

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Dr. Moinina David Sengeh

Opening Remarks

The 7th High Level Dialogue on Gender Equality in Education opening ceremony

Date: :14th February 2023,
AUC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

- **Honourable Ministers of Education Uganda**
- **Commissioner ESTI HE Prof Mohammed Belhocine**
- **Honourable Ministers TVET Ghana**
- **Honourable delegates and representatives of AU Member States;**
- **Representatives of the UN Agencies**
- **CEO of Global Partnership Education (GPE)**
- **Director of UNAIDS to the African Union;**
- **Ladies and gentlemen, All protocol observed.**

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents an opportunity for Member States of the African Union to develop a long-term development strategy for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse. For this to be possible, the human capital must be sufficiently equipped to face this new phase of Africa. The current estimated 1.354 billion African population is projected to be the source of the global workforce by 2035; 40% are below 15 years and more than half of this human capital is female. There is a consensus by African leadership that it is high time concrete emphasis are laid on contributions that the African female human capital brings to the table in fulfilling the development aspirations.

It is no secret that education is one of the most powerful weapons in the fight against extreme poverty. 130 million girls across the world are out of school and 56 million are in Africa alone. As a result, the entire continent misses out by not benefitting from their potential. Educating our youth particularly the girls is a crucial component of achieving

success, especially in the context of trade and entrepreneurship. The government of Sierra Leone launched its “radical inclusion” programme in 2018, aiming to get millions more children into school by offering free, quality education to all youngsters with special focus on the girl child. We are spending almost a quarter of the national budget on education.

Investing in girls’ education, especially in STEAM and TVET, is therefore investing in one of the most effective levers for development for the continent. STEAM and TVET will enable the training that will help in equipping our girls with relevant skills and knowledge to produce skilled and competent human capital. It is imperative for Members States to invest in skills’ development for girls to enhance their capacities not only to facilitate a smooth transition from school to the job market but also to innovate.

Member States and governments, development partners, experts, and youth advocates, let us all put hands on deck to produce, a youth population who is ready to take advantage of the historic AfCFTA by investing in the quality education of girls and women.

I thank you

Information and Communication Directorate, African Union Commission | **E-mail:** DIC@africa-union.org

Web: www.au.int | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | **Follow Us:** [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)