



Republic of Rwanda



Ministry of Education



African Union

Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015

Kigali, Rwanda

9-11 February 2015

Concept Note (January 23, 2015)

Introduction

2015 is an important milestone in the global development discourse and as the year 2015 draws to a close, the world is mobilizing towards defining the post-2015 development agenda. To inform this global agenda, with a focus on education, UNESCO Member States are critically reviewing the progress made in attaining the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the targets set in 2000. At the same time, UNESCO has provided support to countries in their efforts to accelerate closing the gap. This review and assessment of progress provides an opportunity to identify and reflect on key challenges, analyze gaps and lessons learned, and inform the future education agenda, if the right to education for all is to be realized. In Africa, the process is further enriched by the concomitant review by Member States of the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006 – 2015) and development of the post 2015 continental strategy for education development.

The consultations with education stakeholders so far have indicated that the direction of the post-2015 education agenda is to be anchored in a lifelong and sector-wide perspective, addressing access, equity and quality for all – children, youth and adults - at all levels of education from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to higher education and adult learning, and across formal, non-formal and informal modalities. UNESCO's General Conference, which met in November 2013, also committed itself to promoting an overarching goal for education to be "based upon key principles of access, equity, quality, in the perspective of lifelong learning."

The Africa region has also been organizing to ensure that an African perspective is captured in the post 2015 global sustainable development goals. The African Union has therefore galvanized Heads of State and Government to drive the articulation of the Common Africa Position Post 2015 (CAP), which document was launched jointly by the African Union Commission, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. It is noteworthy that the CAP captures education, training and research in two of the --- pillars; and considers education not just as a human right but also as the most important tool for achieving the full spectrum of development goals through human capacity development and building of scientific,

technological and innovation capability. This is considered as imperative for harnessing the youth bulge, and achieving the vision of peace, integration, prosperity and sustainable development. The process of determining the post-2015 education goals, targets and strategies will culminate at the World Education Forum (WEF 2015), to be held from 19-22 May 2015 in Incheon, the Republic of Korea, where an international framework for action for education for post-2015 will be adopted, and at the UN Summit to be held in New York in September 2015 where the post-2015 sustainable development goals will be adopted.

In preparation for the World Education Forum (WEF 2015), a series of regional conferences are being organized by UNESCO in collaboration with UNICEF and EFA partners. Each of these regional conferences is conceived as a follow-up to the Global EFA Meeting GEM held in Oman in May 2014 and the resulting Muscat Agreement, the work of EFA Steering Committee as well as the 7th meeting of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO/EFA)¹, on the post-2015 education agenda.

Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015

The UNESCO Regional Offices for the Sahel (Dakar) and Eastern Africa (Nairobi), in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, the African Union Commission UNICEF and other EFA partners, are organizing the **Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015** in Kigali, Rwanda on 9-11 February 2015. This Conference will bring together ministers and high-level officials of ministries of education from the 47 Member States in the SSA region, as well as other actors and stakeholders in education in order to discuss issues, challenges and priorities for education post-2015. The discussions and outcomes will be informed by the national EFA reviews commissioned by UNESCO and the African Member States; the Common Africa Position, the African Agenda 2063, review of the Second Decade of Education for Africa, and in light of emerging development challenges. The Conference will also develop regional recommendations for the international framework for action to be adopted at the World Education Forum in Incheon in 2015.

The outcome of the Kigali conference will therefore be truly representative of the collective perspectives, realities and aspirations of the African Member States of UNESCO.

Objectives

- To take stock of regional progress in education, in particular EFA, yield lessons learnt for the future and examine persisting and emerging issues, challenges and priorities for education post-2015; and
- To provide regional perspectives and recommendations for the post-2015 global education and development agendas and to contribute to the elaboration of the Framework for Action to be adopted at the WEF 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea.
- To explore the African perspective of the role of Education as a prime enabler of peace, prosperity and sustainable development

¹ The 7th Declaration of the CCNGO/EFA meeting held in June 2013 affirms the strong support to the 2014 Muscat Agreement.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes are threefold:

1. A shared vision and understanding of EFA status in the region (based on/reflected in a regional synthesis report), including:
 - a. Achievements and remaining challenges
 - b. Lessons learnt in terms of goal setting and indicator development, planning and implementation (including governance, partnerships, financing and monitoring)
 - c. Emerging issues
 - d. Challenges and priorities for the future
2. Regional Perspectives on the proposed post-2015 global education goal and targets
 - a. Regional perspectives on proposed global targets in the light of regional/sub-regional challenges and priorities
 - b. Regional/sub-regional perspectives on benchmarks per target
 - c. Proposals for collecting baseline data on new target areas
3. Regional contributions to the development of the Post-2015 Framework for Action and implementation strategy
 - a. Indications on implementation requirements for the region/sub-region including main policy steps
 - b. Regional/sub-regional implementation strategies – education governance, financing, monitoring, coordination and partnerships, as well as national target-setting. E.g.: how can the region/sub-regions collaborate in the implementation of the agenda, what partnerships already exist and what others should be strengthened/created?
4. A shared appreciation of the central role of education in Africa Agenda 2063 and the post 2015 Common Africa Position
5. Shared perspectives on a framework for the African Continental Strategy for Education Development

Organization of the meeting

The meeting would be organized around plenary sessions, roundtables and breakout thematic workshops in several priority areas namely:

1. **Basic Education for All – Inclusion and Equity** (includes issues of right to education, Early Childhood, primary and junior secondary, identification of gaps, issues and challenges in access and equity, health, gender equality, marginalized groups and children at risk)
2. **Teachers and Teaching** (Teacher development including pre and in-service training, teacher recruitment, deployment and retention, teacher welfare and management)
3. **Quality of education and learning outcomes for all** (this includes curriculum, learning process, learning outcomes, literacy for all, ICTs and the learning environment)
4. **Science and technology, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), tertiary and higher education**
5. **Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship** (this includes human rights, peace, responsible citizenship, sustainable development, respect for cultural and religious diversity and intercultural dialogue)

6. **Youth and Adult Literacy, skills and competencies for Life and Work in a Lifelong Learning Perspective** (youth and out of school children, adult learning, skills for work, non-cognitive/transferable skills)
7. **Education in Crisis Situations**
8. **Gender Equity in Education**

Lead partners institutions, African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) would provide support as co-conveners of the thematic workshops to be moderated by Ministers.

The outcome document of the conference will focus on the recommendations for education post-2015, which will serve as the Sub-Saharan African regional contributions to the post-2015 education agenda and to the Framework for Action to be adopted at the WEF 2015.

The Ministerial Forum

His Excellency the President of the Government of Rwanda is expected to preside over the Ministerial Forum and officially open it together with the Director-General of UNESCO and the AU Commissioner.

Date and Venue

The **Sub Saharan Africa Regional Education Conference** will take place at the Kigali Serena Hotel, from 9 to 11 February 2015..

Modality

The Regional Forum will be organized in three parts:

- Information session to bring Member States and stakeholders up to date concerning the relevant overarching continental processes (A meeting of the **AUC-UNESCO Joint Commission**, including representatives of the African Group of Ambassadors to UNESCO and representatives of UNESCO National Commissions and a Technical Workshop on the End-Term Evaluation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa will take place)
- Technical dialogue on 2015 EFA achievement and post-2015 in order to craft the outcome document to be presented to Ministers of Education
- Ministerial Forum to discuss and agree on the outcome document.

Participants

This Conference is expected to draw up to 250 participants from Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. The participation will be by invitation only. The following are the categories of participants to be invited:

- Representatives of UNESCO Member States in the Sub Saharan Africa region. Each Member State is invited to send a delegation of 3 to 6 persons maximum, including CSO. As the conference will address education and learning from a sector-wide and lifelong perspective, the composition of the delegation

should also be sector-wide, ranging from early childhood education to higher education and adult learning. Representatives of relevant ministries, such as ministries of finance, labor, and planning.

- Bureau of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF VI)
- Representatives of African Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- Representatives of non-governmental/civil society organizations and networks operating regionally and sub-regionally in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Representatives of youth associations
- Representatives of United Nations organizations and agencies and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) for Sub-Saharan Africa
- Representatives of development banks, foundations and bilateral development partners
- Representatives of the private and corporate sector
- Individual experts from universities and research institutions

Working languages

The Conference's working languages will be English and French. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided throughout the conference, and all the written documents will be available in two languages.