



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Opening remarks for the work of PACTED II Senior Officials Meeting

Dr Joseph Ngu, Director and Country Representative of UNESCO

Abuja, Nigeria, 25 April 2012

The Chairman of this Expert Meeting and Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria, Dr. Ben D. Ibe,

Senior Officials from African Member States

Mrs. Vera Brenda Ngosi, Director HRST, AUC,

Dr. Beatrice Njenga, Head of Division, Education, AUC

Colleagues from AUC

My colleagues from UNESCO IICBA, BREDA and HQ,

Distinguished colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My Friends from the Media,

I am delighted and honoured to make a few remarks on the 3rd day of this conference to Senior Officials of the Conference of Education Ministers of the African Union – (COMDAF V). On behalf of the Director General of UNESCO Madame Irina Bokova, let me express my deep gratitude to the remarkable leadership of Nigeria, particularly the Honorable Minister of Education. I would also like to sincerely thank the colleagues in the Federal Ministry of Education and the African Union Commission for their laudable efforts in ensuring in a very short period of time that this important meeting is taking place in Abuja.

Further to the Pan African Conference on Teacher Development that took place last April in Togo, this senior officials meeting will mainly review and present the report of

PACTED I as well as present UNESCO's Teacher Education activities, discuss opportunities for teacher development through Open and Distance Learning in Africa, discuss the Status of Teachers in Africa and finally hold a round table of civil society organizations.

As Ms Bokova, our Director-General reaffirmed during the 36th General Conference, UNESCO stands ready to support your work in making your teacher education systems better and more equitable. We are also here to support your cooperation and networking. At its 186th session, the Executive Board of UNESCO endorsed the phased implementation of the field network reform in Africa States during the 2012-2013 biennium. The reformed field network in Africa provides for five multi-sectoral regional offices, seven national offices, 11 desks and one liaison office. This proposition has been made with the objective of securing the financial viability and the successful implementation of the field network reform which will help to ensure that staff and offices effectively and efficiently work together to deliver improved programmes and services that meets the needs of Member States. Furthermore and as you are well aware, the Director General has made Africa and Gender as a priority in her reform structure. For the Education Sector, teachers are the priority of priority and additional resources will be mobilized which will benefit Africa. It is my pleasure to inform you that **UNESCO Abuja Office**, under the reform, has been upgraded to a regional office catering for the costal ECOWAS countries while the BREDA Office in Dakar will cater for our Sahelian ECOWAS countries. UNESCO Yaoundé is the regional office for the Central region, and UNESCO Nairobi is for the East region while that of the Southern African region is yet to be decided upon. The Addis Ababa Officer is now operating as a liaison office to the AUC and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Overall therefore, our new reform structure will be able to work better with our regional economic communities (RECs) and the African Union Commission (AUC).

His Excellencies, Distinguished colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I cannot fail to mention how we are working within the UN family to assist African member States. This is carried out through our effective participation in UN Regional

Coordination Mechanisms (RCM). The twelfth Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of UN agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its NEPAD programme (RCM-Africa) was held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, from 21-22 November 2011, under the theme of 'Capacity Building'. The meeting resulted in key recommendations to strengthen coordination and coherence in the delivery of UN system capacity-building support to the AU and the RECs, at the regional, sub regional and national levels, particularly, in the context of the implementation of the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union (TYCBP-AU).

The issue of teacher education and development has always been of great concern to UNESCO and the Organization's mandate. That is why UNESCO through its Regional Bureau has provided substantive support to the first ever Pan African Conference of Teacher Development in April 2011. UNESCO has combined its support to the task team put in place to prepare a road map for PACTED. UNESCO is also hosting the Secretariat of the International Task Force for EFA created at the High Level Group Meeting held in Oslo, Norway in 2008. Overall therefore, UNESCO's mandate and programmes regarding its support to teacher development in Africa include

- Responding to the worldwide crisis of the shortage of unqualified teachers by advocating and supporting the development of policies and application of international standards
- Building national capacities to better meet EFA and other national development commitments
- Increasing the capacities of countries to undertake effective and coherent teacher education at scale
- Supporting countries in the deployment of alternatives models of teacher education, e.g. Open and Distance Learning and ICTs
- Catalyzing the participation of teacher associations in the development of government education reforms

- Bringing issues of teacher status and training to the international agenda as a fundamental development issue.

UNESCO is confident that the PACTED will continue to grow stronger, especially now that Nigeria is taking over the Chair of COMEDAF and will surely address **the key issue** of Teacher Education and Development up to 2015 and also beyond 2015.

Thank you for your participation and consistent efforts to keep the momentum of PACTED - a strong pillar of teacher development and education. I wish you successful deliberations in the complex tasks of taking stock and planning for the coming months and years.

Nagode, Daalu, Ese gon, Thank You, Merci

Thank you for your kind attention.

Joseph Ngu, Director & Representative to Nigeria.