

AFRICAN UNION

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MESSAGE FROM THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS DAY

The African Union Commission recognizes the invaluable role of teachers in Africa in shaping our present and future, and takes this opportunity to commend, congratulate and encourage Africa's teachers in their noble and often under-rewarded endeavor.

On World Teachers' day, we commemorate the central role that teachers in Africa play in ensuring that children and youth going through education and training programmes graduate with the requisite knowledge and competences, as well as desired values and attitudes for the Africa We Want. Agenda 2063 calls for an education and skills revolution, and this will be impossible if we do not address the challenge facing the teaching profession in Africa, identify opportunities for enhancing their motivation through better training, living and working conditions. Meanwhile, Africa experiences a shortfall of over 3 million teachers to-date, and this may rise unless new strategies are put in place to address the issue. It is for these reasons that the AU Assembly called for a continental study on the training, living and working conditions of teachers in Africa. This study, which is ongoing, will provide seminal information that will inform the baseline for implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2015), in which teacher development is listed as one of the highest priorities towards a transformative education and skills revolution in Africa.

The AU Teacher Study covers all levels from early childhood to tertiary levels and adult literacy, as well as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

It makes use of current data where it exists, interviews with relevant ministers and senior government officials, physical observation, as well as capturing voices of teachers and teacher associations. Issues such as compensation packages, evaluation and career development, recruitment processes and trends, and sufficiency of teachers.

We must recognize that for Africa to harvest its demographic dividends, there must be real, innovative and strategic investments in education and training, with Teacher Development taking a central position. This is for education and training at all levels, as

well as adult literacy and informal skilling and re-skilling to update competences and maintain relevance for employability and entrepreneurship.

However, the challenges teachers face in improving teaching and learning at the classroom and informal levels are complex and multi-dimensional. A workshop convened by the African union Commission in partnership with UNESCO-IICBA and ILO came up with the recommendations calling for countries to invest in comprehensive and holistic teaching policies that are fully integrated within broader efforts to raise the quality of education and instruction. These include:

Standards setting and monitoring at global, regional and national levels within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) with observance of minimum standards for teachers' education, training and professional development across all categories of teachers;

Elevating the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession;

Ensuring that the voice of African teachers is heard through Social dialogue with teachers unions and representative bodies to incorporate solutions proposed by teachers on pedagogic and professional development issues affecting the profession;

Addressing the impact of the current teacher shortages, poor teacher training working and living conditions through integrated investments in teachers' recruitment, deployment, utilization, professionalization, status, motivation and teaching practice;

Providing appropriate incentives to enhance teachers' motivation, using both monetary and non-monetary benefits;

Investing in school leadership roles towards supportive working environments including opportunities for teachers to access peer learning and support and ensuring that teachers have adequate access to educational resources and instructional materials;

Ensuring adequate support for TVET teachers, introducing more flexibility into national TVET curriculum guidelines, with greater links to industry and the labour markets in general;

A meeting to validate the outcomes of the AU Teacher Study, including concrete proposals on addressing some of the issues mentioned above, will be held in Addis Ababa in December 2016, bringing together key stakeholders including senior officials, practitioners, teacher associations and education agencies.