

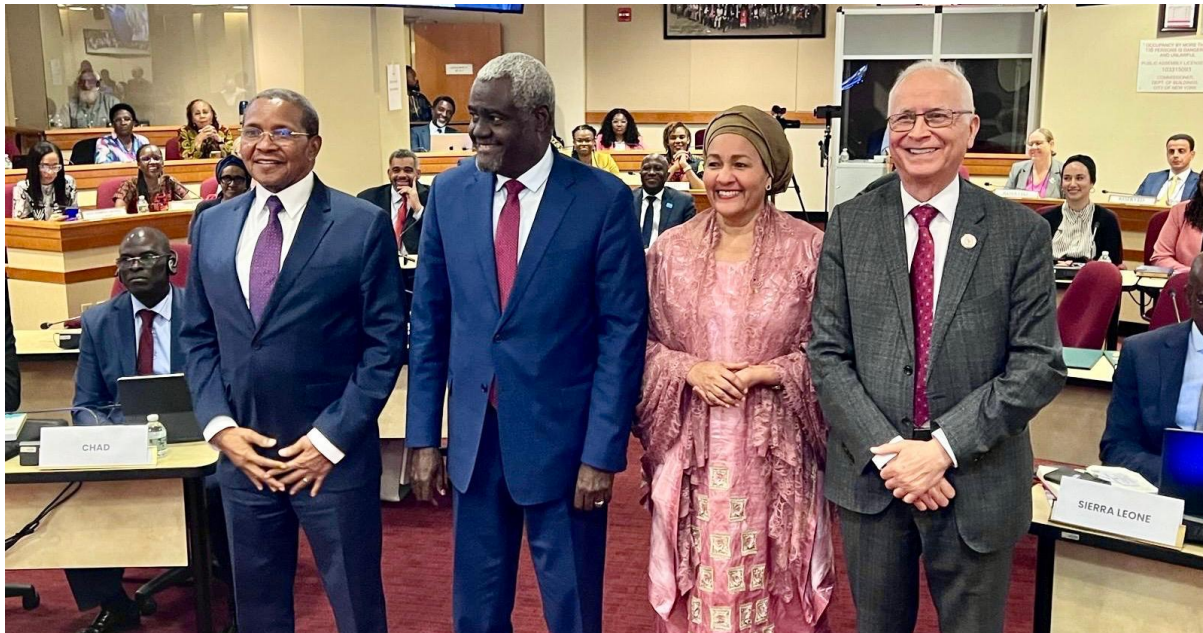
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Investing in Tomorrow: The African Union Year of Education Catalyzing Progress for Africa and the World: Commemorating the African Union's Year of Education



The high-level event titled *“Investing in Tomorrow: The African Union Year of Education Catalyzing Progress for Africa and the World”* concluded with a strong commitment to building resilient quality education for all. The event held on the margins of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA79), commemorated the mid-term of the African Union's (AU) *2024 Year of Education* and underscored the urgent need to transform education systems across the continent.

Hosted by H.E. Mohammed Belhocine, AU Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, Board Chair of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili, CEO of Human Capital Africa (HCA), this significant gathering brought together Ministers, global policymakers, and educational stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to transforming education systems in Africa.

In his opening remarks, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, AUC Chairperson, underscored the critical need to guarantee peace and human, particularly for those who are marginalised and discriminated against and the most vulnerable groups, young girls and women, people with disabilities etc. He added that education sectors notably health, t are the most affected by instability caused by conflicts among others.

The AUC Chairperson further highlighted that education is a beacon of hope and an engine of progress. It empowers individuals, strengthens communities, builds nations, breaks the chains of poverty and lays the foundation for a prosperous and equitable society. *“The African Union's commitment to prioritizing education reflects our unwavering belief that knowledge provides the power to break barriers, challenge societal norms and create a more equitable world.”* He noted.

H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, Former President of Tanzania and Board Chair of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), stressed that investments in education are investments in securing a

better future for Africa. He said “achieving the Africa we want hinges on our commitment to invest in young Africans. Too few governments are meeting the global benchmark of spending 15-20% of national budgets on education. Yet the returns on education are immense: a 1% improvement in learning outcomes can translate to a 7.2% increase in annual economic growth. By 2050, an educated and skilled population could boost per capita incomes in Africa by 50% by 2050. To unlock this potential, we need focused investments, a relentless focus on learning – especially for the most marginalized children – robust support for our educators, and diverse and innovative partnerships. Only then we can ensure that our children—and our nations—thrive”. Underlined GPE Board Chair.

Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili , CEO of Human Capital Africa (HCA), on her part, said the AU commission needs to focus on education for many more years. She added that there is need for accountability mechanisms and frameworks to ensure inclusive lifelong, quality and relevant learning in Africa. .

Farida Ally, GPE Youth leader underlined the need to ensure young people are seen and heard.

Amb. Claver Gatete, Executive secretary of UNECA emphasized that education needs a revolution, and for Africa to achieve its goal, there is need work together in unity as “united we are strong”...

Winnie Byanyima, UNAIDS Executive Director mentioned the importance to focus on girls – some girls are not in school, as they are most vulnerable.

The Ministers from Sierra Leone, Kenya Chad, Malawi, took the floor respectively and stressed that substantial investment – and innovative financing is important, they also mentioned the need to improve foundational learning outcomes.

H.E. Mohammed Belhocine, AU Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, reiterated that this event on commemoration of the AU Year of Education, is a call to action, “to redouble our efforts in building resilient education systems that ensure no child is left behind....our journey continues and today marks a reaffirmation of our commitments as we continue to walk the path toward realizing Agenda 2063, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), and SDG Goal 4” Emphasised Commissioner Belhocine.

The high-level event focused on the need strengthening political will, boosting investment in education, and showcasing successful models of educational transformation.

Education has remained a cornerstone of Africa’s development agenda, as reflected in the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the global Sustainable Development Goal 4. Under the 2024 theme “*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 AU has spearheaded a series of initiatives aimed at increasing access to quality education across the continent.

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