

ADEA Strategic
Medium-Term Plan
(2008-2012)


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Changing without losing our identity

The Strategic Plan – presented here in abridged form – is the result of a collective effort by the members of ADEA's extended family in all its diversity. The Plan bears the marks of this participatory formulation: it was built up through a recursive, spiraling process and can be read from a number of different angles. It arrived in very timely fashion, at a critical moment in ADEA's history. A veritable crossroads of transitions! To wit: the transfer of ADEA headquarters from Paris (i.e. the North) to Tunis (i.e. Africa); the extension of ADEA's remit to include North Africa as well as sub-Saharan Africa; the inauguration of a strategic partnership with the African Union via a protocol agreement backed by the heads of state of the African Union at the Xth summit; a change of leadership in both the executive arm (the Secretariat) and governing bodies (the Steering Committee and Bureau of Ministers); not to mention the turning points observed in ADEA's priority fields of activity, such as development aid and educational cooperation in Africa, education for all and post-primary education; and lastly, the new forms and terms of partnership for which it has worked so hard, involving sector-wide approaches, flexibility, coordination, long-term assistance, harmonization and aid effectiveness.

The Strategic Plan is a valuable tool to guide and operationalize ADEA's responses to these changes and to the challenges they entail for the Association's future progress. The fact is that transitions give rise to questioning, reappraisals, doubts and new quests, because they create instability, propelling those involved into a sort of maelstrom where past, present and future come together. It is thus particularly fortunate that the formulation of the Strategic Plan gave the members of ADEA a chance to engage in collegial reflection and to search together for shared understandings, analyses and answers. Considering the diversity of affiliations and interests in the ADEA network, the plan fostered the emergence of a consensus-based frame of reference that is supposed to cement agreement – if not unanimous then at least reflecting a convergence of views – concerning both the setting of priorities and evaluation of the progress made. The internal dialogue will certainly gain in clarity, depth and coherence as a result. The Strategic Plan does more than simply set out the vision of ADEA's future and purpose; it also translates ADEA's fundamental policy stances and leading ideas into concrete action plans, while at the same time repositioning the organization to reflect the priority given to regional dialogue and partnerships. ADEA's governance, structure and mode of operation, reviewed in detail for the plan, should gain in efficiency owing to the sharper focus of its activity, as will management, operational planning and accountability. So much for the primary effects of the plan.

We should note, however, if only as a secondary consideration, that the Strategic Plan also entails risks. First and foremost, the risk of being sidetracked from ADEA's real purpose, and of stifling its uniqueness, which constitutes the source of its added value. In this respect, serious consideration needs to be given to the managerial and technical-minded temptation to take. The strategic plan as grounds for applying to ADEA the rigid rules and practices that govern traditional institutions,



especially since this temptation arises not from the intentions of individuals but from the often imperceptible assimilation and mechanical transfer of habits of thought and action from one context to another, without taking the precaution of gauging the differences between these contexts, and hence the consequences of the transfer. As an informal network, ADEA offers a relaxed venue that fosters free, open expression and dialogue. This is why it gives rise to unique, critical and innovative discussions among stakeholders who interact with one another quite differently in other venues, particularly in formal frameworks. In other words, administrative and managerial considerations must not be allowed to stifle the logic of development and innovation. And the latter depends precisely on this informal culture and on the flexibility that enables ADEA to respond quickly to changing needs, to changing demand – in short, to the shifting agenda of education-related dialogue and partnerships in an Africa in the process of construction or reconstruction.

In the same vein, the legitimate desire to have concrete evidence of the progress made, for purposes of performance evaluation, should not, in practice, distract ADEA from its focus on processes of long-term change. For, as ADEA members well know, deep-rooted changes – changes in views, paradigms, attitudes, relationships and practices – among the key stakeholders who design and implement educational reforms and innovations take time to emerge and thus cannot be evaluated over the short term alone.

Ultimately, what is at issue is less the instrument (i.e. the strategic plan) than the way it is to be used. If applied dogmatically, it will be not be a treasure but an ordeal for this network that produces such fruitful discussions and partnerships.

How then should it be used to bring about needed change while preserving ADEA's identity?

This is the question faced by those responsible for directing the implementation of this strategic plan. There is no simple answer, but in fact what the question requires is constant vigilance, used as a sort of radar to avoid pitfalls and stay on course. Knowing as I do the remarkable intelligence and sense of balance of ADEA's collective management, I have no doubt whatsoever that it will rise to the challenge. In any case, it is my fervent hope that ADEA embark successfully on its new course, so that it may continue to enhance and improve its invaluable contribution to the progress of education and training in Africa.

Mamadou Ndoye¹
September 2008

1.Mamadou Ndoye was Executive Secretary of ADEA between October 2001 and July 2008.

I. A strategic plan for ADEA:

Why and how?

Articulation vis-à-vis broad aims and measurement of progress

ADEA's decision to develop a strategic plan resulted from a recommendation made in an external evaluation of the organization conducted in 2005. The evaluation report affirmed that, to address concerns over the relevance of its activities, ADEA needed to take two actions:

- 1) link its activities more explicitly to the general policy directions set forth in ADEA's vision paper² by establishing clear, solid linkages between the strategic objectives of the organization and its main concrete lines of action, between its medium-term plan and its annual programs;
- 2) develop a performance assessment framework for purposes of regularly evaluating progress in carrying out ADEA's mission on the basis of criteria and indicators defined in a consensual manner.

An exercise of this sort, undertaken twenty years after the founding of ADEA, naturally offered the opportunity:

- 1) to reposition the organization activity in a changed context; and,
- 2) to review its organizational structure, system of governance, operational and management rules, and operational methods in the light of this repositioning.

Participatory development of the plan

The development of the strategic framework involved all stakeholders in ADEA: ministers of education, development agencies, working groups, as well as experts and practitioners in African education. From the initial discussions at the March 2006 Biennale to the final adoption of the framework in October 2007, a truly interactive process was set in motion – through the discussions held in four Steering Committee and Bureau of Ministers meetings, two meetings with the working committee, and several working sessions of the sub-group in charge of following up on the strategic framework for which remote consultations were ongoing for nearly a year. The plan developed through this process thus represents the collective work of ADEA's extended family.

2. From Past to Future: Continuity and Change, Mamadou Ndoye and Ingemar Gustafsson, in ADEA 2003.

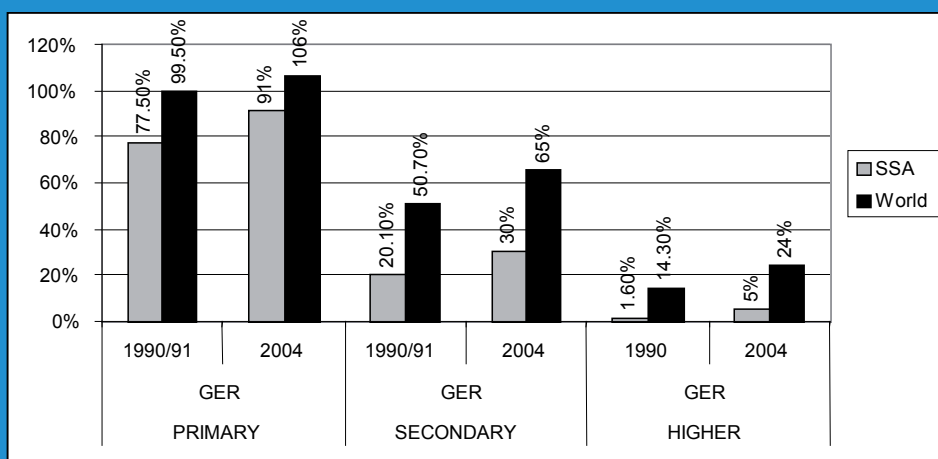
II. Repositioning ADEA within the current context

The context of ADEA's mission is affected by factors at many levels (international, regional, national and local) and in many different spheres of activity (political, economic, social, cultural and financial). However, ADEA's twin focus on education and Africa leads us to highlight a number of key factors.

Significant progress in education in Africa...

Access to education has increased considerably at all levels of the system in the past 10-15 years:

Figure 1: Access to primary, secondary and higher education in sub-Saharan Africa (1990/91 to 2003/04)



GER : Gross Enrolment Ratio

Rates of transition between primary and secondary education rose from 58% in 1990/91 to 80% in 2002/03, testifying to African countries' determination to increase the number of years of compulsory schooling.

... but also persistent challenges

Despite this progress, the stock of educated people is still insufficient. Only 61% of African adults over 15 years of age are literate, compared to a world average of 82%.

School-life expectancy in Africa (7.6 years in 2003/04) is well below the world average (10.7 years). Moreover, the stock of education is unequally distributed, owing to disparities linked to gender, even more so to the area inhabited (rural or urban), and to social status.

What needs to be improved goes well beyond school systems' intake capacity. In this respect, the following problems can be cited:

- the unequal distribution of educational resources;
- school systems' low level of efficiency, with high drop-out and repetition rates;
- the mediocre quality of education measured in terms of learning outcomes;
- the weak link between the education provided and the needs of the economy and society.

A difficult environment for education

It must be emphasized that these general trends mask a great variety of situations from country to country, and even between regions within a country. This can be explained as follows :

- a large proportion of the population, perhaps even the majority, suffers from poverty;
- the civil conflicts, wars, epidemics and pandemics (e.g. HIV/AIDS) that are devastating parts of Africa;
- limitations upon resources, which can be aggravated by bad governance, corrup-

tion, technological backwardness, the brain drain etc.

Nonetheless, there are some reasons for hope

Some positive developments are emerging:

- the gradual democratization of states, reinforced by decentralization and the more positive and active involvement of civil society;
- alternative development strategies in the informale economy and the resumption of economic growth at levels well above that of population growth;
- debt alignment, which has increased the financing possibilities for social sectors such as education.

Opportunities to be seized: international and continental agreements and frameworks

In order to give fresh impetus to these processes of change and development, a number of major initiatives have been launched, including:

> *At the international level*

- the World Education Forum held in Dakar (April 2000), following a World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, supported by the World EFA Monitoring Report team, the High-Level Group on EFA and the Fast-Track Initiative;
- the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (September 2000).

These initiatives have had a catalytic effect on development aid in terms of volume and effectiveness and have reinforced the central position of education in the development process.

> *At the African level*

- the Plan of Action of the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) launched by the African Union;
- Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action developed by NEPAD.

These programs commit African leadership at the highest level to consider education, research and innovation as priorities on the competitive development agenda, in a globalization process marked by the knowledge-based economy and the emergence of knowledge societies.

For a strategic repositioning

✓ Updating and increasing the international and continental dialogue on education policy

The relocation of ADEA headquarters from the IIEP (Paris) to the AfDB (Tunis) and the extension of its scope of action from sub-Saharan Africa alone to the whole of the continent, including North Africa, do not have merely geographical significance. Through these processes, ADEA has affirmed even more strongly its African focus and ownership, which should give greater strength, richness and consistency to

the dialogue and partnership with North Africa, which it is part of ADEA's mission to promote. In addition to better representation of Africa's diversity, ADEA has thus risen to the same level as continental organizations, with which it can now cooperate fully owing to its enlarged scope. This has already led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union, and to hopes of a strategic partnership in order to give a new impetus to continental dialogue on education, particularly with regard to the seven priorities of the Second Decade, namely:

- ① gender and culture;
- ② the strengthening of education management information systems through the creation of an observatory of African education;
- ③ teachers' professional development;
- ④ promotion of higher education;
- ⑤ reforms in technical education and vocational training;
- ⑥ the strengthening of teaching programs and materials with emphasis on mathematics and technology, the use of African languages, and the adaptation of curricula;
- ⑦ improvement in quality.

NEPAD's Consolidated Plan of Action, which focuses on science and technology, supplements the program of the Second Decade. It emphasizes:

- the establishment of networks of centers of excellence which concentrate on specific research and development programs and on capacity building;
- the development on this basis of a system of scientific and technical research

and innovation in key sectors for African development.

In its repositioning, ADEA should link these priorities to international opportunities and to the challenges facing education in the current context, as noted above, particularly to increasing the efficiency and equity of education systems, improving their quality and making them more relevant and more responsive to economic and societal demands, while taking the following into consideration:

(i) the need to take a holistic approach to educational development and, (ii) the demands of a globalization process marked by the scientific and technological revolution, which is driving the development of the knowledge-based economy and knowledge societies.

✔ Supporting forward-looking study and understanding of new approaches and methods of educational cooperation in Africa

The transition from the project approach to the sector-wide approach composed of various forms of aid has enhanced coordination among donors as well as the leadership of African countries. The Monterrey Consensus (2000), the Rome Declaration (February 2003) and the Paris Declaration (March 2005) all affirmed the need to improve the effectiveness of aid through harmonization of policies and operational procedures and practices with those of partner countries. However, the shift from principles to practice represents a challenge and, above all, a real

learning process for both aid agencies and recipient ministries. In this respect, ADEA should play a monitoring, evaluation and support role, informing the dialogue between its two components with the lessons learned from experience.

Furthermore, the transformation of approaches to educational cooperation is far from complete. ADEA should undertake a forward-looking study to identify the new challenges that are emerging and to explore methods of analysis and treatment.

✔ Promoting factors and conditions conducive to success and innovation in education

Emulation of models can help bring about transformation, particularly where conditions are relatively similar. Successful experiences relating to nearly all of the challenges facing education in Africa have been brought to the fore, particularly since the year 2000. For these successes to serve as models for other initiatives, it is necessary not only to identify and describe each experience but above all to analyze them so that the factors and conditions leading to their success are identified and disseminated as widely as possible. It is not a matter of reproducing these experiences as such, but of taking up the theoretical and practical challenge of re-creating the factors and conditions of success brought to light by analysis within a new context. To combat Afro-pessimism by promoting an Africa that succeeds through analytical work, documentation, dissemination of and support

to innovation and reform is the particular concern of ADEA, its Working Groups, its ad hoc Working Groups, and to the ADEA network in general. The integration of Northern Africa into its network and remit should allow ADEA to renew and enrich this work, in order to continue to inform the dialogue on education policy and the changes occurring in education.

✓ Accumulating and pooling knowledge and expertise as means of building African capacities

Building technical and institutional capacity is a process of learning and of transformation. It cannot be reduced to training provided in traditional fashion by a specialized institution. It can be brought about in various ways, and those which ADEA should pursue in priority are linked to its assets as a network of networks, to its membership (which includes all African ministers of education), to its role as an interface between policymaking and research, and to its working methods (dialogue, analytical work, exchange and dissemination). The Working Groups bring together the expertise of ministries, aid agencies and specialized institutions, both African and Northern, through collegial reflection, research and exchanges of experiences with regard to the challenges relating to a specific aspect of education.

In the inter-country quality nodes, stakeholders facing similar challenges join forces to share their analyses of problems encountered and solutions tested. This inter-learning process broadens their awa-

reness and comprehension of such problems, while at the same time it extends the range of possible solutions and allows stakeholders to master the methods and instruments used in analysis, policy formulation, management and monitoring, implementation and evaluation.

The praxis approach – in which ADEA urges countries to evaluate their own experiences, to analyze the factors and conditions of success, to build up a capital of lessons learned with a view to “reinvesting” this capital in the improvement of their own activities and/or for purposes of inter-learning with other countries during the Biennales and other African meetings – is another means of capacity building. The ad hoc working groups support these processes with regard to specific problems.

ADEA has a pool of experts including its working groups, and can thus, on request, provide expert support in the form of assistance with methods and instruments to national teams involved in a critical phase of project development or evaluation. Such support equips the national team with instruments and renders it autonomous, as the expert does not act as a substitute for the team but rather allows it to learn by doing, while providing the tools it needs to undertake the project itself. At the end of this process, the national team is supposed to be able to carry out such work without further help in the future.

III. ADEA's vision of the future and mission

Pioneering network for change in education

By repositioning itself with regard to the current major trends and challenges in education in Africa as a collective stakeholder involved in forward-looking research and a catalyst for reform and innovation, ADEA is projecting itself into its vision of the future:

VISION

ADEA becomes a leader in the process of dialogue, sharing and learning for the qualitative transformation of education in support of Africa's development.

As a pioneering institution, it should focus on:

- ✓ issues relating to the new forms of educational cooperation;
- ✓ implementation of the African Union's Second Education Decade and the NEPAD Plan of Action;
- ✓ the accumulation of experiences and knowledge with regard to the changes taking place in education within African contexts;
- ✓ the networking of experts, actors and partners in education and training;
- ✓ the exploration of and experimentation with emerging themes and future challenges in education.

Promoting innovative policies and practices for the qualitative transformation of education

In this positioning, ADEA's mission is:

MISSION

To act as a catalyst of innovative policies and practices for change in education through the pooling of ideas, experiences, learning and knowledge.

ADEA carries out its mission in the following way :

- ✓ by placing the new challenges raised by changing contexts and needs on the agenda for policy dialogue and cooperation;
- ✓ by identifying innovative policies and practices so that they can be analyzed and shared;
- ✓ by promoting interactions that are conducive to changes in vision, approach, practices or attitudes regarding needed reforms;
- ✓ by involving the African education community and its partners in the process of critical and creative thought.

IV. The medium-term plan

Objectives

On the basis of the preceding analysis, ADEA has set itself the following goal and objectives:

Overall goal:

To contribute to the development of equitable and high-quality education in Africa through concerted efforts by African governments and their partners and through the establishment of a favorable political and social climate, and thus provide effective support to African nations in the achievement of international and continental objectives with regard to education.

Strategic objective 1

To encourage the development and shared understanding of coordinated and effective action on the part of the stakeholders mainly responsible for tackling the major challenges facing educational development in Africa.

Strategic objective 2

To contribute to the achievement of objectives concerning continental and regional integration within the education sector, as defined by the African Union and its NEPAD program through the Plan of Action of the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006–2011) and the Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action.

Strategic objective 3

To produce knowledge and lessons drawn from successful experiences in areas that are critical to the qualitative transformation of education in Africa, in order to strengthen policy and build reform capacity.

Strategic objective 4

To disseminate as widely as possible the messages and the results accumulated by ADEA through policy dialogue, analytical research and exchange, in order to support the sharing of knowledge, inter-learning and capacity building.

Strategic objective 5

To improve the ADEA's performance in the areas of management, planning, evaluation and accountability, while reinforcing institutional capacity and organizational mechanisms.

Activities

The details for implementing the medium-term plan are varied and will evolve through iterations, continued evaluation and emerging information and dialogue. Currently planned activities include:

- ✓ the Biennales, ministerial conferences, seminars, workshops and various other meetings (Steering Committee, Bureau of Ministers, Caucus of Ministers, inter-agency meetings);
- ✓ development of partnerships and networks;
- ✓ research and analytic work;
- ✓ exchanges of experience, inter-learning and capacity building;
- ✓ export of experience and experimentation;
- ✓ advice and assistance in policy matters;
- ✓ production and dissemination of information through publications, the newsletter, the ADEA website and databases;
- ✓ advocacy activities;
- ✓ launching and/or organization of awards and other actions to promote and recognize achievement;
- ✓ creation and organization of inter-country quality nodes and ad hoc Working Groups;
- ✓ management and administration of ADEA's program

Financial resources

The total budget for the 2008-2012 period amounts to US\$40 million, allocated as follows:

General program	\$19.2 million
Support to WGs	\$16.0 million
Overhead	\$ 1.6 million
Reserves	\$ 3.2 million
Total	\$40.0 million

The main sources of financing are annual dues, voluntary contributions to programs or contributions targeted to the activities of ADEA members, and general contributions (unrestricted).

Technical resources

The bodies mainly responsible for implementing the plan are the Secretariat, the Working Groups, the ad hoc Working Groups and the inter-country quality nodes.

In addition to the Executive Secretary, in charge of coordination, it is planned that the Secretariat should include:

- three education specialists;
- three communication, publications, and knowledge-management specialists;
- three finance and administration specialists.

The Working Groups, ADEA's professional tools, work on critical areas of education in Africa in which they have comparative advantages. There are currently nine of them :

- ✓ Communication for Education and Development
- ✓ Early Childhood Development
- ✓ Non-Formal Education
- ✓ Distance Education and Open Learning
- ✓ Higher Education
- ✓ Books and Learning Materials
- ✓ The Teaching Profession
- ✓ Education Management and Policy Support
- ✓ Mathematics and Science

Activities are principally directed toward: (a) research and analytical work, (b) exploration and experimentation, (c) capacity building, (d) advocacy, and (e) networking. In the future, a system of evaluation and monitoring of the WGs should allow for more systematic management of the creation, evaluation and graduation of Working Groups.

The ad hoc Working Groups and inter-country quality nodes are created and contribute according to needs and demand. At present, there are two ad hoc Working Groups (on post-primary education and HIV/AIDS) and five inter-country nodes. The latter are involved in teacher training and upgrading of teaching methods; bilingual education and the use of African languages in teaching; scaling up models for early childhood development; education in rural areas; and literacy.

In addition, ADEA systematically looks for partners in its various initiatives, a practice that allows it to mobilize other institutions and additional human and financial resources to engage in activities that it could not carry out solely with its own resources alone.

V.Principles and modes

of governance and operation

Culture, values and guiding principles governing ADEA's activity

Three points of reference guide ADEA's actions. First of all, partnership built up through dialogue and exchange of experiences. Partnership requires mutual recognition, respect, transparency, and sharing, which form a basis both for trust and for the new culture of cooperation in education, which is characterized by African countries' leadership and policy ownership. Next comes learning, the main focus of ADEA's strategies and objectives, which is central to policy dialogue, to the praxis approach and to capacity building. This is an active, social form of learning that establishes a culture of analysis and fosters change. This leads to commitment to social transformation, which involves ADEA in processes of change in the conceptions, attitudes, practices and relationships of stakeholders in education, resulting in new paradigms and new ways of thinking, acting and cooperating. This key focus develops a capacity for renewal and anticipation as well as forward-looking enquiry.

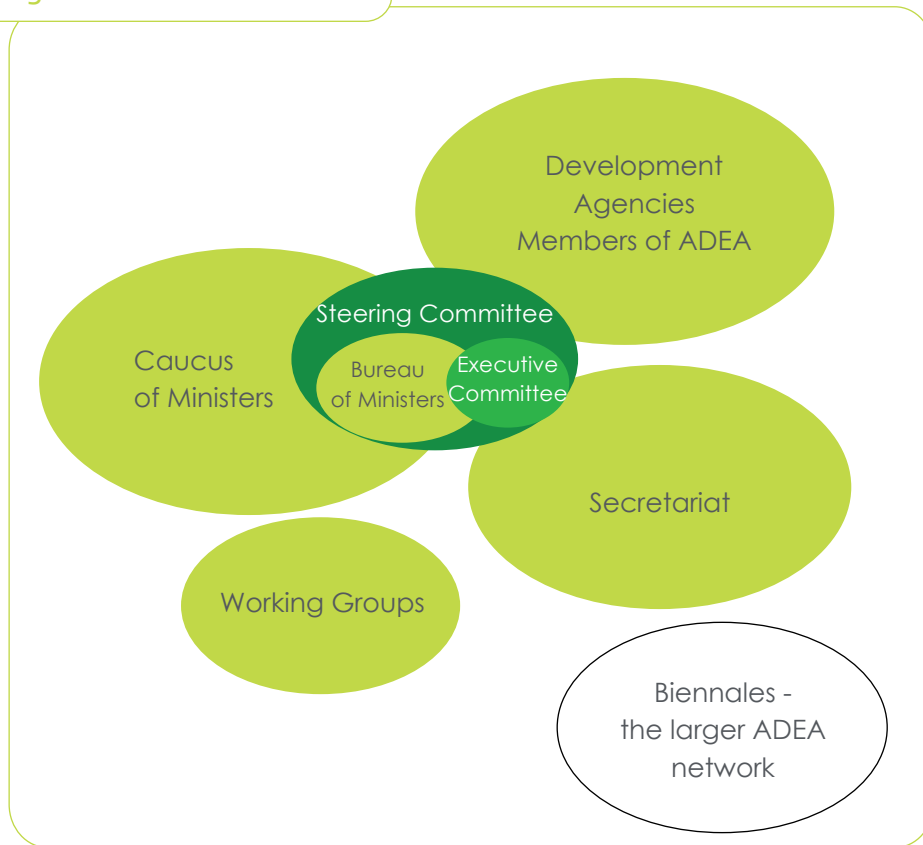
Governance of ADEA

ADEA is directed by a Steering Committee composed of 21 aid agency representatives and 10 African ministers of education. The Steering Committee is the decision-making body for policies and strategic issues such as the medium-term plan, the future of Working Groups and ad hoc Working Groups, external relations, program quality and the budget.

It is backed up by an Executive Committee which handles the details of the annual program, budgets and budgetary allocation and settles questions relating to finance and administration.

The Bureau of African Ministers and the group of member agencies are consultative bodies. The Steering Committee is made up of their representatives. The Bureau of Ministers is composed of ten African ministers of Education representing the five regions of Africa (Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa and Western Africa).

Organization of ADEA



ADEA functions through what may be called "structured informality", which allows it to be flexible and to respond rapidly to changing needs and demands.

ADEA Steering Committee member agencies and countries

Steering Committee member development and cooperation agencies

- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- European Commission
- German Cooperation
- International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)
- Rockefeller Foundation
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
- United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- The World Bank
- Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Department of Development Cooperation, Austria
- Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of International Cooperation and Development, France
- Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, Portugal
- Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

ADEA Bureau of Ministers member countries*

- Southern Africa: Mozambique and South Africa
- Central Africa: Congo Brazzaville and Republic Democratic of Congo
- Eastern Africa: Kenya and Sudan
- North Africa: Algeria and Libya
- Western Africa: Burkina Faso and The Gambia

*Composition of the Bureau of Ministers nominated by the Caucus of Ministers on May 5, 2008 in Maputo, Mozambique.