



Joint Press release

African Union Second Decade for Education in Africa: The AU and ADEA launch publications on skills for Africa's accelerated and sustainable development

Tunis, May 5 2014. The African Union Commission (AUC) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) launched two series of publications in Yaoundé on April 24, 2014. The launch session took place during the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF VI), which was held this week in Yaoundé.

These documents are published at a time when Africa continues to lag behind in development: economic growth has not yet brought decisive social progress and Africa is has yet to successfully integrate the globalization process. Much of this lag in development is attributable to the poor performance of African education and training systems.

Two series of publications were launched:

- **The African Union Education Outlook 2014 reports**, produced by the ADEA Working Group on Education Management and Policy Support (WGEMPS) for the African Union. The reports measure the progress made by Africa as a whole and by its sub-regions in the eight priority areas of the African Union's Plan of Action of the Second Decade of Education in Africa. The eight areas are as follows: gender and culture; education management information systems (EMIS); teacher development; tertiary education; technical and vocational education and training; curricula and teaching; quality management; and early childhood development.
- **ADEA Triennial publications on critical skills for the accelerated, sustainable development of Africa.** These publications synthesize and issue recommendations on the critical skills that education and training systems should develop to produce the human capital that Africa needs for accelerated, sustainable development.

Both series of publications can be accessed from ADEA's Home page at www.adeanet.org

The publications were launched as part of the collaboration between the African Union Commission and ADEA. On April 24, 2014, the two entities renewed the Memorandum of Understanding that unites them.

In his remarks, African Union Commissioner Martial De-Paul Ikounga urged the press to take greater interest in education. "One of Africa's problems with education is also the insufficient importance attributed to it by the press", he declared.

Mr. Ikounga also emphasized the importance of the collaboration between the AUC and ADEA. "It is a necessity", he declared. "The African Union Commission and COMEDAF make policy decisions. But we need to translate these decisions into actions. ADEA represents a set of skills that the African Union needs."

After a brief presentation of the AU's Second decade of Education Plan of Action made by be Beatrice Njenga, Head of AUC's Education Division, Angela Arnott, Coordinator of the WGEMPS, emphasized the main trends outlined in the "African Union Education Outlook 2014" continental report. Access to education remains a problem, since half of all out of school children in the world are African. In eight African countries, fewer than half of children who enroll in school complete the primary level.

Concerning higher education, enrollment rates have tripled over the last 15 years, but universities remain teaching institutions rather than the research centers that Africa so badly needs to be competitive at the global level. Technical and vocational education and training remains inadequate, fragmented, barely recognized and under-funded. It is not growing enough to absorb the many young people who have dropped out of school, and one consequence of this is the alarming unemployment rate (60%) among young Africans.

Hamidou Boukary, Acting Executive Secretary of ADEA, reported that ADEA's current priority is to help countries to transform their education and training systems, which "must help to produce citizen who participate in the emergence of Africa, its economic growth, its sustainable development and its global competitiveness". ADEA has produced a Strategic Policy Framework to guide African countries to carry out this transformation, which was adopted by the heads of state of the African Union at the AU Summit in Addis Ababa in January 2013.

The Chair of ADEA recalled the words of Nelson Mandela that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". "But this education must be of good quality", he stated, adding that mere attendance in school is not enough.

ADEA is hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB). It is a partnership between African ministries of education and development partners, a forum for dialogue on education and training policies in Africa, a network of policy-makers, practitioners and researchers in education, and a catalyst for educational reforms aimed at the accelerated, sustainable development of Africa. ADEA programs are implemented by the ADEA Secretariat, which is based in the AfDB, and by its working groups, Task Force and inter-country quality nodes, which address specific themes and challenges in the education field.

The AUC, through its Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, manages education programs designed to formulate and harmonize education policies across Africa by supporting access to education of good quality for all African children and citizens.

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