



Press Release

For immediate release

Finland and ADEA Renew Funding Agreement for 2014-2016 to Boost Education and Training in Africa

Tunis, Monday 16 June, 2014. The Government of Finland has renewed its funding agreement with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). The ceremony for the signing of the Agreement took place on Friday, June 13 in the temporary offices of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Tunis.

Through this agreement, Finland will provide a total amount of 1.2 Million Euros for the period 2014 – 2016. The grant will help implement ADEA's second medium-term strategic plan (2013 – 2017). The plan marks an evolution in ADEA's vision and mission since its inception 25 years ago, and focuses on establishing and supporting reforms underpinned by strong links between education and training and sustainable development. As all key economic indicators show, Africa is on its way to becoming the continent of the future that is poised to drive global economic growth at a time when other continents are slowing down economically. Education and training, in particular of African youth, for the acquisition of relevant skills and competencies, is, therefore, a sine qua non for the continent to live up to its perceived potential. It was in this spirit that the 2012 Triennale held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso carried the theme: "Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for sustainable development in Africa: How to design and implement an effective response by education and training systems."

The ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Finland to Tunisia, Her Excellency, Mrs. Tanja Jaaskelainen, Mr. Aly Abou-Sabaa, Vice President, Sector Operations of the African Development Bank, Mr. Heikki Tuunanen, Executive Director for Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and India at the AfDB and Mrs. Thanh-Hoa Desruelles, Principal External Relations and Communication Officer, representing ADEA.

The Ambassador of Finland to Tunisia, Her Excellency, Mrs. Tanja Jaaskelainen, opened the ceremony by stressing the importance given to education by Finland, both in her country and as a priority in development aid.

Speaking on behalf of the African Development Bank, the Vice-President for Operations, Mr. Aly Abou-Sabaa said that the Bank was pleased with the support that Finland is providing to ADEA. He noted that ADEA's medium term plan is consistent with the AfDB's 10-year strategy for the period 2013-2022 and its recently launched Human Development Strategy, which highlight the importance of skills and technology development as one of the key areas of priority. "The Bank will provide increased support for technical and vocational training linked to the specific needs of the labor market in order to equip the youth with the right skills to work both in formal and informal sectors, to create businesses and to contribute to the acceleration of Africa's development," Mr. Abou-Sabaa said.

The African Development Bank's Executive Director for Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and India, Mr. Heikki Tuunanen, insisted at the ceremony on ensuring a holistic approach to development assistance, and said that it was not very helpful to look at infrastructure, agriculture and other sectors separately. He stressed that education has a crucial role to play in development, and highlighted the role ADEA should play in this regard for Africa.

Speaking on behalf of ADEA, Ms. Thanh Hoa Desruelles thanked the government of Finland for continually supporting ADEA since its early days. She said that ADEA was particularly pleased as the Association is bent on implementing the recommendations of its Strategic Framework that was endorsed by African Heads of States at their summit held in Addis Ababa in January, 2013. "It guides African countries to implement the paradigm shifts needed to transform their education systems so that they will produce the skills Africa needs for its accelerated and sustainable development," Ms. Desruelles concluded.

Finland's education system is one of the best in the world, as OECD's PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) publications attest.

Traditionally, Finnish development cooperation has emphasized support to Africa, with an objective to create a strategic framework for strengthening partnerships between Finland and Africa through development policy measures. Finland aims to respond rapidly to the new challenges facing Africa from the changing global operating environment and the problems caused by the global economic and financial crisis, climate change and the food crisis.

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