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HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Enhancing policies and practices to promote STEM- focused TVET for women and girls

**24 January, 2018
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Welcome statement

**Commissioner,
Human Resources,
Science and Technology**

- Your Excellency, Mr Jakaya Kikwete, Former President, Tanzania
- Your Excellency, Mrs Fatoumamba Jallow Tambajang, Vice-President, Gambia
- Your Excellency, Ine Eriksen Soereide, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- Your Excellencies, Ministers of Education, Gender and Finance
- Experts from the Ministries of Education
- Dear partners and actors for the development of Africa,
- Experts and consultants
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

It's a great honor for me and a pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, to warmly welcome all of you to the beautiful city of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia and to the African Union Commission. I then want to .express my sincere gratitude to the Royal Norwegian Embassy of Addis Ababa as well as the programme main partners: UNESCO, UNICEF and Save the Children. My gratitude also goes to all participants for having responded to our invitation to take part in this important meeting to exchange and share valuable experiences on a topic that constitutes one of the major priorities of the African Union in the domain of education in general, and girls' and women's education in particular. In fact, the retention of girls and women in education systems through quality deliverables has become a no negotiable aspect for all education actors and for all African Union Member States.

As you already know, among the AU priorities, over the past years, the education struggle has been to set goals, objectives and actions to fast track access for all and retention for girls in order to reach effective achievement of students. More and more, Africa requires strengthened capacities of human capital in general and girls and women's empowerment and well-built capacities at all levels, from the institutional to the individual level.

In our common efforts to reach the outcomes and accomplish the development goals, we have made commitments for the urgent implementation of adopted frameworks and decisions related to gender equality in education systems. It is noticeable that various changes are happening, but need to be accelerated whilst all education actors are engaged for fast and sustainable changes, mainstreaming inclusive and quality education at all levels.

Therefore, within this second edition of the High Level Dialogue (HLD), through the experience sharing between education experts, I want us to put emphasis on the importance of STEM as learning subjects education, leading us to revisit the role of TVET through STEM, to consider clear and direct investment in the domain in order to prepare future technicians, technologists, and engineers and to fast-track empowerment of a new generation of concerned young girls and women. The ultimate goal is to ensure that Africa benefits from its human resources so that we see well trained, highly equipped and specifically skilled to effectively contribute to the development of their continent.

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Edition of High Level Dialogue must allow us to enhance political commitment and support in **investing in girls and women's education with a special focus on girls' self-confidence in STEM and TVET to strengthen engagement towards gender-responsive budgeting, including STEM and TVET education and recommending continental review outlining progress made by countries in quality learning and high rates of retention of girls and young women in STEM and TVET, as well their future access to labor markets for competitive jobs**. If accomplished, those efforts will facilitate the development and effective implementation of pertinent programmes of action that build technical, technological and engineering capacities, and change the entire landscape of female professionals in Africa.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all agree that, if we are to achieve gender equity and equality and ensure the full participation of all segments of African human resources, then all training fields should be mobilized and made accessible for all, in all sector of education. Appropriate investment must follow and support quality and pertinent learning and acquisitions. Thus, girls and women in all fields of STEM, TVET, engineering, in all types of job should be part and parcel of the learning process. Political will and commitment is required. Parents and leaders' guidance and support have become extremely necessary not only at the orientation level, but also in the skills and capacities gaining and the empowerment process. In consequence, not only there is urgency to look into the learning contents and teaching strategies, but also to guide and support the educational and professional choices of the females who wish to give themselves capacity, knowledge and skills for better contribution to development.

The African Union through the AU/CIEFFA needs to continue mainstreaming all the target groups involved, namely the youth, girls and young women; we have the duty to prepare them for delivering up to their full potential to serve their community. In the process of this HLD, AU/CIEFFA will be consulting its partners and envision with them, the setting-up of relevant strategies that would enable, beyond girls' retention in educational systems, their personal success and professional accomplishment.

Before closing my statement, I would like to express my appreciation to AU/CIEFFA for their excellent work accomplished so far to push the girls and women's education agenda for Africa. I would also express my gratitude to Norway for its financial support to AU/CIEFFA's program and for this fruitful collaboration enabling to mobilize energies and expertise, thus building up this good synergy in actions. I would also thank our education partners and consultants who have always supported our efforts to move forward education in Africa. To all participants, thank you very much for the inputs that they will make to the discussions at this 2018 HLD. Finally, I commend my collaborators from the department of HRST, and other AUC Colleagues for their efforts towards moving the 2063 agenda and CESA forward, in perfect harmony with international strategies for girls' and women's education.

Long live Africa! Vive l'Afrique

Thank you!