



basic education

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Association for the  
Development of  
Education in  
Africa



## ADEA'S ANNUAL POLICY DIALOGUE FORUM HIGHLIGHTS THE OPPORTUNITY OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN AFRICA TO PREPARE YOUTH FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

**31 July 2019, Johannesburg, South Africa** – The Association for the Development of Education in Africa ([ADEA](#)) yesterday concluded its High-Level Annual Policy Dialogue on Secondary Education in Africa: Preparing Youth for the Future of Work. In partnership with the [Mastercard Foundation](#), the [Department for Basic Education](#) of South Africa (DBE) and the [African Development Bank](#), the event concluded that it is critical to reform secondary education in Africa by enhancing the teaching profession, quality learning and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills provision, and embracing innovation and information and communication technology (ICT).

Opened by H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, Education Ministers from across the continent engaged on how to design and transform education systems within secondary education to better prepare African youth for the changing nature of work. In his speech, President Ramaphosa highlighted that “Africa’s demographic dividend can only be earned through our investment in the continent’s highest-yielding resource: its young people.” He further added that “secondary education empowers young people at a time when they are most hopeful, experimental and flexible in their lives, and we should embrace this life stage as one to empower young people to take charge of their lives and our collective future.”

Mastercard Foundations’ Report on *Secondary Education in Africa: Preparing Youth for the Future of Work* is the Foundation’s latest collaborative effort between multiple donors, partners, and research organizations including a key partnership with ADEA. The report, due to be released in early 2020, focuses on the role of secondary education in ensuring youth acquire the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to succeed in a dynamic and globalized labor market.

Over the course of the two-day forum, more than 160 participants highlighted the immense opportunity of Africa’s young people alongside the realization of an ever-changing job market with the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The Forum generated intense discussions around changing curricula to deliver relevant skills, developing a highly trained teacher workforce, ensuring access to secondary education for all young people regardless of circumstance, and how to finance necessary reform or transformation of current education systems.

Hon. Angelina Matsie Motshekga, Minister for Basic Education, South Africa, commented: “I am confident that the discussions of the last two days will go a long way towards an integrated regional and continental approach to modernizing our post-primary opportunities and outcomes. This, we owe to our children. Let me thank ADEA for acting as a lever of change and elevating the voice of Africa on education priorities at regional, continental, and global levels. We are looking forward to more of these forums, as they provide an opportunity to dialogue with our counterparts, experts and partners – and make the dawn of Africa a reality. Thank you once more to the Ministers, Deputy Ministers, experts, resource people, and academics, who joined us and openly shared lessons; allowing us to learn from each other.”

Albert Nsengiyumva, Executive Secretary of ADEA commented further: “Secondary education is increasingly becoming the platform for preparing youth for the world of work and hence the need for a paradigm shift in reforming this sub-sector. African countries need to reform secondary education starting from attracting strong applicants in the teaching profession, and training and retraining adequate numbers of teachers as well as providing skills for the world of work for young people to increase their adaptability and resilience.”

In his several interventions, he also highlighted not only the importance of exploring and implementing innovative financing mechanisms for sustainability but also according greater priority to technical, vocational and educational training (TVET) as well as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and ICT by strengthening public-private-partnerships (PPPs).

Kim Kerr, Director of Regional Programs at Mastercard Foundation, added: “The objective of the Mastercard Foundation’s report on secondary education is to initiate a dialogue on the importance of meeting increased demand for secondary education, and the urgency of preparing Africa’s youth to succeed in an ever-changing work environment. The ADEA Forum contributed to the regional dialogue on how best to ensure that Africa benefits from the potential of its growing youth demographic. We are grateful to ADEA and the Ministry of Basic Education of South Africa for bringing together such a dynamic group of stakeholders to work together towards transforming the youth challenge into an opportunity for the African continent.”

Secondary education will increasingly be a key platform for young people in Africa to enter the world of work. Digitization, automation, and technological advances are changing the nature of work globally, including in Africa. These trends will increase uncertainty and the pace of change, raising the premium on skills that help young people be adaptable, resilient, and creative problem solvers.

Now is the time to rethink what skills young people will require to enter the workforce following secondary education, and to intentionally design secondary education systems with those skills in mind. Putting in place the conditions for economic growth and job creation in Africa will be critical. As part of this, young people will also need to be prepared with the knowledge and skills required to succeed as entrepreneurs and sought by employers.

Lastly, the Forum seized the opportunity to gather African ministers of education and key stakeholders and partners to be informed about the recent workshop on the establishment of the African Education Fund ([AEF](#)). “This Fund is a unique African mechanism to address the challenges of education and skills development in Africa,” said Hendrina Chalwe Doroba, Manager of the Education and Skills Development Division of the African Development Bank during the ADEA’s High-Level Policy Dialogue Forum. The AEF workshop was organized by the Bank, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa and the African Union in Abidjan on 16 - 17 July 2019.

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**About ADEA:**

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) is a forum for policy dialogue. It is a partnership bringing together African policymakers in charge of education, science and technology; development cooperation partners; researchers and education technical experts. ADEA contributes to the empowerment of African countries to develop quality education and training systems that respond to the countries' emergent needs and drive social and economic transformation sustainably.

[www.adeanet.org](http://www.adeanet.org)

**About the Mastercard Foundation:**

The Mastercard Foundation seeks a world where everyone has the opportunity to learn and prosper. The Foundation's work is guided by its mission to advance learning and promote financial inclusion for people living in poverty. One of the largest foundations in the world, it works almost exclusively in Africa. It was created in 2006 by Mastercard International and operates independently under the governance of its own Board of Directors. The Foundation is based in Toronto, Canada. For more information and to sign up for the Foundation's newsletter, please visit [www.mastercardfdn.org](http://www.mastercardfdn.org). Follow the Foundation at @MastercardFdn on Twitter.

**About the Secondary Education in Africa Report:**

*Secondary Education in Africa: Preparing Youth for the Future of Work* focuses on the role of secondary education in preparing African youth for the future of work. Background papers covering a range of topics relevant to secondary education in Africa inform the Report, and can be accessed here: <https://mastercardfdn.org/secondary-education-in-africa/>. The full report will be released in 2020.