

Press release

For immediate release



Association for the
Development of
Education in
Africa

Bamako + 5: What teachers to meet the twofold challenge of quality education for all?

Bamako, 27 October 2009 – Mali's Minister of Education, Literacy and National Languages, the Hon. Salikou Sanogo, today opened the second conference on contractual teachers hosted by his country, announcing that his government has just taken measures to integrate this category of employees into the civil service of the state and local authorities. "All of these measures", he continued, "help to enhance the viability of the teaching profession and to create the financial, material, psychological and social conditions required for its development and sustainability."

Speaking to more than 200 participants representing some 20 Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African countries, development partners, teachers' unions, parent-teacher associations and other civil society organizations, the minister declared that, five years after the first Bamako conference, held in November 2004, "our education systems have made progress toward improving the living and working conditions of all teachers".

The work of the conference, continued Mr. Sanogo, is to evaluate the actions undertaken, and the conference proceedings "will provide indicators enabling us to assess the situation, reinforce what has been accomplished, and make proposals for significant improvements in our policies and strategies on the use of contractual teaching staff".

Mr. Ahlin Byll-Cataria, Executive Secretary of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), noted that the aim of this evaluation exercise is not to "bear judgment on what countries have accomplished but rather to work together to take stock of the progress made and learn from the experience of each country, not only the success stories but also the difficulties and obstacles encountered". He added that this would make it possible to take account of the greater diversity of country contexts represented at Bamako + 5, the 2004 conference having been attended only by 11 Francophone countries. He welcomed the strong participation of Lusophone and Anglophone countries.

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The ADEA Executive Secretary reminded participants that education "is not solely the responsibility of ministers of education" and "depends on consultation, coordination and collaboration with other ministries". He also noted that teacher training and support in Africa benefited from a number of initiatives as well as the mobilization of many institutions to promote the use of ICTE to broaden access to quality education for all in Africa.

On behalf of the African Union (AU), education expert Mohamed Chérif Diarra stressed the importance given to the continent-wide teacher issue in the AU's action plan for the Second Decade of Education for Africa, launched at the Khartoum summit in January 2006. Teacher development, he pointed out, is one of the seven strategic areas of focus of this plan, which puts special emphasis on "teacher mobility, and tends to encourage movement from areas with an excess of teachers to areas with a shortage". This measure, he stated, "will involve the creation of four regional training centers on the African continent".

Congratulating ADEA and the Malian government for holding the conference, the African Union representative declared: "Without good teachers there can be neither quality education nor good pupils."

Ms. Assibi Napoe, head coordinator of the African Regional Office of Education International, a coalition with 30 million members, called for the allocation of 20% of national budgets to education. She expressed concern over the worldwide economic and financial crisis and the intensifying political crises observed in Africa.

The following African countries are represented at the Bamako + 5 Conference: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zanzibar.

Bamako, 27 October 2009

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