

Press Release

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Association for the
Development of
Education in
Africa



**Dialogue on how to sustain educational and economic progress amidst the
global financial crisis**

Pan-African conference of Ministers of Finance and of Education ends in Tunis

Tunis, July 18, 2009: The Conference for African Ministers of Finance and of Education on “*Sustaining the Education and Economic Momentum in Africa amidst the Current Global Financial Crisis*”, jointly organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank, with the support of the partners of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), ended in Tunis yesterday.

The Conference brought together forty-four African Ministers of Finance and of Education from twenty-eight countries to consider a topic of major concern: how to maintain, against the backdrop of the 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 Ministers of Finance and of Education emphasized the interactive relationship between education and economic growth, underlining the crucial role played by education and training in economic growth, social cohesion and democracy. They consequently acknowledged the mutual responsibility and accountability of Ministers of Finance and of Education for educational progress and, by the same token, the need for cooperation between these two sectors. The ministers also recommended dialogue as a means to identify priorities and/or types of expenditure that should be maintained if the achievements of the sector are to be sustained.

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Noting the remarkable progress achieved over the last decade in education at all levels of the system – and particularly the tremendous increase in access to primary education – the ministers expressed their concern at the global downturn that is currently jeopardizing these major achievements. They also identified crucial challenges for education in Africa in the areas of improving quality and equity, teacher recruitment and professional development and the effectiveness and relevance of educational systems, namely in regards to the world of work and the productive sector. Concerning this last point, Ministers discussed the conditions and factors that foster the development of skills to meet the needs of the economy and business enterprises.

The Ministers emphasized their will to protect, and even increase budgets for education and engaged their external partners to explore ways and means of doing the same regarding external financial aid. They also indicated the need to search for strategic options that would seek the best use of resources, the application of cost-effective solutions and economies of scale such as those that may be obtained through sub-regional and regional cooperation.

To conclude, the Ministers of Education and Finance wished the dialogue initiated by the Conference to be the starting point for closer collaboration between themselves and between them and their external partners.

The Conference for African Ministers of Finance and of Education on “*Sustaining the Education and Economic Momentum in Africa amidst the Current Global Financial Crisis*” took place in Tunis, July 15-17, 2009. In addition to African Ministers, key actors attended the conference 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 several bilateral development agencies.

Tunis, July 18, 2009.

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