

Press release

For immediate release

African Union Commission and ADEA pledge collaboration to improve education as Africa's young population booms

Tunis, March 28, 2014: The African Union Commission (AUC) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work closely together on the development of education across the continent of Africa. The Signing ceremony took place in Tunis on March 24, in the premises of the African Development Bank (AfDB), which hosts ADEA

The AUC and ADEA will jointly develop and implement programs aimed at achieving Africa's collective goals in education. The MoU focuses on continuing the implementation of strategies and programs in the key priority areas spelled out in the African Union's Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006 to 2015) Plan of Action (PoA). These are: gender and culture; education management information systems (EMIS); teachers' professional development; higher education; technical and vocational education and training; curriculum and teaching and learning materials; quality management.

The two parties will also design programs aimed at reaching specific goals for education in Africa, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Post 2015 agenda where they relate to education and the Education for All initiative.

They will also work together to further develop continental and regional integration through education.

In a wider sense, the collaboration on improving education in Africa will contribute to the African renaissance by building renewed understanding and appreciation of Africa's cultural and social heritage, including its languages, and to the continued development of the continent.

During the signing ceremony, which took place on March 24, 2014, at the African Development Bank in Tunis, the Africa Union's Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, H.E. Martial De Paul Ikounga said: "ADEA is much more than an Association. ADEA is a partner that has proved to be essential to implement the African Union's overall programs in education." He added "ADEA also develops critical thinking in areas which are of prime importance, such as the use of ICT to improve teaching and learning... This is an indication of the role we would like to see ADEA play increasingly."

The Commissioner also stated that he would help ADEA build on its relationships with governments, including African governments, in order for it to be more visible and attract more resources. "More support and resources will enhance ADEA's capacity to act and to serve our common cause" he said.

Mr. Hamidou Boukary, Acting Executive Secretary, said that the MoU was in fact a renewal of a first MoU designed to facilitate implementation of the AU's Second Decade of Education PoA. He

pointed out ADEA's contribution in this regard and progress made in three areas of the Plan of Action: ADEA facilitated the development of a continental education management information system (EMIS) and produces annual statistics (AU Outlook publication) enabling the AU to monitor progress in its 7 priority areas for education. It contributed to implementing the AU's Pan-African university project and is helping the AU implement its teacher development program (PACTED) in the areas of mathematics and Science. ADEA has also convinced the AU to bring in two important priority areas which were not in the initial PoA: Early Childhood Development and Non-Formal Education.

Mr. Boukary added that the new MoU (2014-2019) was designed to further progress made in the 7 priority areas. He added that it would also position ADEA to support the AU's new strategy for the next 50 years (2013-2063) and the Post 2015 development priorities spelled out by African countries, which emphasizes development of technical and scientific skills. "ADEA's Strategic Policy Framework adopted by the AU's Heads of State is in line with these priorities and positions ADEA to be a major actor to support Africa's sustainable development" he said.

Representing the Vice President, Operations II Complex, of the AfDB, his senior advisor, Mr. Sering Jallow, said the African Development Bank fully supported the collaboration between ADEA and the AUC. He noted that both ADEA's Strategic Policy Framework stemming from the 2012 Triennale and AU's Second Decade of Education Action Plan were paving the way for Africa's future development through the strengthening of education, training and skills throughout Africa. "We hope that even greater synergies will be developed between ADEA, the AfDB and the AUC, in line with the Bank's 10-year strategy which underscores skills development and technology, which remain a pillar for the Bank, as we try to achieve more inclusive and green growth in Africa".

The AUC-ADEA agreement comes at a time when education is of prime importance in Africa as its young population continues to grow at a faster rate than elsewhere in the world. In 2010, there were 411 million children aged 14 years or under, and, according to the UN, that number will more than double to 839 million by 2020.

ADEA is hosted by the African Development Bank. It is a partnership between African Ministries of Education and development partners, a Forum for policy dialogue of education and training in Africa, a network of education decision makers, practitioners and researchers, and a catalyst for education reform in view of Africa's accelerated and sustainable development. ADEA's programs are implemented by its Secretariat based within the AfDB, and its Working Groups, Task Forces and Inter-Country Quality Nodes, which address specific education topics and challenges.

The AUC, through its Human Resources, Science and Technology department, runs education programs designed to develop and harmonize education policies across Africa, supporting access to quality education for all African children and citizens.

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