

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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African Member States, the AUC, and partners have renewed their commitments to invest in home grown school feeding in Africa.

The 7th African Day of School Feeding was celebrated on 1st March 2022 under the theme of **‘Nutrition and human capital development in Africa through increased investment in home-grown school feeding’**, Ministers from AU Member States made commitments to strengthen efforts and investments on expanding the initiatives across the continent. The ADSF was established by the African Union in 2016 to raise awareness and knowledge on school feeding, take stock of progress made and galvanize political support for the adoption, implementation or sustainment of pro-school feeding policies, programmes and resources. This event marks a rallying point, bringing together stakeholders across the public, private,



civil society and multilateral sectors, to reinforce and strengthen political will for school feeding continent wide.

H.E. Ambassador Cessouma Minata Samate, AU Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development on behalf of H.E. Prof. Mohamed Belhocine AU Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, highlighted that investing in the learner is now more important than ever during this COVID-19 crisis. The Commissioner requested that Member States and partners should strive to make school feeding programmes more inclusive and reimagine how school feeding programmes are

financed and implemented, making them more home-grown. She underlined that the 2022 continental commemoration of the African Day of School Feeding is an opportunity to build on the continental and global political momentum around school meals to mobilise the political and financial commitments required to restore, scale-up and enhance the quality of school feeding programmes on the continent from its pre-pandemic status.

Speaking at the event on behalf of UN agencies and development partners, the WFP Executive Director, Mr David Beasley, underscored that “the celebration demonstrated how the African continent has successfully made progress on strengthening Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes thereby supporting its youth, creating human capital, and building local economies. The 7th African day of School Feeding Celebration takes place at a time of unprecedented humanitarian need, and school meal programmes are key interventions in this demanding time. He added that the Global School Meals Coalition is one of the transformational initiatives that could contribute for the efforts of the continent to expand the interventions in Africa.

The Home-Grown School Feeding Guidelines was launched during the event by H.E. Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, the Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-

NEPAD). He also mentioned that “Home-Grown School Feeding, is one of the strategic programmes of AU, aiming to link school feeding to Education, Health, and agricultural development through the production and procurement of locally diverse foods. He stressed that, due to the lack of coordinated and systematic implementation approaches AU Member States are facing challenges to implement the programmes. Hence, the guideline is very important for the design, implementation management, monitoring and evaluation of the sustainable programmes.

Furthermore, the Chair of the CAADP Development Partners Coordinating Group, Mr Stanlake Samkange, made it known that “Home-grown school feeding programmes are meant to facilitate multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration, bridging sectoral and institutional silos. In this regard, a call was made to the African Governments to focus on coordinating and sustaining the complementary and reinforcing regional policies starting with CAADP framework and processes, as well as the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25); Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy, and Africa’s Agenda for Children 2040, making sure on bringing implementation down to the country-level where results can be seen.

Ms. Angel Mbutia, GPE Youth Leader, representing the Africa’s Youth, stated that; “School meal programmes are gender equaliser and game changer that prevent hunger and enhance children’s ability to learn. She also mentioned that sick children cannot attend school and hungry children cannot learn; and investing in school feeding programmes is necessary to complement other investments.

In his closing remarks, Dr Godfrey Bahigwa, the director for Department Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) representing H.E. Ambassador Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko AU Commissioner for ARBE stated that an integrated approach in planning, managing and monitoring and evaluating of home-grown school feeding programme at the local, national and continental levels is a paramount importance for sustainable development. He added that it is very important to align policies through strategic frameworks and guidelines all streamlined under the AU Home-Grown School Feeding Cluster.

During the event, the communique was adopted by the 149 participants from Member States and Partners highlighting key actions to be implemented in a long and short term plans. The 7th ADSF communique adopted by the AUC built on last year’s continental momentum around home-grown school feeding provided AU member states and participants with a reminder of the need for continual renewal of commitments. In this respect, the communique: called on African governments to increase financing for school feeding programmes; invited non-signatory countries to join the School Meals Coalition (SMC); encouraged those that have signed on to the SMC to develop national plans and roadmaps towards establishing sustainable country-owned and implemented school feeding programmes; and called AU Member States to collectively mobilize ahead of the upcoming UN transforming Education Summit to ensure that home-grown school feeding is placed on the summit’s agenda; among other commitments.

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