

PRESS RELEASE

AFRICAN UNION VISITS BRAZIL TO EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES IN HOME-GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING



Brasilia, Brazil, 28 August 2015: H.E. Dr Martial De Paul Ikounga, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology led a high level delegation of the African Union to visit Brazil from 22-30 August, to learn from the highly successful Brazilian experience in ensuring that every child goes to school through a robust school feeding programme. They were well received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Agriculture, Education and Social Development, who all collaborate in this multi-sectoral programme.



The high level delegation included the Minister for Education of Niger; Minister for Agriculture of Zimbabwe, State Minister for the North Region of Ghana, Ambassador of Cameroon in Brazil representing the Cameroon Minister for Basic Education; and senior officials representing Ministers from Malawi and Kenya. SADC was also represented, as well as the department for Rural Economy and Agriculture. The study visit was organised by the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger, the WFP offices to the African Union, and to Niger. Many

African countries already have school feeding programmes supported by the governments and the World Food Programme, however much still needs to be done.

Africa has made great efforts in increasing enrolment rates in the education system. However, there are still millions of children out of school and millions other who go to school but are unable to learn. Too many children are too hungry to learn, and too undernourished to achieve optimal cognitive, psychomotor and affective development necessary for success in education. School feeding programmes have enabled millions of children to stay in school remain in school and achieve success. What is more, Home Grown School Feeding programmes contribute significantly to rural development by making small scale farming attractive in generating income, introducing new employment opportunity and profitable occupation for youth, with the potential for building entrepreneurship and innovation among poor communities.

Brazil has been able to lift 50 million families out of absolute poverty through the Home Grown School Feeding programme that has provided a social safety net and enhanced social and economic inclusion.

The Brazilian experience will help enhance existing programmes and help to promote greater government investment, given the clearly demonstrated multiple social and economic benefits of Home Grown School Feeding. According to Commissioner Ikounga, this will make a significant contribution to achieving Agenda 2063 through higher education achievement, enhanced health and nutrition, and new livelihoods and income generation for

boosting rural economies through improved productivity and employment opportunities for youth and women in poorer communities.

The Commissioner will establish an inter-departmental committee to develop a feasibility study towards a continental framework for eradicating hunger among school children. The Framework will take into account AU strategy for Education which seeks to promote holistic inclusive quality education for all; and the Science technology and Innovation Strategy and CAADP both of which have eradication of hunger among their priorities. In this endeavor, the Commission will establish technical partnership with the Brazilian Centre for Excellence for Eradicating Hunger, the World Food Programme, the government of Brazil, Regional Economic Communities and other key agencies. This concept will be presented to the next STC on Education, Science and technology; the STC on Agriculture; and to the January 2016 Summit.

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