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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis-Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Téléphone: +251 115 517 700 Fax: +251 115 517844
Site Internet: www.africa-union.org

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**FIRST EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION
OF THE AFRICAN UNION (COMEDAF IV+)
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**REPORT OF THE THIRD ORDINARY MEETING OF THE
COMEDAF III BUREAU OF MINISTERS
(October 2009)**

**THIRD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE
BUREAU OF THE CONFERENCE OF
MINISTERS OF EDUCATION
OF THE AFRICAN UNION
29th – 30th OCTOBER 2009
BAMAKO, MALI**

AU/MIN/BUREAU /EDUC/RPT(I)

**REPORT OF THE THIRD ORDINARY MEETING OF THE
COMEDAF III BUREAU OF MINISTERS**

REPORT OF THE COMEDAF III BUREAU MEETING

Introduction

1. The Bureau of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III) met on the 29-30 October in Bamako, Mali to consider the report of the Steering Committee and to approve the draft agenda for COMEDAF IV due to be held in November 2009.

In attendance

2. Honourable Ministers of Education or their representatives from the following COMEDAF Bureau Member States participated in the meeting: the Republic of South Africa, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Republic of Kenya and Burkina Faso. The Hon Minister from the Republic of Mali was also present.

None of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were present.

The following international partner agencies attended the meeting as Observers: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

The following specialised institutions of the African Union were represented: Pan African Institute of Education for Development (IPED), the Centre International pour l'Education des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique (CIEFFA), New Partnership for Africa (NEPAD) the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN).

ITEM 1: Opening Session

3. H.E. The Minister of Basic Education, Literacy and National Languages from Mali, Prof. Salikou Sanogo, welcomed participants on behalf of the host government.
4. The following international partner agencies addressed the meeting expressing their support for the work of the African Union Education Ministers:
 - a) Mme Akila Belembaogo, UNICEF Representative to the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union;
 - b) Ms Anne Therese Ndong-Jatta, Director of UNESCO-BREDA;
 - c) Mr Jean-Marie Byll-Cataria, Executive Secretary of ADEA

5. Prof. Jean-Pierre Ezin, the AU Commissioner for Human Resources Science and Technology also began by welcoming participants to the meeting. He commented on the lack of qualified teachers in Africa and on the need to further develop teacher education. He indicated that the AUC will set up a team to specifically look at this issue of teacher education. He also identified TVET as a key challenge facing this continent. The Commissioner outlined the progress made with the establishment of the Pan African University and stressed the importance of this project for meeting Africa's need for qualified personnel in the fields of science, engineering and technology. He concluded by commenting on the absence of the RECs from the meeting.
6. In his statement, Mr Abdunabi Abudgnia the Rapporteur of COMEDAF III Bureau, and Representative of the Minister of Education of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya thanked the Government of Mali for their warm welcome and described the work done by Libya to promote the use of African languages in African schools.
7. In his statement H.E., Mr Enver Surty, Chair of the COMEDAF III Bureau and Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic of South Africa reminded the meeting that education has to be looked at as a continuum with Early Childhood Education being an important starting point. He stressed that teacher education and TVET are essential if the education sector is to address the development needs of African countries in both qualitative and quantitative terms. He thanked ADEA for the organisation's support to the AU and underlined the need to ensure that the RECs take full ownership of the Plan of Action. He argued for a balanced reporting to COMEDAF IV identifying the achievements, gaps and challenges faced in the implementation of the Plan of Action. He concluded by reiterating the need to exploit all possible synergies in the programmes of the various international partners and by identifying once again the need for alignment if aid to education was to be truly effective.

ITEM 2: Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of Work

8. The Agenda and Programme of Work for the meeting were adopted.

ITEM 3: Consideration of the Report of the Second Ordinary Session of COMEDAF Bureau (Addis Ababa, November 2008)

9. The Rapporteur presented the report of the November 2008 COMEDAF Bureau meeting. The Report was adopted with particular note being taken of the need for strengthening the flow of information between RECs and the

AUC. The meeting also emphasised the gains of having two meetings of the COMEDAF Bureau annually.

ITEM 4: Consideration of the Report of the Third Ordinary Session of the COMEDAF III Steering Committee, Addis-Ababa, Sept. 24-25, 2009

10. The report was adopted with amendments.
11. The meeting noted a separate report on the implementation of the Mwalimu Nyerere Scholarship Scheme. The progress of the Scheme was welcomed and the meeting was briefed on the planned involvement of the European Commission which will allow a substantial scaling up of the programme from 2011. The meeting noted that universities in many AU Member States charged fees to foreign students which were considerably in excess of those charged to domestic students. It was agreed that the AUC would write to Ministries and Departments of Higher Education requesting that consideration be given to applying domestic fees to Nyerere award-holders studying at national universities.

ITEM 5: Consideration of the Pan African University Project Document

12. The AUC made a presentation of the Pan African University (PAU) project to the meeting. The presentation focused on the planned impact of the project on academic mobility within Africa and on the brain drain of scarce skills from the continent. The meeting was briefed on the status of the UNESCO-supported Feasibility Study and about the appointment of a High Level Panel to move the project rapidly towards full implementation.
13. The meeting welcomed the considerable progress made with this project and stressed the importance of ensuring ownership on the part of all the major stakeholders. It was agreed that the AUC would provide an opportunity for further reflection and dialogue on the project including broadening the range of thematic areas covered and the involvement and role of the RECs.

ITEM 6: The Revised Arusha Convention

14. A presentation was made on the revised Arusha Convention. It was agreed that measures were needed to ensure full stakeholder ownership of the revised instrument as well as to create a 'Roadmap' to promote the Arusha process.

ITEM 7: Any Other Business

a) Presentation of the Libyan initiative on extending the use of African languages

15. The meeting was briefed on the language policy of the Libyan Government which currently involves the use of five African languages in the curriculum as part of its policy to promote regional integration. The meeting agreed that the Scientific Committee set up in collaboration with UNESCO to study the language question be expanded by the inclusion of additional experts and stakeholders. The meeting also agreed that the involvement of the AUC in work of this Committee should be more substantive.

b) Presentation of the General History of Africa textbook project

16. The meeting was further informed regarding the status of the UNESCO project to prepare a General History of Africa which is funded by the Libyan Government. The next stage of the project is the production of textbooks and teaching materials which will enable this important publication to be used as a learning resource for Africana students.

17. The meeting agreed that the presentation of the two above activities be including the Programme of Work for COMEDAF IV

ITEM 8: Consideration of the Draft Agenda for the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF IV)

18. The meeting endorsed the draft agenda for COMEDAF IV with amendments (see *Annex 1* to this report)

ITEM 9: Presentation and adoption of the Report of the Third Ordinary session of the COMEDAF III Bureau

19. The report was adopted with amendments.

ITEM 10: Presentation and adoption of the Recommendations of the Third Ordinary Session of COMEDAF III Steering Committee

20. The meeting adopted the list of resolutions proposed by the Steering Committee and agreed to present them to the COMEDAF (see *Annex 2* to this report)

