



FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines

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Conference on African Girls' Education in Africa

Towards gender Equality in Education: Positioning youth to champion Africa's education agenda



*Caption: *From Left to Right* H.E. Mrs. Esther Lungu - First Lady of Zambia; H.E. Dr. Denis Wachinga - Zambian Minister of Education; MME. Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner of AUC HRST.*

Zambia, Lusaka August 28, 2017 – The African Union Commission (AUC), the Government of Zambia, the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE), the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, UNESCO, Plan International, UN WOMEN, UNICEF and Microsoft Philanthropies co-convened from the Inaugural Conference on Girls' Education in Africa, which was held from the 23rd to the 24th of August 2017.

The Conference organised under the theme of Girls' Education in Africa aimed to strengthen Youth Leadership and Engagement in promoting Education for all especially young girls in line with the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) and Agenda 2063.

The Conference, which was officially opened by First Lady of Zambia Mrs. Esther Lungu on behalf of His Excellence, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of Zambia, was attended by more than 500 participants including 100 young delegates, 13 ministers of Education and Gender; and Heads of key partner institutions.

The First Lady stated that Education is key to unlocking the barriers of socio- economic transformation as it has proven to be a game changer in the power relation as it relates to gender. The First Lady congratulated FAWE for their 25 years of contribution in promoting girls education, and called on stakeholders to protect young girls from child marriage.

She also stressed that African countries should uphold girls' education by increasingly investing on the four pillars of education. These include stimulating quality model teachers; quality and conducive environment at household level; quality administration keeping girls in school; conducive infrastructure that encourage girls stay in schools.

The African Union Commission's delegation led by H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) was composed of Dr. Beatrice Njenga, Head of the Education Division, Mr.



Caption: H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner of HRST making her remarks

Abraham Asha Herano, Mr. Kokou Sename Djagadou, Ms. Woudasse Abebe, Mr. Caseley Olabode Stephens and Mr. Sebastien Eude Bokossa Kaltani from Women Gender and Development Directorate.

Speaking during the opening ceremony of the conference, the Commissioner for

HRST H.E. Prof. Anyang Sarah Agbor addressed the floor on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Mr. Mahama Moussa Faki, recognising that Africa could not achieve its development agenda if Education of girls and women is not adequately prioritised and invested in as called upon by the AU theme for the year 2017 “harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth”.

The commissioner reiterated in her statement “that beyond literacy we need young people and young girls to be imparted with an education that prepares them to be unflinching leaders, an education that promotes and upholds African Union values of

peace, security and good governance; healthy behaviour, functional employability, entrepreneurship and inventiveness, with mind-sets geared towards pan Africanism and sustainable development.”

She emphasized the need to reverse the trend where women and girls are under-represented in science and technology-related Education (STEM) and professions on the continent as well as the urgent need to end the stereotypes and perception that STEM is too challenging for women and girls to take on.

In conclusion she called upon all stakeholders to protect girls from harmful societal practices including child marriage and provide them with skills and information to avoid unwanted pregnancies and early childbearing that may affect their quality of life. The Commissioner went on to state that, “Sexual and reproductive health is an important aspect of a girl’s development and the school setting should be a conducive environment that protect the girl from sexual and gender based violence, harassment and bullying. Furthermore, we must work together to ensure safe schools, child friendly and safe gender responsive learning environments.”.

The two-day conference also fed into the 10th triennial General Assembly of FAWE which will streamline its strategy to support African Governments in responding to the education need of the continent.

Following the opening session, the AUC delegation contributed to the various plenary and parallel sessions of the conference.

Additionally, an exhibition on Girls’ Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/design and Mathematics (STEAM) was held as a side event throughout the conference. The AUC HRST participated with the aim of presenting and sharing the department’s strategy and program documents. The AUC exhibition also comprised of other key AUC publications such as Agenda 2063, the Demographic Dividend Road Map, the African Youth Charter, African Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Scorecard, and The African Women’s Decade 2010-2015.

For more information contact:

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About the African Union

The African Union (AU) is a continental union consisting of all 55 countries on the African continent. It was established on 26 May 2001 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and launched on 9 July 2002 in South Africa, with the aim of replacing the Organisation of

African Union (OAU). The most important decisions of the AU are made by the Assembly of the African Union, a semi-annual meeting of the heads of state and government of its member states. The AU's secretariat, the African Union Commission, is based in Addis Ababa. In 2013, as part of its 50th Anniversary, the AU adopted Agenda 2063, a blueprint for achieving an Africa that “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.” More information on the African Union and its work can be found at www.au.int