



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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AU/CIEFFA Launches *Africa Educates Her* Campaign a Rallying Call to Get Girls Back to School

Educational systems across the AU Member States have seen significant disruption due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. As we grapple for more data and evidence, school closures have aggravated learning and teaching systems leading to a lot of inequalities.

On the 11th of September 2020, the African Union International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) officially launched the *Africa Educates Her* campaign.

"Africa Educates Her" is a campaign to bring awareness around issues that hinder girls and women from accessing education during the COVID 19 pandemic as well as a rallying call for AU Member States, educators, civil society organisations and youth to take positive action that ensures girls return back to school as learning institutions are slowly re-opening around the continent.

As part of the campaign, the AU/CIEFFA sees to highlight the experiences of learners, especially girls at primary, secondary and tertiary level during the COVID 19 related school closures and request African youth to contribute on ways they see themselves together with development partners and governments promote and protect girls' rights to education in times of crisis.

In his opening address, Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo, Director, Human Resources, Science & Technology pointed out: *"We are facing a global pandemic like no other which threatens the progress made by AU Member States in terms of access, participation and completion at primary and secondary levels of education in the African educational landscape"*

In her address, the AU/CIEFFA Head of Mission, Dr. Rita Bissoonauth underscored that education is a "basic human right and not a privilege", adding that school closures harm girls in many ways, often with long-term consequences. *"Once girls are taken out of schools, the probability of them going back is very low. This is not to say that we are forgetting the boys, but we should not forget that girls are most vulnerable."* She noted.

Development partners and education ministry representatives in attendance hailed the launch of the *Africa Educates Her* campaign as a much needed action to get the continent and all stakeholders working to safeguard girls' right to education and to spur collaboration and the sharing of best practices that promote the continuity of girls' and women's education in Africa.

Justine Sass from UNESCO speaking on behalf of the UNESCO Global Education Coalition emphasized that she believes that advocacy, such as the *Africa Educates Her* campaign is important to unlocking the door that allows girls to return to school. *"We need to engage with teachers and school directors so they can understand what's happened during the school closures and what are some of the things that girls' have gone through, and the challenges they need to address once kids come back to school."* She added.



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During the launch the AU/CIEFFA announced the *Africa Educates Her* campaign's [Call for Creative Content](#) where they will be accepting videos, blog articles, poems, photography and music submissions from Africans, students, human rights defenders and educators showcasing their learning and teaching experiences during the COVID-19 related school closures and the initiatives they are taking to ensure girls go back to school once schools re-open.

The campaign will run until December 2020 and youth, educators, government ministries and development partners joining the campaign will [pledge to take action](#) promoting girls re-entry to school as schools start re-opening in different countries.

In the closing remarks, Dr Mahama Ouedraogo urged everyone to work together and keep in mind that the work and actions around the campaign should be scalable and impactful at grassroots and community level in order to achieve objective 4 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Aspiration 6 of the AU Agenda 2063.

"We should synergistically formulate and implement relevant strategies and initiatives that put particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable groups, in the remote areas, with disabilities and crisis situations, especially, girls and young women, particularly when designing catch-up strategies for all learners as schools re-open." He concluded.

Education experts from different AU Member States' education ministries, Youth, AU/CIEFFA alumni and Development partners attended the launch.

About the AU/CIEFFA

The African Union International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa is a specialized institution of the African Union under the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology. The Centre aims to promote girls' and women's education with a view towards their full participation in the eradication of poverty and the edification of a peaceful world for sustainable human development.

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