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Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 Fax: +251 115  
517844

Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)

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**COMMEMORATION OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> AFRICAN DAY OF SCHOOL  
FEEDING (ADSF)**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND  
INNOVATION, VIRTUAL MEETING, 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2022**

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

**COMMEMORATION OF THE 7<sup>th</sup> AFRICAN DAY OF SCHOOL FEEDING -  
1ST MARCH 2022  
FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ**

We, the African Union (AU) Member States, the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD), Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), together with our partners, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as other distinguished cluster members and invitees, meeting virtually on the of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to discuss our commitment to advancing the home-grown school feeding agenda in Africa.

**[Preambular paragraphs]**

**RECALLING** AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government declarations and decisions particularly, the Assembly Decision 589 (XXVI), and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Growth and Transformation on home-grown school feeding to improving human capital through breaking down barriers to enable access to education, increasing school retention rates, enhancing the health and nutrition of children, and strengthening local and rural economies;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** that home-grown school feeding (HGSF) is a key intervention in the delivery of the African Union Continental Education Strategy (CESA 16 -25), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (2016-2025), thereby contributing to the realisation of Agenda 2063 – “The Africa We Want”;

**BINSPIRED** by the 2022 African Union theme – Year on Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security in Africa: Strengthening Agri-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development, the 2022 ADSF is commemorated under the theme "Nutrition and human capital development in Africa through increased investment in home-grown school feeding”;

**RECALLING** the significant progress that Member States have made in scaling up school feeding policies and programmes, showcasing increasing political and financial commitments towards school feeding programmes across the continent;

**STRESSING** that despite those gains, school feeding programmes have recently faced a setback amid the perfect storm of the four "Cs" – COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, climate change, and the rising cost of food– with the poorest and most vulnerable school-age children bearing the brunt;

**FURTHER STRESSING** that this confluence of factors has damaged pre-pandemic gains, stalled scale-up, and slowed the progress of AU Member States in realising a

more integrated, multi-sectoral school feeding programmes that harness co-benefits across multiple sectors from education, agriculture, social protection, nutrition and health;

**DEEPLY DISTURBED** that nearly **60 million** children on the continent did not have access to school meal programmes prior to the pandemic;

**RECOGNISING** that averting a continental and generational educational catastrophe will require a rethinking of education systems on the continent, and **FURTHER RECOGNISING** that any future transformed education system will need to ensure that investments in learning go hand-in-hand with investments in the learner through key interventions like school feeding programmes;

**WELCOMING** the recent launch of the School Meals Coalition at the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and **ACKNOWLEDGING** that AU Member States, the AU Commission and AUDA-NEPAD constitute over half of the global signatories to the coalition and have exercised a leadership role to help in its establishment and operationalisation, and **WELCOMING that** several AU Member State signatories to the School Meals Coalition expressed their country-specific commitments to operationalise the shared goal and objectives of the coalition into concrete actions that advance country-level progress;

**MINDFUL** that the 2022 continental commemoration of the African Day of School Feeding is an opportunity to build on the continental and global political momentum around school meals to mobilise the political and financial commitments required to restore, scale-up and enhance the quality of school feeding programmes on the continent from its pre-pandemic status;

**HAVING CONSIDERED** the state of school feeding in Africa, **HAVING LISTENED** to AU Member States, AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD and Development Partners both during the technical and commemorative discussions on 28<sup>th</sup> of February and on 1<sup>st</sup> March, **COGNISANT** of the ADSF and AU themes of 2022 and **BEARING IN MIND** all previous Assembly Decisions and ADSF communiqués on home-grown school feeding,

**[Operative paragraphs]**

1. **CALLS FOR** AU Member States to continue increasing domestic financing for school feeding programmes subject to each country's capacity to restore pre-pandemic gains and reach the 60 million children who did not have access to school meals before the pandemic, and **ALSO CALLS UPON** Development Partners to provide the financial and technical support required to augment country efforts to support the continental restoration and future scale-up of school feeding programmes;
2. **REQUESTS the** AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, the Home-Grown School Feeding Cluster and the recently established School Meals Coalition to work

with AU Member States to promote global and intra-African knowledge sharing to learn from best practices in policy formulation and implementation of HGSF;

3. **ENDORSES** the AUDA-NEPAD Home-Grown School Feeding Implementation Guideline and the UNESCO IICBA Teachers' Guide on School Feeding, and **URGES** Member States to put the guidelines in use, tailoring their application to fit country contexts, to realise the transformational and multi-sectoral benefits of HGSF;
4. **SUPPORTS** the School Meals Coalition's goal of ensuring that "every child has an opportunity to receive a healthy, nutritious meal in schools by 2030" and its three objectives: (i) restoring what we had; (ii) reaching those we missed; and improving our approach, and **INVITES** non-signatory AU Member States to the School Meals Coalition to strongly consider joining to take advantage of the coalition as a vehicle to support country progress and scale-up;
5. **STRONGLY ENCOURAGES** Member States to move toward developing national plans and roadmaps towards establishing sustainable and self-reliant programs, and **SUGGESTS** that such processes have multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral involvement that will ensure the development of robust commitments that have the support and input of key stakeholders, including development partners, implementing agencies and civil society actors such as smallholder farmer networks;
6. **ENCOURAGES** Member States to provide necessary information to AUC, RECs and HGSF Cluster Members while conducting the 2021-2022 Biennial report of the Home-Grown School Feeding in Africa. This should be carried out in line with the recommendation of the Assembly decision to report regularly on the HGSF implementation through the Executive Council; and with the ownership of AUC and support from AUDA NEPAD and key partners such as World Food Programme (WFP), FAO, UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP-CERFAM, AFECN, and cluster members.
7. **WELCOMES** the UN Secretary General's announcement on convening a Transformative Education Summit in September 2022, and **INVITES AU** Member States, the AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, and Development Partners to mobilise collectively ahead of the summit to ensure HGSF is placed on the summit's agenda, and be included on a transformed, resilient and responsive education system that prioritises investments in both the learning and learner;
8. **Calls** AU Member States and Partners to develop and adopt an AU Gender-responsive School Feeding Strategy for the retention girls and vulnerable children in school and to propose educational measures that build the nutritional

resilience of Africans and ensure that this strategy is accompanied by agri-food chains with incentives for girls, young women in educational institutions.

9. **ADOPTS** this Communiqué, **FURTHER REQUESTS** the AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD and Development Partners, specifically those in the Home-Grown School Feeding Cluster, to work with Member States on implementing school feeding-related policies, and **COMMITTS** to review progress on their implementation, including this Communiqué, during the 2023 ADSF continental commemoration as a means of accelerating the implementation of commitments to get school feeding programmes back on track and scaled-up to mitigate against the impacts that key drivers of hunger and malnutrition have on school-aged children and promote human capital development and the expansion of rural and local economic opportunities.

**Done virtually on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022.**