



Opening in Rabat of the Youth Forum on Education and Training for the Sustainable Development of Africa

Young Africans are asking to be listened to more and are expressing their desire to be involved in the decisions that affect their future

Rabat, 19 October 2011. The Youth Consultation Forum on education and training for the sustainable development of Africa opened this morning in Rabat, Morocco at the headquarters of ISESCO with approximately one hundred participants in attendance. Among them are representatives of youth from the five regions of Africa, the Chair of ADEA, the resident representative of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Morocco, the representative of the Director-General of ISESCO, and representatives of the Diaspora.

The Chair of ADEA, Mr. Dzingai Mutumbuka, welcomed the participants and urged young people to play their role to the full in ensuring the proper working of education in Africa. To that end, he recalled ADEA's commitment to giving a voice to young people to allow them to express their deepest aspirations with a view to the discussions that will take place at the 2012 Triennale on education and training in Africa.

The AfDB resident representative in Morocco, Ms. Amani Abou Zeid, was fully in agreement, stating that *"youth must be placed at the heart of our national policies. We cannot combat unemployment without training programmes. Nothing will be achieved unless youth is involved in the decision process"*.

Speaking on behalf of the Director-General of ISESCO, Mr. Abdoulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Mr. Ahmed Said Ould Bah, his chief of staff, emphasized *"the empowerment of education and training in relation to the specific needs of Africa, a legitimate demand with a view to achieving the millennium development goals"*.

The Rabat gathering should allow young people to express how they see their role in skill development, to assess the strengths and weaknesses of different training pathways and to examine the training needs of African youth in order to adjust them to match the needs of the economy. Such is the vision of their leader at the Forum, Marie Tamoifo, who said to those taking part: *"Because we are the future of this continent, because it is we who will take over from the older generation, we ask to be listened to more, to be more closely involved in the decisions that affect our common future; we want to be full stakeholders in building our continent »*.

The African population is inherently young: it includes over 200 million young people aged between 15 and 24, which is approximately one third of the working age population.

Three-fifths of all African unemployed people are young. Youth unemployment is often attributed to a lack of relevant skills or a mismatch between existing skills and those required by the labour market. There are however countries where youth unemployment exists alongside high levels of education and skill. In yet other countries, despite the fact that their educational institutions turn out thousands of graduates every year, the labor market is facing major shortfalls in skills needed.

The Forum provides an opportunity for ADEA to listen to African youth as it expresses its opinions and expectations in the area of education and training in Africa. ADEA will also be listening to the views of young people on how systems of education and training should be reformed to meet their employment and career needs and act as effective instruments that will help accelerate economic growth and sustainable development.

Organized by ADEA in partnership with the Islamic International Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ISESCO), the Youth Forum will end on Friday 21 October next. One of the main outcomes expected is a document containing an overview of the discussions that will be an important contribution to the 2012 Triennale.

A major event on education and training in Africa, the Triennale, which is organized by ADEA, will take place in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso from 12 to 17 February 2012 and will take up the theme: *Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for sustainable development in Africa: How to design and implement an effective response through education and training systems?*

More information on the Youth Consultation Forum and the 2012 Triennale can be found on ADEA's website at www.adeanet.org

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