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OPENING STATEMENT

BY

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COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

ON THE OCCASION OF

**WORKSHOP ON TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR PEACE-
BUILDING IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND SURROUNDING COUNTRIES**

22ND – 23RD MAY, 2018

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor and pleasure to welcome all the guests that have travelled great distances to be present for this workshop.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Japanese Embassy of Ethiopia and the Government of Japan for your support to this important endeavour.

Special thanks to UNESCO IICBA for co-organizing this very important event.

The vision of the African Union is a peaceful integrated prosperous Africa drive by its own citizens representing a dynamic force in the global arena. Africa's desire for shared prosperity and well-being, for unity and integration, for a continent of free citizens and expanded horizons, where the full potential of women and youth, boys and girls are realized, and with freedom from fear, disease and want, could only be achieved by ensuring that education plays its role as the key agent for sustainable peace- as Education is the key tool to teach and nurture compassion, empathy for others, and learning to live together. Where there is education, teaching and teachers are the core of the theme.

Aspiration 4 of the Agenda 2063 emphasizes that "a culture of peace and tolerance shall be nurtured in Africa's children and youth through peace education." The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) calls for peace education and safeguarding education in times of emergency, and ensuring safe teaching and learning environments. The strategy recognises that peacebuilding would not be sustainable if the efforts are not mainstreamed in education and implanted in the minds of young people. The Teacher is therefore key in ensuring peace seeking dispositions and conflict avoidance mind-sets responsible citizenship. It is essential that we explore and develop ways and means of building the capacity of teachers to make every subject an opportunity for peace.

We also know that experience sharing and dialogue are crucial components of all peacebuilding efforts.

It is for this reason that this consultation and experience sharing workshop has high value in complementing and advancing the common efforts of AU member states in peacebuilding towards the Africa We Want

With education as a key platform for peacebuilding, teachers play an imperative role in transforming the minds of young people. The UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security puts youth at the very heart of peacebuilding efforts.

Africa is the most youthful continent with 70 % population under 35 years of age- and will continue to be so for another decade or two. This offers the continent a unique opportunity to leverage its economic, social and political development in order to realize the demographic dividends. The demographic dividend discourse calls for improved access to quality education and skills development, employment and entrepreneurship, access to health information and services in a peaceful environment guided by good governance.

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa – a domestication of SDG 4- calls for compulsory completion of secondary education; and enhancing access to tertiary education and TVET. It calls for ensuring safe and peaceful teaching and learning environments, and for education to nurture values for responsible citizenship. With less than 50% of children and youth currently completing secondary education in Africa and less than 10% accessing University and other tertiary institutions, we must do more to enhance access, including by building more and safer schools and colleges. Optimising the agency of education for peace demands universal access to education.

Attacks on schools contributes to drop outs and underperformance in education. Attacks on the mind through promotion of negative conflictual attitudes, is an attack on our very existence. We must endeavour to protect education and protect schools during emergencies; besides training teachers as agents of peace building and of the development of peaceable attitudes.

The Teacher is in the driving seat for this process. Teachers must be equipped to play active roles in peace building processes and see a reflection of their work in the society, because success in all professions and over all development is a direct result of success of the teaching profession.

As part of the implementation of CESA (16-25) in the area of peace, we have together with stakeholders and member states, established a thematic Cluster on Peace and Education. The Cluster covers matters related to Safe Schools, Peace education, education for prevention of violent extremism, education during emergencies and conflicts, research in peace and education, as well as media literacy as an important education tool. The Coordinating agency for this Cluster is Save the Children International, assisted by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) including the ADEA Inter-Country Quality Node on Peace. IICBA is appreciated as a strong member of the Cluster, whose work in education for prevention of violent extremism is helping to ensure that young people are provided with the training and support required to engage as active citizens and lead the global

movement towards the creation of a peaceful world. With SCI, the Group of Friends of Children Affected by Armed Conflict has been established, for undertaking peer to peer advocacy for more member states to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and its implementation. Teacher Training and Development for Peace Building in the Horn of Africa and Surrounding countries is an important factor in this endeavour. We are also working within the Cluster to carry out a survey on safe schools in Member States.

The African Union Peace and Security Council has been seized of issues of children in conflict over the years. On separate occasions since 2016 the Council recommended that every PSC report to the Summit of AU Heads of State and government must contain a section on children in armed conflicts. Such is the high value accorded the issue.

Humanitarian responses in Africa are increasingly incorporating School feeding as which has been instrumental in bringing children back to school in crisis context. To mention some of them:

- In Niger, cantines d'urgence (emergency canteens) have been set up to minimise the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency
- Egypt has also set up school feeding for Syrian refugee
- In Eastern DRC in schools that receive IDPs, returnees, or refugees;
- Sahrawi refugee camps SF Programme

At the AUC, HRST department is working with other AU Departments for the integration of protecting education and facilitating the provision of continuous education at all times and under all circumstances in Africa, into various sectoral frameworks. This is indeed a cross-cutting issue that will be best addressed through multi-sectoral collaboration.

Safe schools require also appropriate standards for infrastructure and school environments; as well as relevant competence-based curricula and pedagogies; including promoting peace education.

We will have to strengthen education management information systems- including data collection- which must include indicators for measuring vulnerability; identification of at-risk schools, students and teachers; and determination of the impact of various interventions. We also need to measure the impact of new interventions including peace education.

Teachers have huge responsibility in promoting peace and mutual respect among students and communities where they work so as to help prevent violence in schools through increased awareness and knowledge.

This event will provide opportunities for nurturing networking and exchange in areas of peace education and the precious role of teachers. This event is therefore timely

and significant for the AU in its endeavour to harness the demographic dividend for the continent's development, by ensuring, among others, that children and youth are well educated, trained and empowered for meaningful and dignified lives, are able to think critically, make choices concerning their careers and are able to inculcate desirable values, attitudes, competences and skills to contribute to the continent's vision of peace, integration and prosperity. Young people growing old without quality education represent the biggest threat to achieving this vision of the Africa We Want.

Every one of us has a role to play in educating for peace. We shall work together to support the integration of peace education into education curricula.

I look forward to the outcomes of these debates and discussions, and to new partnerships for ensuring that education is protected as a human right, and as the key to achieving our desired peace, social economic development and shared prosperity, in ways that are systemic. Our children and youth are our future; peace is life; teachers are key for equipping students with compassion, tolerance, living together in love; and education is our chief hope for building peaceful societies for the African we want.

Thank you for your attention