cleophus Mugenyi, Commissioner, Basic Education Department, Ministry of Education & Sports, Uganda

Ms. Dianah Nelsen, Chief of Education, Education Cannot Wait

Ms. Mariam Toure, Regional Humanitarian Advocacy Adviser Central and West Africa, Save the Children

Hon Dr. Kilemi Mwiria, Consultant, Academic, member of parliament, advisor to president of Kenya

Key takeaways:

- EiE remains chronically underfunded - the need to mobilise greater financial resources is more urgent than ever. Humanitarian funding alone will not be sufficient to close the funding gap.
- Overall, education funding coverage dropped from 60% in 2019 to 40% in 2023. Despite this reduction, some countries continue to increase their investment in education. Malawi for example in 2023 allocated 25% of annual budget to education. The country also achieved 40% reduction in school infrastructure costs through improved.
- The countries where children's education is at greatest risk are the most underfunded in terms of humanitarian funding, including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia. (EiE Hub, 2024).
- With rising needs, the necessity to mobilise greater financial resources - including through innovative mechanisms and effective financing strategies - is more urgent than ever. Without adequate funding to support education systems before, during and after crises, millions of children will be left without access to quality education.
- Close coordination and collaboration between relevant ministries, humanitarian and development actors, and other stakeholders, is critical to ensure financial predictability, coherent and swift responses when crises occur, as well as ensuring the channelling of available resources to where they are most needed. Three financing models for education in emergencies could be explored by countries. This includes: a) Long-term: Endowment Funds (e.g., Zimbabwe and South Africa Education Endowment Funds) b) Immediate term: Crowdfunding and community-based financing (e.g., Kenya's M-Changa) c) Hybrid: Public-Private Partnerships (examples from Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Nigeria).

Presidential Dialogue on Education:

Venue: New Palais de Congres

The Presidential dialogue on education” involved 4 Head of States, the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director and the African Union Commission Chairperson.

- **Mr. Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Deputy Director.** Mr. Ted appreciated the Government of Mauritania and the African Union for the successful event and expressed gratitude to leaders for the importance accorded to education within framework of the the Year of Education in 2024. He noted that success will depend on true reform of educational systems. Stating that more that 60% of African are under the age of 25 and therefore the need for education is paramount. More needs to be done to achieve SDG4 as learning outcomes remain low with 100 million children out of school. He further noted the need to build the foundation for the future of children – invest in teachers, technology with quality learning, continuity of learning, strengthening the system with data, good governance and financial resources.
- **Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission,** emphasized the urgency of addressing a looming crisis in teaching capacity, with a current shortage of 15 million teachers. This shortfall is particularly concerning as conflicts have already forced thousands of school closures across the continent, affecting regions already struggling with educational access. The presidential dialogue revealed emerging solutions to these challenges through strengthened domestic commitments.
- **Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda** demonstrated how political will can translate into concrete action, highlighting his country’s increase in education spending from 11% to 17% of its national budget.
- This approach to resource mobilization was echoed by **Mr. Bassirou Diomaye Faye, President of Senegal** who outlined reforms focusing on digital transformation and market-relevant education to prepare Africa’s youth majority for an increasingly digital economy.
- Regional cooperation emerged as another key solution, with **Mr. Abdelmadjid Tebboune, President of Algeria** announcing expanded support for pan-African education. Building on Algeria’s existing support for 65,000 African students, the country will now provide 2,500 annual scholarships for higher education and vocational training. This commitment aligns with initiatives presented by other leaders to strengthen educational capacity across borders, recognizing that continental challenges require collaborative solutions. On the technological tools/ AI/ Nano technologies/Robotics, the President committed his country towards enhancing education on the continent. He announced that Algeria will increase the number of scholarship and training to African students.
- **Host President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani of Mauritania** synthesized these various approaches, emphasizing how infrastructure deficits and climate impacts affect education across the continent. His call for collective action reflects the growing recognition that educational transformation requires both national commitment and regional cooperation, themes that will be central to the forthcoming Nouakchott Declaration.

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SUPPLIED

2.3. DAY 3- 11 DECEMBER

Opening session

Dr. Bo Viktor, Director, UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight presented key findings from data collected from schools and teachers in 33 countries of Africa and shared the three areas of recommendations from the recently published research “Improving Education in Africa:

- The use of **local data** to make informed decisions addressing country specific challenges
- Directing education investments towards **areas of high impact**
- Designing **implementation plans** that respond to local context embedding implementation research for continues improvements.

The recommendations are directed to decision makers to consider when planning and monitoring progress and steer education in their countries, emphasizing the following:

- **Prioritize equity** for that every child has opportunities to access education, learn and acquire skills.
- **Maximize learning** by addressing absenteeism and double-shifts in schools, increase instructional time for improved learning outcomes.
- **Improve pedagogical quality** by addressing the teachers’ qualifications, training and guiding and supporting teachers for effective teaching and learning, classroom and learning environments enable effective pedagogical practices (harnessing the power of technology etc.)
- **Expand high-impact learning interventions** starting from early childhood education to address learning outcomes, prevent drop out and to also contribute to more resilient society.
- **Leverage the existing infrastructure**, provide learning materials and have in place clear standards and monitoring mechanisms to measure progress and inform further improvements.
- **Identify roles and responsibilities** of everyone in the education system and communicate them clearly and consistently including at decentralized levels.
- **Involve local actors, teachers, community leaders, students, parents in all processes related to education.** Moreover, important to devise plans and support implementation using data and context and communicate well.

Presentation of the outcome of the technical discussions

Professor Saidou Madougou, Directeur, Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation presented key takeaways for day 1 and **Dr. Dr. Laila GAD**, UNICEF Representative to the AU presented key takeaways for day 2.



VOICES OF YOUTH Session

Three young girls from Madagascar, Mauritania and Gabon shared their thoughts, stories and key messages for the ministers of education and partners present in the Conference

Ms. Herimalala Casmira, Madagascar: (9993)



She asked the audience to imagine a 10-year-old girl who has hopes and dreams to become a doctor but her reality is harsh. She struggles to walk a long distance to go to school and once there she attends education in an overcrowded class. She is not alone and that is why, she considers that key things decision makers should understand:

- Young people can make a difference.
- What you decide today it should be followed with action and not remain a written commitment
- We expect actions from you.

Ms. Soumaya Voulani, Mauritania: (9986)



Progress in education has been made, but this is not enough as many face challenges, especially girls, children with disabilities, displaced people, refugees being the most affected by lack of education. How can we talk about any development if we do not give every child a chance to build their future through education?

- We must make sure that every child has access to quality education and make Africa an equitable society and continent.
- Every child should have access to education.
- Every teacher should be trained,
- Every community must be provided adequate infrastructure.
- Education should not be only a priority for today but also for days to come.

Ms. Mesene Nguema kessy, Gabon: (9973)

She asked the participants to remember a girl in rural area in Gabon who faces a variety of issues to go to school and learn. This reality is true for many children in the continent and with low investments made in education.



- Education helps children build a better future
- Turn education into a strategic priority
- We expect you to make this year the beginning of changes in education in your countries

Ministerial High-level Panels

Panel 1: Priorities for education in Africa.

Chair: Hon. Mr Aziz Kamara, Deputy Minister of Education of Sierra Leone

Panelists:

Hon. Mr Mohammed Seghir SADAoui, Minister of Education of Algeria

Hon. Mr Kouaro Yves Chabi, Minister of Education of Benin

Hon. Mr Owen Sabelo Nxumalo, Minister of Education and Training of Eswatini

Hon. Dr Habibatou Drammeh, Minister of Education of Gambia

Hon. Mr Joseph Nsengimana, Minister of Education of Rwanda

Hon. Mr Nyekeh Y. Forkpa, Deputy Minister of Education of Liberia

Hon. Dr. Ashraf Sobhy, Minister of Youth and Sports of Egypt

Dr. Pia Britto, Global Education Director, UNIC



Summary: All ministers underlined a series of policies that countries should focus on to make sure education systems are addressing the urgent needs of access and learning.

Several countries underscored how policies should be strengthened to foster access to quality education, and ensure children complete their education and acquire the relevant skills to become productive citizens. The crisis of Out-of-school children is still persistent in the continent and should be ended! Countries should implement affirmative actions to give more discriminated groups the opportunity to learn, especially in the rural areas of the continent. Education support programmes are important to accelerate and foster school access (i.e. school feeding, etc.).

Another area to focus on is the workforce and particularly teachers but also schools directors. Teachers' function should be valorized (salary, training and technology are three main domains to consider). In many countries teachers' shortage should be tackled, while ensuring the professionalization of the teacher's profession to foster education quality and ensure the potential of technology for pedagogical improvements is harnessed.

The continent should be ready to heavily invest in education for quality education. Education should be the priority of every country on the continent. While increased funding is crucial, countries should also look at innovative financing mechanisms and improve efficiency of the expenditure.

To tackle the learning crisis, investment on ECD/ ECE and particularly on foundational literacy and numeracy in very important.

Finally, climate change is challenging the systems today and this cannot be addressed alone. Increased collaboration among AU countries is needed.

UNICEF intervention underscored some general policy aspects that countries may focus on to ensure education systems can serve their purpose and ensure they will take advantage of the demographic dividend by a conscious commitment to invest in human capital. This will allow countries on the continent to convert demographic transition into a demographic dividend.

The failures of the current systems need to be highlighted if the continent wants to find solutions (i.e. OOSC, etc.). It is also clear that some solutions are outside the education system.

UNICEF underlined how solutions exist and commended what countries shared in terms of inclusive strategies/ school fees abolition policies; support to teachers, strengthening of pedagogical approaches.

Eventually, it should be reminded that equity is key in all domains and should be an underlying principle of any policy.



UNICEF called for two priority actions:

1. LET'S END LEARNING POVERTY by 2035
2. LET'S TURN THE NEXT DECADE INTO A DECADE OF ACCELERATION FOR EDUCATION

Ministerial High-level Panels

Panel 2: Resilient Education Systems for EiE contexts.

Chair: Mr. Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director

In his opening remarks, the Chair noted the following to set the scene for the Ministerial debate:

- Across Africa, escalating conflicts, displacement, disasters, food insecurity and public health emergencies have combined to create unprecedented global humanitarian needs in 2024. Acute and protracted conflicts are coinciding, causing an increasing spillover of impacts on neighbouring countries – all of which disproportionately impact the learning, safety, mental health and overall well-being of children, adolescents and young people.
- An estimated 123 million school-aged children in Africa¹ are affected by crises, of whom 46 million are out of school.²
- Over 14,000 schools closed mostly due to conflict, affecting 2.8 million children in West and Central Africa, not only on their schooling now but potentially on their future.
- As of 2022, one in five refugees worldwide were hosted in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is expected that the total number of refugees across Africa will continue to rise.³
- Humanitarian crises have severely disrupted education systems, leading to the closure of schools, displacement of populations both within countries and across borders, and the destruction of educational infrastructure.
- This disruption disproportionately affects girls, who are already marginalized in many societies, while forcibly displaced children have on average, fewer years of schooling and a lower likelihood of transitioning to secondary school.
- Additionally, even if children are in school, they may not be learning – four in five children in Africa (nine in ten in sub-Saharan Africa) are unable to read and understand a simple story.⁴



¹To note the number of children affected by crises and out-of-school is an underestimate given it does not account for the Sudan crisis

² Based on findings and analysis from ECW (ECW, 2023).

³ <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/global-trends-report-2022.pdf>

⁴ https://www.unicef.org/media/151606/file/Foundational%20Learning%20Action%20Tracker%20-%20Africa%20Snapshot_EN.pdf



The panel discussions focussed on two main issues:

Issue 1:

With an increase of emergencies and crisis in Africa (public health emergencies such as Mpox, armed conflicts, climate change, floods, etc) becoming more complex in nature and repetitive in some countries, *what actions are your countries taking to better prepare and mitigate the negative impact on children, continuity of learning and education systems?*

The following Ministers shared their perspectives based on their countries 'experience:

- **Hon. Prof. Francois Havyarimana**, Minister of Education of Burundi
- **Hon. Aurelien Simplicie Kongbelet**, Minister of Education of Central African Republic
- **Hon. Mr Mamadou Gana Boukar**, Minister of Education of Chad

Issue 2:

Many strategies are being developed and implemented at country level to strengthen the resilience of education systems in emergency contexts. *What do you think are the most effective strategies? How do initiatives such as safe school protocols, mental health support, and disaster risk reduction integrate to support this goal?*

- **Mr. David Adejo Andrew**, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education of Nigeria
- **Hon. Mr Moustapha Mamba Guirassy**, Minister of Education of Senegal
- **Hon. Mr. Moustapha Mohamed Mahmoud**, Minister of Education of Djibouti



Ministerial High-level Panels

Panel 3: Sustainable financing models for education in Africa .

Moderator: Professor Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, AUC

In his opening statement, Professor Belhocine highlighted the critical importance of the conversation of education financing with Ministers by noting two important elements:

Firstly, the huge population of children and youth in Africa necessitate large governments' investment in education. Secondly, efficiency in education spending is critical to improve results and attract more funding.

The panel discussions covered the following issues.

Issue 1:

What strategies has your country implemented to sustainably mobilize additional domestic resources for education, and how have these strategies addressed challenges such as competing national priorities or limited fiscal space? How does your ministry ensure the efficiency and equity of spending, particularly in reaching the most vulnerable learners?

- **H.E Mme Houda Babbah**, Minister of Education and Reform of the Education System, Mauritania
- **Hon. Mr Torerayi Moyo**, Minister of Education of Zimbabwe
- **Hon. Ms Lela Mussa**, Minister of Education of Tanzania

Issue 2

Has your country implemented any of these innovative mechanisms? What lessons has your country learned from implementing innovative financing mechanisms, and how can these be adapted or scaled to strengthen education systems across Africa?

- **Hon. Mr Nouredine Nouri**, Minister of Education of Tunisia
- **World Bank Country Director**, Mauritania
- **Representative of African Development Bank**

Key takeaways:

Tanzania/Zanzibar

- Education spending is set to increase to 21% of government expenditure, with an earmarked tax for skill development. Private sector engagement will support equipment, infrastructure, and girls' education. Diverse funding sources, including an education fund, social fund, and public-private partnerships, are being explored. Community involvement in education financing will be encouraged, complemented by government support. Efficiency will be strengthened through decentralization, annual audits, stakeholder reviews, and transparent committee oversight.

Tunisia

- A free education policy is in place for all children up to age 16. A multi-sectoral approach is being implemented, with 19% allocated to education in 2025, plus additional funding across other ministries for education-related needs (e.g., school transport under the Ministry of Transport, rural women's education under Social Affairs). Funding priorities include school rehabilitation, teacher training, school feeding, and transportation, alongside increased civil society engagement and support for second-chance education.

Zimbabwe

- In 2024, education funding increased from 19.4% to 26.2%, with a focus on mobilizing domestic resources. Strategies include private sector contributions, an education fund, and earmarked taxes. Funding aims to address equity concerns, such as school feeding for young children and sanitation pads for adolescent girls. Greater community engagement in education planning and management is encouraged, along with expanding public-private partnerships.

World Bank Mauritania

- A comprehensive approach is needed for education in Africa, combining knowledge transfer, innovative financing, and improved taxation capacity for human capital development. In 2021-22, \$25 billion was approved for education across 260 programs. To further support education, strategies like debt relief or debt swaps should be explored to enhance funding and sustainability.

Jeffrey Sach online intervention

- Education is Africa's most crucial investment, yielding the highest returns compared to other sectors. However, current internal benchmarks are inadequate since Africa has a significantly larger school-age population than the rest of the world. Most African countries lack sufficient internal capacity to finance education adequately, requiring much more funding than current estimates by institutions like the IMF and World Bank suggest.
- To maximize returns, African nations must use all available means—digital tools, teachers, and local languages—to improve education. Ensuring that today's children complete secondary and higher education will drive economic growth. If coupled with investments in infrastructure like roads and electrification, these educated youth will find jobs locally; otherwise, they may migrate as highly skilled workers.
- The key to funding education lies in future payroll taxes on these well-educated Africans rather than taxing the current population, which lacks proper degrees. Given the high return on investment, Africa can finance education through debt rather than grants, with governments implementing a payroll tax (capped at 12%) on high school graduates and above, regardless of where they live and work.



d. Presentation of the Nouakchott Declaration

The Government of Mauritania through the Minister of Youth, Sport and Public Administration, Mr. Mohamed Abdallahi Louly presided over the presentation and discussions of the declaration. After a brief introduction indicating the government satisfaction with the deliberations, he invited Hon. Mr Mamadou Gana Boukar, Minister of Education of Chad to read the Nouakchott Declaration on Education, Youth and Employability in Africa.

Discussions were opened for questions and comments from Member States and other participants. Few comments received from country delegates recommended that the declaration should highlight the importance for: African values and cultures, girls' education, monitoring and evaluation of commitments. These comments were appreciated by the Chair who invited the AU Commission to reflect these inputs into the final version.

The declaration received an overwhelming support from all Ministers of Education present and participant through a standing ovation. With no objection expressed, the chair declared the Nouakchott adopted with a recommendation that the AUC Commission takes it through the policy organs for full adoption by the AU organs.



3. CLOSING CEREMONY

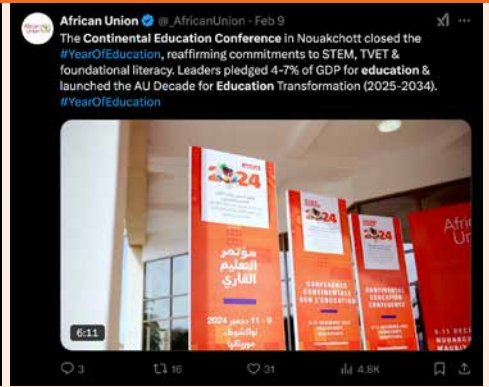
The closing ceremony was chaired by Mr. Mohamed Abdallahi Louly, Minister of Youth, Sport and Public Administration of Mauritania. The other personalities included:

- **Mr. Ted Chaiban**, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director
- **Honorable Mrs. Nancy Chaola Mdooka**, Deputy Minister of Education, Malawi, Chair of the 5th Specialized Technical Committee (STC) for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
- **Professor Mohamed Belhocine**, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, AUC
- **Dr. Ritha Bissoonauth**, Director of UNESCO Liaison Office to the AU and UNECA

In their closing remarks, the speakers thanked the African Union Commission and especially the Commissioner for convening such an important event on education. They praised the Government of Mauritania for the exceptional success in the organization of the event with the great mobilization of the entire government throughout the 3 days of the conference. While acknowledging the quality of the presentations, they emphasized the urgency to implement the commitment outlined in the Nouakchott declaration. They called the AU Commission to spearhead the process of making the declaration adopted by the AU organs and put in place a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of its implement. All the speakers expressed their support to the call for the AUC to declare a decade for accelerated actions for education and skills in Africa to maintain the momentum generated by the AU Year of education among all education stakeholders. The Commissioner in particular appeal to Ministers to become champions for transforming education in their respective countries by taking bold actions towards quality education for all.



4. COMMUNICATION COVERAGE



The conference was extensively covered by pan African media including the use of digital platforms, videography and photography. Live coverage was provided for the Presidential ceremony. Key to extensive pan African coverage was the collaborative work between the African Union and UNICEF communication teams. Three press releases were produced during the conference and interviews were carried out with key spokespeople of various organizations.

5. CONCLUSION

The continental Education Conference held from 9 to 11 December 2024 in Nouakchott, Mauritania was a resounding event. It brought together over 400 participants, including 100 speakers on 10 different but interrelated topics affecting education in both development and emergencies settings, 30 Ministers of Education and Permanent Secretaries of 25 AU Member States and representative from African Union Institutions, UN Agencies (UNICEF, UNESCO, and WFP) as well as many International Organizations. This event was a testimony of the AU commitment to work with its Member States and partners towards ensuring that all African children and youths have access to quality and equitable education as outlined in the continental education strategy for Africa recently developed for the period 2026-2035 and the SDG4. The anticipated adoption of the Nouakchott declaration by the relevant policy organs of the AU will provide a powerful policy tool to reinforce the implementation of various policy frameworks and programs like the CESA, the CTNET strategy, the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) strategy, and the Ending Learning Poverty in Africa (ELPAf) Campaign. The partnership with UNICEF was exceptionally instrumental throughout the organization of this conference. The Department of Education looks forward to continuing working with UNICEF and other partners of the education sector to take the recommendations of this conference forward.



6. ANNEXES

- Annex 1: Copy of the Agenda
- Annex 2: Copy of the draft “Nouakchott declaration”



ANNEX 1 : AGENDA

DAY
1

Part 1: SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

9 December 2024 | Venue: Old Palais des Congres

DAY 1

Time	Activities	Facilitators	
8:00 - 9:00	Arrival and registration.	Program Director (Mauritania)	
9:00 - 9:25	Opening Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Gilles Fagninou, UNICEF Regional Director, for West and Central Africa Dr. Nancy Chaola Mdooka, Deputy Minister of Education of Malawi, Chair of the Specialized Technical Committee Professor Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, AUC H.E Mrs. Houda Babbah; Minister of Education and Reform of the education system of Mauritania 	Professor Saidou Madougou, Director, AUC Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation	
09:25 - 09:30	Introduction of the Conference Objectives.	Professor Saidou Madougou, Director, AUC Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation	
9:30 - 9:35	Short video capturing voices from Children, Youth and Teachers on their aspirations and expectations.	UNICEF	
9:35 - 9:50	Introductory session on the situation analysis: Challenges and opportunities for education in Africa and impact on learning outcomes and skills.	Ms. Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education Division, AUC	
9:50 - 10:00	Introduction to breakout sessions, expectations and Team Leads.	Ms. Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education Division, AUC Dr. Pia Britto, Global Education Director, UNICEF	
10:00 - 10:30	Official photo and tea break		
6 breakout sessions will be going on in parallel			
Breakout session 1: Curriculum & Teacher <i>Foundational skills and literacy, and teacher workforce.</i>		Breakout session 2: Evidence to Action <i>Bridging the Gap for Foundational Learning Outcomes in Africa.</i>	
Time	Activities	Time	Activities
10:30 - 10:40	Moderator: Mr. Jephthe Mve Mvondo, Education Policy and Advocacy Specialist, UNICEF AU Office Welcome remarks and overview of the session	10:30 - 10:40	Moderator: Mr. Noubatour Adoumtar, AU - IPED Welcome remarks and overview of the session
10:40 - 11:00	Setting the scene: Investing in foundational learning and literacy: Rationale and case studies. Foundational skills and literacy in Africa: investment case and the role of teachers, educators, and school leaders. Ms. Sophia Ashipala Head of Education Division - AUC - ESTI & Dr. Quentin Wodon, Director UNECO IICBA (virtual)	10:40 - 11:10	Opening remarks: evidence in education Ms Linda Jones, Chief Education, UNICEF Innocenti (virtual) AUC Efforts in Strengthening Education Data Production and Usage through the EMIS Norms and Standards. Mr. Noubatour Adoumtar, AU - IPED
11:00 - 11:20	Improving foundational learning in Mauritania: Some recent initiatives. Mr. Ahmed Ba, ministère de l'Éducation nationale de la Mauritanie	11:10 - 11:20	Findings from GEMR Spotlight Mauritania. Mr. Manos Antoninis UNESCO / (Minister of Education of Mauritania)

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Part 1: SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

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Time	Activities	Time	Activities
11:20 - 11:40	Improving Mathematics Instruction through a Competency - Based Curriculum. Mr. Momodou Jeng, Director, Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education Gambia (virtual)	11:20 - 11:40	MICS Data, unleashing household surveys to improve education quality on the Continent? Mr. Joao Pedro Azevedo Deputy Director, UNICEF DAPM (virtual)
11:40 - 12:00	The GRP model as a core component of continuous teacher professional development for enhanced learning outcomes. Naomi Kamitha (FAWE)	11:40 - 12:00	Translating Research Outcomes to Enhancing Policy Formulation: What strategies work? Africa missing data. Ms. Sylvia Montoya, UNESCO UIS
12:00 - 12:20	Literacy teaching and learning through business story books: An award - winning initiative. Janix Asare (Ghanaian Just Commit Foundation) - (virtual) & Mr. Leon Mugenzi, Rwanda Ministry of Education	12:00 - 12:20	Evidence to Improve Education on the African Continent. Mr. Thomas W. Dreesen, Education Manager, UNICEF Innocenti (virtual)
12:20 - 12:30	Summary and key takeaways	12:20 - 12:30	Recap and Conclusion of morning session
12:30 - 14:00 Lunch break			
14:00 - 14:10	Moderator: Dr. Tomoko Shibuya, Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF WCARO Welcome remarks	14:00 - 14:10	Introduction to session on FLN Mr. Adoumtar Noubatour, AU - IPED
14:10 - 14:30	Technical session on Teacher professional development, education, and well - being. Investing in teachers: Professional standards, education, and working conditions. Ms.Sophia Ashipala (African Union) & Quentin Wodon, Director IICBA	14:10 - 14:50	Panel discussions on evidence based foundational learning. Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Aysia Kamzi, Gates Foundation • Mr Tony Essien
14:30 - 14:50	Teaching staff revitalizing in the Democratic Republic of Congo through a better end of careers' management. Valérie Lefèvre, AFD	14:50 - 15:25	Panel discussion on South - South and Triangular Cooperation as accelerator to SDG. Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Laila O. GAD, UNICEF Representative to the AU and UNECA • Dr. Abdoulaye Salifou, UNESCO Liaison Office to the AU
14:50 - 15:10	Strengthening teachers' management to improve teachers' quality and end learning poverty. Wally Wane, World Bank	15:25 - 15:50	Sharing of experience on evidence in achieving learning outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence in TVET on the African continent. Christine Hofmann, ILO • Evidence in Education in the Regional Economic Community: the case of ECCAS. Dr. David Blaise Ossene, ECCAS • Using Evidence to Improve Education Quality and Delivery in the Gambia. Sohna Foon, Ministry of Education of the Gambia
15:10 - 15:30	Professional standards and careers for teachers in Sierra Leone: Recent Reforms. Sorje I. Turay, Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission (virtual)		
15:30 - 15:50	Rendre la profession enseignante plus attractive : perspectives de l'internationale de l'éducation. Mme Mariama Chipkaou, Education International		
15:50 - 16:00	Summary and key takeaways	15:50 - 16:00	Summary of key takeaways: Mr. Adoumtar Noubatour, AU - IPED
16:00 - 16:20 Tea break			
16:20 - 17:30	End of the day Plenary Session		

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DAY
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Part 1: SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

9 December 2024 | Venue: Old Palais des Congres

Breakout session 3: Technology & skills		Breakout session 4: Equity & Inclusion	
<p><i>Education in the 21st Century: leveraging innovation and technology for a resilient education and TVET systems for youth empowerment, job creation and entrepreneurship.</i></p>		<p><i>Schools as a driver for gender equality: leveraging the transformative power of education.</i></p> <p><i>Achieving Equity and Inclusion: Right to Education for Africa's Out - of - School Children.</i></p>	
Time	Activities	Time	Activities
10:30 - 10:40	<p>Moderator: Mr Gemechu Kusa, SIFA Principal Portfolio</p> <p>Opening and Session overview</p>	10:30 - 10:40	<p>Moderator: Ms. Catherine Asegu FAWE Director</p> <p>Introduction and session overview</p>
10:40 - 10:55	<p>How technology, including AI is shaping education and TVET: Opportunities for Africa.</p> <p>Mr. Thomas Davin, Director, Office of Innovation, UNICEF (virtual)</p>	10:40 - 11:00	<p>Overview on gender equality and inclusion in education in Africa. Ms. Simone Yankey - Ouattara, AU - CIEFFA</p>
10:55 - 11:15	<p>Leveraging the role of APET in the transformation of the education system through technology in Africa.</p> <p>Prof. Yaye Kene Gassama, Chair of the African Union High Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET)</p>	11:00 - 11:45	<p>Panel discussion: Strategies for Promoting Gender Equality in and through Education.</p> <p>Panelist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SE. Savia N'Tehah; MASEF (Mauritania) • Dr. Mariatou Kone Minister of Education Cote d'Ivoire • Dr. Conrad Sackey, Minister of Education, Sierra Leone • Ms. Alima Marcos, Education Specialist UNICEF/GCI, UNGEI • Solange Akpo, ANCEFA • Makan Sylla (Malia) and Nana Firdaousa (Niger) - Young Feminists
Time	Activities	Time	Activities
11:15 - 11:55	<p>Roundtable discussion: How can we leverage innovation and technology in transforming education and TVET for the Africa we want?</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Hamadi Bekaye, DG Employment (MAJESSC) • Prof. Saidou Madougou, Director ESTI • Prof Yaye Kene Gassama, APET • Thomas Davin, UNICEF Innocenti Director of Innovation • M. Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh, ILO in Mauritania • Dr. Chomora Mikeka, Director Ministry of Education Malawi • Dr Asyia Kazmi, OBE, Policy Lead, Global Education, Gates Foundation 	11:45 - 12:10	<p>Solidarity Circle session</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aichata Cisse, Young Feminist Activists Mali • Bachir Gentil, Young Feminist Activists, Niger
11:55 - 12:25	<p>Message of support from the AU member state.</p> <p>Dr Bosun Tijani, Federal Minister of Communications and Digital Economy of Nigeria</p>	12:10 - 12:25	<p>Presentation of Freetown Manifesto and invitation to new signatory countries.</p> <p>Minister of Mauritania/Sierra Leone/ Minister of Cote d'Ivoire/ Minister of Senegal</p>
12:25 - 12:30	<p>Summary Key and takeaways.</p> <p>Mr. Norman Khoza, Senior Programme Officer Environmental & Social Risk Management, AUDA - NEPAD</p>	12:25 - 12:30	<p>Summary Key and takeaways.</p> <p>Ms. Catherine Asegu, Senior Advocacy Partnership, FAWE Director</p>
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch break		

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Part 1: SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

9 December 2024 | Venue: Old Palais des Congres

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Time	Activities	Time	Activities
14:00 - 14:45	<p>Use of technology in formal education in Nigeria. Dr Nasir Sani - Gwarzo, PS, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria</p> <p>Overview of the A to Z of AI platform experience, lessons and opportunities on the Future of Work. Dr Barbara Glover, AUDA - NEPAD</p> <p>The African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (ASPYEE). Sabina Klaus, GIZ</p>	14:00 - 14:10	<p>Introduction and Scene Setting. Mr. Gordon Jonathan Lewis, UNICEF WCAR Deputy Regional Director (Moderator)</p>
14:45 - 15:30	<p>Showcasing Ed Tech - Gates Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elimu Angaza, Kenya personalised adaptive learning and teacher feedback Khan Academy, globally - a personal digital tutor for students and a teacher lesson plan and resource generator - proven impact EIDU, Kenya, lesson plans for teachers and personalised practice for students - proven impact 	14:10 - 14:25	<p>Presentation on current state of equity and inclusion in African education. Dr. Rolla Moumne, Right to Education Expert, UNESCO</p>
		14:25 - 15:20	<p>Panel Discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to education for Out of School Children: girls, minority groups, girls on the move, CWDs, etc. Regional disparities and the impact of crises on educational access. Innovative, sustainable models for inclusive education <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madame Nadia Ayari, Director General, Ministry of Education, Tunisia Hon. Dr. Ms. Habibatou Drammeh, Minister of Basic and Secondary Education, The Gambia Selina Nkoile, Youth advocate/founder of Nashipai Maasai Project (Kenya). Abderahmanne Diop, AU CIEFFA Youth Alumni
15:30 - 15:45	<p>Q&A feedback from audience</p>	15:20 - 15:40	<p>Identifying unfinished business. Prof. Mathole Motshekga, Executive Director Kara Heritage Institute</p>
15:45 - 16:00	<p>Summary and takeaways Dr Barbara Glover, AUDA - NEPAD</p>	15:40 - 16:00	<p>Summary and takeaways Ms. Simone Yankey - Ouattara, Acting Coordinator AU - CIEFFA</p>
16:00 - 16:20	<p>Tea break</p>		
16:20 - 17:30	<p>End of the day Plenary Session</p>		
<p>Breakout Session 5: Conducive Learning Environment . <i>School health and nutrition; mental health and psychosocial support; and the learning environment.</i></p>		<p>Breakout Session 6: Financing & Governance . <i>Financing and Governance for Educational Transformation (morning). Leadership and accountability in education - what works and what's next? (afternoon)</i></p>	
Time	Activities	Time	Activities
10:30 - 10:35	<p>Opening and overview of the session. Ms. Lydie Kouame, Deputy Director WFP African Union Global Office (Moderator)</p>	10:30 - 10:40	<p>Opening remarks. Prof. Mohamed Belhocine Commissioner ESTI African Union (Moderator)</p>

Time	Activities	Time	Activities
10:35 - 10:50	<p>Setting the Scene: unpacking the conducive learning environment. Pia Britto, UNICEF Global Director, Education and Adolescent Development</p>	10:40 - 11:00	<p>Ministerial exchange between the Ministers of Education and Finance of Mauritania.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint vision on education for the country: shared objectives Collaborative efforts Challenges and strategies for overcoming them. Next steps for enhanced collaboration
10:50 - 11:30	<p>Panel discussions 1: Overview of Policy and Strategies that govern Conducive Learning Environments.</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AU - ESTI Hon. Aurelien Simplicie Kongbelette, Minister of Education Central Africa Republic Ms. Lucy Nyambura Murage, Partnership Officer - HHS Ms. Tracy Ntumba, Partnerships Office, MoE, DRC Dr Houda Mint Babah, Ministry of Education Mauritania 	11:00 - 11:50	<p>Panel discussions: Peer exchange panel (Moderated by Raphaelle Martinez, GPE)</p> <p>Panellists: Technical directors from Ministry of education and finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benin: Gender - responsive budgeting and program - based budgeting to ensure transparency and equity. Namibia: Two decades of constantly high allocations to the sector + program - based budgeting + addressing budget bottlenecks. Rwanda: Results - based financing in education and linking school funding to measurable outcomes + Teacher MIS and EMIS integrated into the FMIS Tunisia: Establishment of an Education Reform Fund
11:30 - 12:25	<p>Panel discussions: Understanding what constitutes a safe, inclusive, responsive, and conducive learning environment.</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMC Research Consortium WVI - Member/Parent from Mauritania Elizabeth Gitonga, Programme Manager, African Early Childhood Network Funlola Adegoke, The Fárigá Initiative Against Bullying in Schools 	11:50 - 12:25	<p>Panel discussions: insights from AFD, Ed Finance Network to discuss instruments that support greater collaboration between MoF and MoE on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pooled Funds Innovative financing
12:25 - 12:30	Summary and key takeaways	12:25 - 12:30	Summary and key takeaways
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch break		
14:00 - 14:10	<p>Moderator: Ms. Lydie Kouame, Deputy Director WFP African Union Global Office</p>	14:00 - 14:10	<p>Moderator: Dr. Pia Britto, Global Education Director, UNICEF</p> <p>Leadership and Accountability in Education: what works and what next?</p> <p>Opening Remarks: Kim Min Jeong, Director, Education 2030 Division, UNESCO</p>
14:10 - 15:20	<p>Experience sharing on workable solutions (Case studies).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Programme on Education - Albert Saka, Ministry of Education - Malawi Learning Through Play - Mr. Lamin Jobe, Principal Education Officer MoBSE and Secretary General of the ECD Network Education must go on - School Feeding in Fragile contexts. Mr. Toure Moustapha, Head of Programmes WFP DRC School Health and Nutrition Programmes, Mauritania - Ministry of Health - Mauritania Addressing mental health and psychosocial support in schools, disability, and inclusion. Save the Children - West Africa 	14:10 - 14:55	<p>Keynote Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead for learning - key findings & recommendations from the GEMR 2024/2025 Manos Antoninis, Director, Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO SDG4 Scorecard & the review of CESA 16 - 25 monitoring framework. Silvia Montoya, Director, UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) Foundational Learning Action Tracker. Pia Rebello Britto, Global Director of Education and Adolescent Development, UNICEF

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Part 1: SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

9 December 2024 | Venue: Old Palais des Congres

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Time	Activities	Time	Activities
15:20 - 15:50	Q&A and feedback from participants Moderator: Ms. Elizabeth Gitonga - AfCEN	14:55 - 15:45	Panel Discussion: Translating commitments in the Year of Education into actions for a Decade of Acceleration - Exploring a continental accountability mechanism. Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E.M. Houda BABAH, Minister of Education and Education System Reform, Mauritania • H.E.M. Moustapha M. Guirassy, Minister of National Education of Senegal (TBC) • H.E.M. Salimane KARIMOU, Minister of pre - primary and primary education, Benin • Solange Akpo, Regional Coordinator, ANCEFA • Brad Olsen, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution (virtual) • Soumaya Voulani, Youth Advocate, Mauritania
		15:45 - 15:50	Youth voices: African students and youth #LeadForLearning
		15:50 - 16:10	Q&A
15:50 - 16:00	Summary and key takeaways Catherine Mfitlodze - project Manager, WFP AUGO	15:50 - 16:00	Summary and key takeaways Minister of Education, Mauritania
16:00 - 16:20	Tea break		
Time	Activities	Moderators	
16:20 - 17:30	End of the day 1 Plenary Session		
16:20 - 16:25	Call the meeting to order - Program Director <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome remarks and calling rapporteurs 	Ms. Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education AUC	
16:25 - 17:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakout session 1: Curriculum and Teachers • Breakout session 2: Evidence to Action • Breakout session 3: Technology & skills • Breakout session 4: Equity & Inclusion • Breakout Session 5: Conducive Learning Environment • Breakout Session 6: Financing & Governance Questions and comments from participants	Pia Britto, Global Director, UNICEF	
17:15 - 17:30	Closing for day 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education AUC • Pia Britto, Global Director, UNICEF 	Program Director	

ANNEX 1 : AGENDA

DAY
2

10 December 2024 | Venue: New Palais de Congres

DAY 2			
Time	Activities	Facilitators	
7:00	Departure from hotels to the new Palais des Congres	Mauritania	
8:00 - 8:10	Welcome Remarks	Program Director	
8:10 - 8:30	Introductory Session: Emergency, crisis - resilient and inclusive education systems for more inclusive and equitable learning opportunities	Gordon Jonathan Lewis, UNICEF Deputy Regional Director WCARO UNICEF	
8:30 - 8:45	Introduction to breakout sessions, Team Leads and transition to breakout session halls - AUC - ESTI		
Breakout Session 7: Armed Conflict <i>Impacts of armed conflict on education access, learning, mental wellbeing; and opportunities to leverage education to strengthen vertical and social cohesion.</i>		Breakout Session 8: Protracted crises <i>Successful approaches of advancing education in protracted crisis in the African continent, with emphasis on teachers, community engagement and localization, continuity of learning, protective and safe environments</i>	
Time	Activities	Time	Activities
8:45 - 8:55	Moderator: Dr. Caseley Olabode Stephen AUC Opening remarks: Mr. Friedrich Affolter, UNICEF, Global Education Cluster Co - Lead	8:45 - 8:50	Welcome and overview of the session Moderator: Mr Jeremy Hopkins, UNICEF Deputy regional Director ESARO (Moderator)
8:55 - 9:55	Keynote Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and Armed Conflict in Africa: key findings. Ms. Chantal Mutamuriza, Sr Humanitarian & Education Advocacy Advisor, Save the Children International Schools and girls threatened by Boko Haram. Ms. Aisha Lavan, Community Leader, Maiduguri - Nigeria Cognitive and mental consequences and responses on children learning in armed conflict: Mr. Leandro Salazar - Liévano, NRC Promoting social cohesion through skills development for refugees and host communities in the Moughataa of Bassikounou: Mr. Ahmédou Mané, INAP/FTP, Mauritania Exploring the Linkages between Education Sector Governance, Inequity, Conflict, and strengthening social cohesion. Mr. Friedrich Affolter, Global Education Cluster 	8:50 - 9:00 9:00 - 9:45 9:45 - 10:00	Opening presentation: current state of education in crisis contexts in Africa – Education Research in Conflict and Protracted Crisis: data and evidence of impact of crisis on education and successful models - Mr. Oladele Akogun, ERICC Panel Discussion: Barriers and the impact of crises on educational access & TES commitments follow - up Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of refugees into national systems. Hon Mamadou Gana Boukar, Education Minister of Chad Successful model of community engagement in education to build local resilience. Judicael Mokole, FoNaHa, community engagement organization from CAR Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach in crisis zones. Ms Umma Yero, Volunteer teacher from Nigeria, Maidiguri province Importance of integrating protection into education interventions in protracted crisis. Camilla Jones, Global Alliance for child protection in Humanitarian Context Questions and reflections from the audience
9:55 - 10:15	Q&A session and interventions from the floor. Facilitators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friedrich Affolter (UNICEF, Global Education Cluster Co - Lead) Leandro Salazar - Liévano (NRC, Regional Education Adviser for Central and West Africa) 	10:00 - 10:15	Call to action: Roadmap for progress and key recommendations and actions on the way forward from each panelist.
10:15 - 10:20	Summary and key takeaways	10:15 - 10:20	Summary and key takeaways
10:20 –10:50	Tea break		
Breakout Session 9: Resilience <i>Safe and Resilient Schools in Climate Crisis Contexts: An All - Hazards, All - Risks Approach.</i>		Breakout Session 10: Resources <i>Overview of the governance and financing of EiE in Africa, identify key needs and challenges, and explore innovative, scalable solutions.</i>	

Time	Activities	Time	Activities
10:50 - 11:00	Welcome and Opening remarks. Moderator: Dr. Helena Murseli, UNICEF, Senior EiE Advisor	10:50 - 11:00	Welcome and introduction Moderator: Mr Jeremy Hopkins, UNICEF Deputy regional Director Eastern and Southern Africa Region
11:00 - 11:10 11:10 - 11:25 11:25 - 12:00	Setting the scene: Understanding how the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) can support the preparedness to face future emergencies. Ms. Janaina Hatsue Hirata Barrozo, GADRRRES (virtual) Minimum Standards for School Safety. Dr. Nasir Sani - Gwarzo, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria Panel discussions: Towards Safe and Resilient Schools: Practices and Experiences in Crisis Contexts: Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Sadrack Bertrand Matanda (Delegate Disaster and Climate Crises, West & Central Africa Anticipatory Action Coordinator, IFRC): • Ms. Geneviève Kebe, IRC • Dr. Nasir Sani - Gwarzo, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria • Ms. Jackline Nyerere, Kenyatta University 	11:00 - 11:40	Panel discussion: Highlighting the financing gaps given the scale of Education in Emergencies needs in Africa and financing options for education in emergencies. Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Christopher Okonji, Programme Officer - STI, African Union Development Agency - NEPAD (TBC) • Ms. Nancy Chaola Mdooko, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, Malawi • Dr. Cleophus Mugenyi, Commissioner, Basic Education Department, Ministry of Education & Sports, Uganda • Ms. Dianah Nelsen, Chief of Education, Education Cannot Wait • Ms. Mariam Toure, Regional Humanitarian Advocacy Adviser Central and West Africa, Save the Children • World Bank - TBC
12:00 - 12:15	Questions and reflections from the audience.	11:40 - 12:15	Questions and reflections from the audience.
12:15 - 12:25	Summary and Key takeaways. Dr. Helena Murseli, UNICEF	12:15 - 12:20	Summary and Key takeaways. Dr. Kilemi Mwiria, Managing Director Africa
12:25 - 13:00	Plenary for Feedback Call the meeting to order - Program Director Welcome back remarks and calling rapporteurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 7: Armed conflict • Session 8: Protracted crisis • Session 9: Resilience • Session 10: EiE financing Concluding remarks for the Education in Emergencies segment. Ms. Aferdita Spahiu, Education Specialist UNICEF MENAR	Ms. Sophia Ashipala, Head of Education Division AUC	
13:00 - 14:00 Lunch break			
Presidential dialogue on Africa's education.			
14:10 - 14:40	Call the meeting to order and introduction of the Moderator - Program Director Keynote speeches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director • H. E Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission • H.E Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania 	H.E Mrs. Houda Babbah; Minister of Education and Reform of the education system of Mauritania	
14:40 - 15:45	Interventions of invited Head of States (States' protocol).	H.E Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania	
15:45 - 16:00	Keynote speech on the theme - "Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century". Professor Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation	H.E Mrs. Houda Babbah; Minister of Education and Reform of the education system of Mauritania	
16:00 - 16:45	Announcements by the Program Director Official photo		

ANNEX 1 : AGENDA

DAY
3

PART 2: HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL DIALOGUE

11 December 2024 | Venue: Old Palais de Congres

DAY 3		
Time	Activities	Facilitators
9:00 - 9:10	Calling the meeting to order, welcoming and introduction of the day.	Program Director
9:10 - 10:00	<p>Introductory session:</p> <p>Presentation on "Improving Education in Africa - Insights from research across 33 countries in Africa". Dr. Bo Viktor, Director, UNICEF Innocenti - Global Office of Research and Foresight</p> <p>Video message by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Economist, Columbia University</p> <p>Summary Recap of Key takeaways from technical discussions in day 1 and day 2, presented to High Level Stakeholders. Professor Saidou Madougou Directeur, Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and Dr. Dr. Laila GAD, UNICEF Representative to the AU</p>	Program Director
10:00 - 10:30	Tea break	
Time	Activities	Moderators
10:30 - 10:40	Calling the meeting to order and introduction of the Ministerial panel.	Program Director
10:40 - 11:25	<p>Panel 1: Priorities for Education on the African Continent.</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Mr Mohamed Esghir SADAUI, Minister of Education of Algeria Hon. Mr Kouaro Yves Chabi, Minister of Education of Benin Hon. Mr. Owen Sabelo Nxumalo, Minister of Education and Training of Eswatini Hon. Dr Ms. Habibatou Drammeh, Minister of Education of Gambia Hon. Mr Joseph Nsengimana, Minister of Education of Rwanda Dr. Pia Britto, Global Education Director, UNICEF 	Hon. Mr Conrad Sackey, Minister of Education of Sierra Leone
11:30 - 12:15	<p>Panel 2: Resilient Education Systems for EiE contexts.</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Prof. Francois Havyarimana, Minister of Education of Burundi Hon. Aurélien Simplicie Zingas, Minister of Education of Central African Republic Mr. David Adejo Andrew, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education of Nigeria Hon. Mr Moustapha Mamba Guirassy, Minister of Education of Senegal Hon. Mr Mamadou Gana Boukar, Minister of Education of Chad Hon. Prof Laurent Serge Etoundi Ngoa, Minister of Education of Cameroon 	Mr Ted Chaiban, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF

ANNEX 1 : AGENDA

PART 2: HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL DIALOGUE

11 December 2024 | Venue: Old Palais de Congres

DAY
3

Time	Activities	Moderators
12:20 - 13:05	<p>Panel 3: Sustainable financing models for education in Africa.</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Prof Mariatou Koné, Minister of Education of Cote d'Ivoire H.E Mrs. Houda Babbah; Minister of Education and Reform of the education system of Mauritania Ms. Edda Bohn, Deputy Executive Director of Ministry of Education of Namibia Hon. Mr Noureddine Nouri, Minister of Education of Tunisia Hon. Mr Torerayi Moyo, Minister of Education of Zimbabwe World Bank Country Director, Mauritania Representative of African Development Bank 	<p>Professor Mohamed Belhocine, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, AUC</p>
13:10 - 14:30	Lunch break	
14:35 - 14:45	Interventions by young people.	Program Director
14:45 - 15:15	Feedback and Comments from the floor.	Program Director
15:15 - 16:00	Presentation and discussions of the Nouakchott Declaration	H.E Mrs. Houda Babbah; Minister of Education and Reform of the education system of Mauritania
16:00 - 16:20	Tea break	
16:25 - 16:45	<p>Closing ceremony</p> <p>UNICEF</p> <p>Deputy Minister of Education of Malawi, Chair of the Specialized Technical Committee</p> <p>AUC - ESTI</p> <p>Mauritania</p>	Program Director

ANNEX 2: NOUAKCHOTT DECLARATION

DECEMBER 9, 10 AND 11, 2024

1. We, **Ministers of Education** of the Member States of the African Union, **Education experts** from countries and development organizations, Representatives of civil society organizations, the private sector and youth, met from 9 to 11 December 2024 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, on the occasion of the African Continental Conference on Education, Youth and Employability jointly organized by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the African Union Commission with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) under the theme "*Educating and Training Africa for the 21st Century*". We are gathered to review the implementation of the AU Year of Education 2024 and reaffirm our commitment to accelerate the transformation of education on the continent.
 2. **Recalling** that education is a fundamental human right as enshrined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Article 13 of the African Youth Charter, which underscore the need for State Parties to provide free and compulsory basic education of good quality.
 3. **Recalling** also Aspiration 6 of the AU Agenda 2063 which envisions an Africa whose development is people-driven, building on the potential of the African people, especially women and youth, and caring for children", as reinforced in the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA); and reflecting the commitment of Member States to achieve SDG 4 as a catalyst to accelerate the achievement of the other SDGs, integrate the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance into all educational systems.
 4. **Recognizing** that youth constitute more than 62% of the African population and that they aspire to concrete employment prospects, thus requiring increased access to skills training to guarantee decent jobs.
 5. **Further Recognizing** that over the past two decades, Africa has made considerable progress in enabling children to access preprimary; primary to secondary education with a significant decrease in the proportion of primary and secondary school-aged children who are not in school.
 6. **Grateful**, too that despite this progress, Africa continues to face persistent challenges in learning outcomes, with over 100 million children still out of school and an average of only 35% of children at the end of primary education able to read fluently, while others complete their studies without vocational skills. Added to this is the structural financing gap and the crisis in the teaching profession.
 7. **Noting** with concern the shortfall of 17 million teachers in Africa for the region to achieve its education goals, and the need to ensure that the teaching profession is sufficiently attractive in terms of salaries, benefits and working conditions.
 8. **Further Noting** with concern that conflict, violence, harmful practices and gender-based abuses against women and girls, Health emergencies, school closures and natural disasters continue to exacerbate educational inequalities, hamper access to education, particularly for women and girls, and deepen the learning crisis, threatening to reverse decades of progress in education in Africa and challenging the effective provision of safe and conducive learning environments.
 9. **Bearing in mind** that total spending on education by governments and donors in Africa remains insufficient to close learning deficits, with an estimated annual gap of \$77 billion for African countries, in addition to insufficient and stagnant public spending on education per capita of around \$100.
 10. **Recognizing** that the AU Year of Education 2024 has generated interest across Member States and mobilized considerable support from partners in the face of the urgent need for collective action to transform education in Africa.
 11. **Aware** that young people constitute both the present and the future of Africa; innovative policies are needed to achieve "the Africa we want", a continent at peace, prosperous and driving its own development.
- We therefore call on African Union Member States, the African Union Commission and African Education Partners to:
- A. Regarding priorities in education, youth and their employability**
1. **Make** education compulsory and public education free and of good quality for all children and young people, with particular attention to girls, from pre-primary education to secondary, higher, vocational and technical education, ensuring that all children and young people are in school or in qualifying training.
 2. **Advocate** for the AU, in line with the recent proposal made by the STC-EST5, to declare the period 2025-2034 " AU Decade of Accelerated Action for Education Transformation, Youth Skills Development and Innovation in Africa" to sustain the momentum initiated during the Year of Education 2024, thereby leveraging the power of education as an acceleration strategy to achieve the recently adopted AU Agenda 2063 Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan.
 3. **Prioritize** foundational learning, including early childhood education, to ensure that every child has access to learning opportunities starting in preschool to raise learning levels and end learning poverty by 2035.
 4. **Reforming** the teaching profession with a focus on quality teacher training and safe teaching and learning environments, including the use of new technologies in teaching, and professional development programmes at all levels. This should lead to increased teacher recruitment and better management policies that improve teacher retention, accountability and development.
 5. **Strengthening** Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education and intensify the promotion of technical and vocational education and training in order to accelerate the employability of young people and promote the development of Africa.
 6. **Take** advantage of the use new information and communication technologies and artificial intelligence to improve education management information systems and modernize educational infrastructure to create safe and healthy learning environments for learners and teachers.
 7. **Establish** training in line with the aspirations of young people, particularly technical and professional sectors, and promote the creation of TVET in rural areas, allowing young people to anchor themselves in their region.
 8. **Mobilize** our efforts to provide young people with sustainable opportunities, with

an emphasis on education and vocational training adapted to the needs of the African labor market and employability skills, personal development and social inclusion, in order to prepare a generation capable of meeting the challenges of tomorrow and transforming our societies.

9. **Establish** harmonized and synchronized education, provided on the same day in all basic schools in the Member States of the African Union, to promote peace, human rights, tolerance, living together, preservation of the environment, the fundamental values of Pan-Africanism, political participation, civic service and leadership.

B. Regarding resilient education systems

10. **Protect** the rights of children and young people to quality education in all circumstances, including in times of conflict and natural disasters, and humanitarian actions in compliance with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
11. **Integrate** Education in Emergencies (EiE) into the national education sector and strategies to strengthen the resilience of the system to be able to prepare for, mitigate and respond to crises (conflicts, public health emergencies and climate change).
12. **Promote** national initiatives through national youth programmes with emphasis on local, national, regional and continental initiatives to establish innovative programmes and share experiences.
13. **Strengthen** vigilance among young people who are dropping out of school, particularly in urban and rural areas, and set up prevention and early warning mechanisms to support them, especially the most vulnerable.
14. **Take** all necessary measures during conflicts to keep schools safe from attack and occupation by armed groups and military personnel, in line with the Safe Schools Declaration, and enable them to provide school health and nutrition (SNH), mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.
15. **Adopt**, promote and strengthen peace education and enable safe learning environments, by including processes for

preventing and responding to violence in and around schools in national curricula, and by promoting conflict-sensitive approaches in education and development programming, particularly in humanitarian and all fragile contexts.

16. **Promoting** peaceful conflict resolution and support the implementation of the AU flagship project "Silencing the Guns by 2030" to create a conducive and inclusive learning environment for learners, particularly in protracted crises.

C. On education financing and governance, and youth empowerment

17. **Allocate** 4 to 7 percent (%) of GDP to finance education depending on the size of the national economy, as well as a corresponding amount of 15 to 25 percent of the annual national budget to education, with increased investments in teacher training and in learning infrastructure and equipment.
18. **Strive** to give greater political and budgetary attention to early childhood education and care and basic literacy and numeracy ensuring that an increased share of public funding is allocated to early childhood education, recognising the evidence of the increased returns on investment this will generate, whilst contributing to greater equity in public education.
19. **Exploring** innovative and feasible financing models to increase funding for youth empowerment education. Notably:
 - Increase tax revenues through effective, fair and consistent implementation of tax policies and innovative approaches while encouraging enterprise and investment;
 - Proactively leverage the support of international partners to provide greater access to innovative financing mechanisms for education, including debt swaps and results-based financing, as well as increased conversion and spending of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs);
 - Promote youth entrepreneurship through NGOs, Start-Ups and local income-generating initiatives, through predictable and sustainable financing.
 - Collaborate with international financial institutions and donors to seek below-market and/or interest-free loans

for targeted financing of education, particularly early childhood education;

- Harmonize the actions of development organizations and the efforts of member countries of the African Union;
 - Take concrete measures to encourage, facilitate and protect private and foreign investment in the education sector;
 - Support the operationalization of the African Education Science Technology and Innovation Fund (AESTIF) while advocating for the creation of a Global Education Fund for Africa that is more responsive to education in emergencies.
20. **Strengthening** data and evidence systems which enable better governance of education, in particular: Upgrading Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) to collect more comprehensive information in real time and at the individual level, including for children on the move, internally displaced persons, children affected by conflict and emergencies;
 - Leverage the existing monitoring platform for government efforts and progress in education (e.g. the monitoring of fundamental learning actions, the SDG4 dashboard) to fill gaps and promote South-South cooperation;
 - Regularly assess learning and use results to improve classroom practices and educational policy;
 - Facilitate local-level evaluation and research on education budget execution and the implementation of cost-effective interventions.
 21. **Call** for the creation of a continental accountability mechanism under the leadership of the African Union Commission which will monitor and report every two years to Member States on the effective implementation of this declaration.

Adopted, Nouakchott, 11 December 2024

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