

Press Release

For Immediate Release



Association for the
Development of
Education in
Africa



Panafrican conference of African Ministers of Finance and of Education aims to enhance education in national development strategies

Tunis, July 13, 2009: An important conference of African Ministers of Finance and of Education on the theme “*Sustaining the Education and Economic Momentum in Africa Amidst the Current Global Financial Crisis*” is to be held at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Tunis, Tunisia, from 15 to 17 July 2009.

Some 50 Ministers from about 30 countries are expected to attend the Conference. They will gather to consider an issue of major concern: how to maintain, against the backdrop of global economic recession, the progress achieved in the education sector over the past decade while at the same time ensure that investments in education help sustain and accelerate economic growth and social development in Africa.

The conference is jointly organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank (WB) with the support of the partners of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI).

The current global economic downturn threatens to jeopardize the major advances in education that many African countries have achieved, especially since 2000. It is putting pressure on public budgets and private incomes in most countries. These developments make it harder for African countries to mobilize the resources that are required, from both domestic and external sources, to protect and boost investments in education, not only in primary education but also at the higher levels. They also put at risk the efforts by African countries to forge a closer link between education, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels, and the economy. By equipping people entering or already in the workforce with a range of skills for the modern economy, particularly in science, technology and innovation, these efforts are essential for enhancing the

Association for the Development of Education in Africa
African Development Bank (AfDB)
Temporary Relocation Agency
BP 323 – 1002 Tunis Belvédère - Tunisia
Tel: +216/ 71 10 39 00
e-mail: adea@afdb.org Web site: www.adeanet.org

competitiveness of African businesses in the global marketplace today. The dire economic situation triggered by the current worldwide economic crisis is also challenging the attainment of goals for Education for All (EFA) and the African Union's Second Decade of Education. At a time of tight budgets, slow growth and diminishing and unpredictable levels of external aid, investments in education must seek to be as efficient as possible in order to ensure that the benefits are shared broadly and that they contribute to increasing economic productivity and growth.

The Conference will provide a forum for dialogue and exchanges among the Ministers and between them and development partners structured around a key concept: the mutual dependence between education and economic growth. The discussions will provide an opportunity for the Ministers to consider a more holistic approach to the development of human capital, which seeks to offer African children and youth quality basic education and opportunities of further advancement, as well as to provide prospective employers with an educated and skilled workforce.

The Conference will explore five key themes: (i) joint political leadership by Ministers of Finance and of Education for the implementation of strategies to ensure sustainable economic and social development; (ii) strategies to sustain long-term financing of investments in education and training; (iii) options to enhance efficiency and equity in the deployment of public resources; (iv) greater cooperation between African countries around education priorities; and (v) enhanced impact of external aid on education and the economy.

Apart from African Ministers, key actors such as the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities, UNESCO, UNICEF, civil society organizations, the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, the European Commission and bilateral development agencies will be present in Tunis..

The Conference will be opened on the afternoon of 15 July by the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Mr. Donald Kaberuka.

A communiqué will be produced at the end of the Conference.

Tunis, July 13, 2009.

Press contacts:

- **Thanh-Hoa Desruelles**, External Relations and Communication, ADEA, t.desruelles@afdb.org, tel: +216/ 7110 3432 (office), +216/ 21 69 11 46 (portable).
- **Lawalley Cole**, Coordinator, WGCAMED, l.cole@unesco.org in Tunis: +216/ 21 63 14 25 (portable).

Chawki Chahed, Media Relations, AfDB, press@afdb.org and c.chahed@afdb.org
Tel. : +216 71 102 702, +216 22 290 290 (Portable)

Association for the Development of Education in Africa
African Development Bank (AfDB)
Temporary Relocation Agency
BP 323 – 1002 Tunis Belvédère - Tunisia
Tel: +216/ 71 10 39 00
e-mail: adea@afdb.org Web site: www.adeanet.org