

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Pan-African Parliament Workshop on AU Theme Highlights Urgent Need for Educational Reform Across Africa



The Pan-African Parliament convened, in collaboration with African Union (AU) institutions, partner organisations, and academic institutions, a pivotal workshop on the AU Theme for the Year 2024: “Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa.” The event brought together a diverse array of experts and stakeholders to address the urgent need for educational reform across the continent. Presentations and briefings were delivered by representatives from various institutions, including the African Union Commission for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI); the University of Zululand; and the Global Campaign for Education. Experts on the Right to Education and Rights of Persons Living with Disabilities (PWDs) also presented technical findings and recommendations.

During the workshop, several critical issues were highlighted, leading to comprehensive recommendations aimed at transforming Africa's education system. One primary concern was the inadequate implementation and awareness of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025, AU Agenda 2063 education-related targets, and Sustainable Development Goal No. 4. Participants urged member parliaments to hold forums discussing these strategies and to participate in evaluating

the current strategy for developing a successive plan post-2025. Another significant concern was the inadequate national budgets allocated to education, science, technology, and innovation. Privatization of education was identified as both an opportunity and a problem, causing class stratification and marginalization within communities.

Governments were criticized for neglecting public education, leading to dilapidated infrastructure, insufficient learning resources, and poorly trained teachers. Participants advocated for allocating at least 1% of GDP to finance education, science, technology, and innovation sectors. Emphasis was placed on comprehensive teacher development programs, improved educational infrastructure, and acquiring essential learning resources. The establishment of the African Education, Science, and Technology Innovation Fund was proposed as a blended financing mechanism to support these initiatives. Parliamentarians were urged to lobby for restoring the teaching profession as a dignified career with adequate salaries, benefits, and resources, addressing the issue of brain drain and ensuring teachers have access to modern teaching materials and professional development.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was highlighted as a needed solution to unemployment and leveraging the youth bulge for economic development. Both formal and informal TVET institutions require substantial support to expand their reach and enhance their quality. It is imperative to challenge and change the negative perception of TVET, encouraging young people to pursue careers in craftsmanship and practical trades. Addressing the gendering of certain educational courses within TVET was also deemed crucial to fostering a more inclusive and equitable workforce needed for Africa's infrastructural development.

The necessity for legislative action to support a dynamic and sustainable research enterprise capable of translating scientific discoveries into practical solutions for socio-economic development was discussed. Participants called for decolonizing the education system, noting that most curriculums are Eurocentric and do not instill African history, culture, and values. Special attention to marginalized groups, including girls, children in rural areas, those living with disabilities, and those in fragile contexts, was emphasized. Regularly requesting and considering reports from the AUC, AUDA, NEPAD, regional economic communities, and other partners on the implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 was also recommended.

Participants identified the need for the African Union Commission Department of Education, Science, and Technology and Innovation to partner with the Pan-African Parliament and other stakeholders to create awareness and advocate for sustained implementation of educational strategies. Launching the African Education, Science, and Technology Innovation Fund and developing continental policy frameworks on teacher development and higher education were key recommendations. Member States were urged to allocate adequate budgets for education and enact policy frameworks to facilitate competency-based education and training. National and

regional parliaments were called upon to advocate for education, support policies for intra-Africa cooperation, and ensure sustainable funding and investment in education. Development partners were encouraged to align support programs with CESA, participate in multi sectoral committees, and commit more funding towards education initiatives in Africa.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Pan-African Parliament serves as a platform for representatives from all African states to engage in discussions and decision-making on the continent's challenges. To fulfill its mandate, the Parliament collaborates with Regional Economic Communities, regional and national parliamentary bodies, and civil society organizations. This collaboration aims to raise awareness about AU legal instruments and decisions and to mobilize member states for the ratification, domestication, and implementation of AU objectives, policies, and instruments. Learn more about the Pan-African Parliament: <https://pap.au.int/en>

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