

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release

Date: 02nd July, 2024

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The 1st AU Pan African Conference on Girls and Women's Education Opens in Addis Ababa

The 1st African Union Pan African Conference on Girls and Women's Education (AU/PANCOGE_{d1}) has been officially opened. The opening ceremony was held at the African Union Commission (AUC) Premises on July 02nd, 2024. The event, holding under the theme, "*Prioritizing Girls and Women's Education: A Strategy for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa*" will run till July 05th. While opening the ceremony, the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, H.E Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, highlighted the commitment of the African Union (AU) in promoting and empowering girls through quality education. "*The AUC is strongly committed to advocate for the implementation by its Member States of the Agenda 2063, the [Continental Education Strategy for Africa \(CESA\) 16-25](#), the [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa \(Maputo Protocol\)](#), the Sustainable Development Goals 4 & 5 and other related policies promoting girls and women's education in the continent.*"

Moderated by ESTI's Commissioner, H.E. Prof Mohammed Belhocine, the ceremony set the tone for the four-day deliberations on girls and women's education in Africa.

With close to 500 in-person and close to 300 online participants in attendance, the AU/PANCOGE_{d1} is organised as part of activities under the AU Year of Education.

The State Minister for Education, Central African Republic and President of the Steering Committee for Education, Science and Technology, H.E. Aurelien-Simplice Kongbelet-Zingas, was keen to express his expectations about the conference. "*I am convinced that the discussions and reflections we will have over the next few days will enable us to gain a better understanding of the complex challenges hindering girls and women's education, and to develop effective strategies to overcome them.*"

During his opening remarks, the Ambassador of Norway to the AU, H.E. Stian Christensen, stated that "*The theme of this conference is highly relevant in this regard. Girls' education is important in all areas and at all levels. This is about empowering girls and women to be full-fledged members of society, to unlock Africa's huge potential for economic development and life improvement for its citizens.*"

Representing the advocacy for girls and women's education at a global level, the Director of the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), Antara Ganguli, highlighted one of the most

resistant challenges to girls' education, social norms, and beliefs, “[...] *people’s underlying beliefs about the role of girls and women in society had not changed, and that this hampered genuine support for girls’ educational achievements.*”

The gathering is organised by the AUC Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation through its technical and specialised office, the African Union International Center for Girls and Women’s Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) led by Simone Yankey. The event, which is the first of its kind, takes place in collaboration with UN Agencies, AU Organs and departments, development partners, organizations promoting girls and women’s education, and youth champions on girls’ education. Multi stakeholders are expected to intervene and bring their experience throughout the Conference.

Editor’s Note:

African Union International Centre for Girls and Women’s Education in Africa

The International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) is a specialized institution of the African Union since 2004, dealing with women and girls’ education following Decision Assembly/AU/DEC.44 (III). AU/CIEFFA is a specialized institution of the African Union under the Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI). 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. <http://cieffa.au.int>

For further information please contact:

1. **Azwe Success Barbara**, Communications Officer | African Union International Center for Girls & Women’s Education in Africa | African Union Commission **WhatsApp:** +226 64 90 44 95 | **E-mail:** BarbaraS@africa-union.org | Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
2. **Gamal Eldin Ahmed A. Karrar**, Senior Communication Officer - Information and Communication Directorate | African Union Commission **Tel:** +251 904 138 354 | **E-mail:** gamalk@africa-union.org | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia