

## Workshop Concept note

### ADEA Workshop on Education for Sustainable Development – ESD

#### 1. Purpose of the concept note

The purpose of this concept note is to guide participants around the discussions that will be held during the Workshop. It is aimed at informing research prior to the Conference and supporting discussions as the different themes are tackled by the sub-groups.

#### 2. Rationale

In response to concerns raised during the Triennale 2012, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) is providing a platform for dialog on Education for Sustainable Development. The aim of this platform is to eventually lead towards the development of an Inter-Country Quality Node (ICQN) to respond in a structured and collaborative approach to country expectations.

The aim of the platform is to first bring together countries of the continental sub-regions towards sharing innovative research and practitioner experience in Education for Sustainable Development. It is expected this will culminate in inter-country collaboration regarding adoption of strategies and mechanisms to promote essential competencies that would inclusively enable the youth as well as the elderly make research-informed use of available resources to ensure inter-generational equity.

All development initiatives are emanations of Agenda 21 (1992). In fact this Agenda stipulates that “Education, raising of public awareness and training are linked to virtually all areas in Agenda 21, and even more closely to the ones on meeting basic needs, capacity-building, data and information, science, and the role of major groups. .... The Declaration and Recommendations of the Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education organized by UNESCO and UNEP and held in 1977, have provided the fundamental principles for the proposals in Agenda 21 (1992).

The main program areas have been:

- “(a) Reorienting education towards sustainable development;
- (b) Increasing public awareness;
- (c) Promoting training.”

In addition, Agenda 21(1992) discusses how governments should “*promote proven educational methods and the development of innovative teaching methods for educational settings*”. It recommends that the required educational approach should be lifelong, life wide, inclusive of all age groups, ages, approaches and technologies. The above will inform discussions during the Conference held in Flic en Flac, Mauritius from the 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

### 3. Background- ADEA Triennale Follow-up

It is widely acknowledged that Sustainable Development has gradually taken on a broader sense than its original association with the environment. The Triennale Concept Note readily accepts that the concept of sustainable development *“has since expanded to encompass the social and economic infrastructure that determines a society’s capacity to maintain itself in a rapidly changing global context”* (Paul Cappon). Therefore to improve the African society’s capacity to maintain and perpetuate itself, the Triennale concept note identifies four inseparable and complementary dimensions: a) the protection and preservation of the environment, particularly efforts to tackle climate change, b) the development of a model of sustainable economic growth based on the rational exploitation and conservation of natural resources; c) the construction of inclusive societies founded upon effective efforts to alleviate poverty and tackle all sorts of discrimination and marginalization; d) the strengthening of mutual knowledge and cultural and spiritual understanding between groups, societies and peoples to foster solidarity and peace. Reportedly, after five days of intense discussions, the participants at the Ouagadougou Triennale reached a broad-based consensus on a paradigm shift for education in Africa that will in particular involve close linkages between education and training where SD will play a prominent role<sup>1</sup>.

The participants at the Triennale also decided to establish a multilateral approach to education and training in Africa that truly takes account of stakeholders such as private sector and youth. They also realized that the new paradigm could only be driven through a strong partnership between schools and businesses in order to ensure that young Africans receive training that matches the needs of national economies and prepares them for entry into social and economic life<sup>2</sup>. It was recognized that this will only be realized by building education and training into a program of social reform by building up a critical mass of:

- citizens who are not just informed and trained, but who are above all capable of using their achievements to bring about the economic, social, cultural and political changes required for sustainable development
- workers with job skills that exploit the potential and specific development assets of different African countries, raise labor productivity and boost economic growth, particularly through the new technologies
- highly qualified human resources capable of ensuring the home-grown production of scientific knowledge and technological innovation and offering Africa an opportunity to develop knowledge-based economies and societies as required by the current process of globalization<sup>3</sup>.

Towards developing strategies for the implementation of the resolutions reached after the Triennale 2012, it became apparent that ADEA had to create a space that could bring together concerns that were

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<sup>1</sup> ADEA (2011, p.3). Triennale 2012 Concept Note

<sup>2</sup> ADEA (2011, p.3). Triennale 2012 Concept Note

<sup>3</sup> ADEA (2011, p.9). Triennale 2012 Concept Note

raised separately under the 3 sub-themes that had driven the ADEA Triennale 2012. This space will provide the forum whereby the strategies defined under the 3 sub-themes could be woven together. In this regard, the ADEA proposes to introduce an innovative approach to teaching, learning and the development of critical competencies by demonstrating the systemic relationship between learning, industry and employment, between input and outputs, as well as the formulation of mechanisms to measure internal and external efficiencies. Within that new paradigm it becomes clear that aspects of ESD should integrate domains like mainstream education, science, vocational training, information and communication technology, and lifelong learning including formal, informal and non-formal pathways.

As outlined in post- Triennale debates, this Conference concept note describes a desirable systemic approach to education reform and reflects global and essentially African preoccupations. This may stimulate different stakeholders to reflect more systemically on their own experiences and to successfully engage in debates, consultations and analytical work to be undertaken as part of follow-up activities post the 2012 Triennale.

#### **4. What are the core competencies essential to the promotion of ESD?**

Directly derived from the Triennale 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 desirable cross-cutting competencies would be as follows:

*Context and culture: specific cognitive, metacognitive and affective competencies informed by critical consciousness.*

It is expected that individuals from participating countries will develop critical core skills enabling them to:

- a. Think autonomously and critically as well as make informed decisions.
- b. Understand the implications of and be able to use a proposed inclusive framework for policy development and program planning.
- c. Develop contextualized policy guidelines and plans of action with regard to macro, meso and even micro levels of intervention
- d. Become environmental activists

During the Triennale discussions, it was recognized that human societies have moved away from the center of development: the human being. Given climate-change driven challenges and in the context of Education for Sustainable Development, core competencies should enable individuals adapt to their changing circumstances as well as mitigate and possibly even work towards reversing the negative effects of climate change. The known effects of climate change on development are inter alia food insecurity, environmental migrants who cause pressure on accommodating countries, desertification, droughts and depleting resources. Other than climate change development can be compromised by

inequity, non-sustainable consumerism as well as urbanization among others. People need to be equipped to respond to such situations through the acquisition of critical competencies.

Only a paradigm shift can reinstate the human being at the center of development. During the Triennale debates, it was anticipated that Education would be a central facilitator towards that paradigm shift through systemic and interconnected interventions in all Educational sectors and across all pathways, including all social and ethnic groups as well as the private and public sectors, towards developing collective critical consciousness with regard to all human activities.

Conscientization or critical consciousness is important to enable us change our attitudes and eventually our behaviors. We will need to critically recognize and modify unsustainable lifestyles in a way that will impact positively on the various spheres of influence in which all human beings operate. Essential competencies should enable citizens of Africa and of the World realize their systemic interconnectedness with local, regional and global spheres of influence.

The themes that the cross-cutting critical competencies will address are:

Sustainable consumption, Research and Industry, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Cultural Diversity, Indigenous Knowledge, Disaster Risk Reduction, Poverty Reduction, Gender Equality, Health, Sustainable Lifestyles, Peace Education, Water, Energy, Sustainable Urbanization, Environment as a whole.

## 5. New priorities

The concerns of the platform will reflect global and essentially African preoccupations. Several ministers who participated in the post-Triennale debates elaborated upon ESD strategies already formulated in their countries and agreed on the need to have a platform that would favor structured and reliable discussions towards supporting further country engagement in approaches promoting sustainable development.

Discussions will focus on aspects regarding the nature of core skills and competencies necessary within the African context and will outline a range of issues and challenges in this area that are faced by policy-makers, practitioners, educational institutions, industry, students and people at large alike. Since countries may already have tackled several of these issues, this concept note serves mainly as a menu that may inform new priorities. These new priorities will be subdivided as follows:

a. Group 1: ESD, Teaching, Learning and Capacity Building: Strategies and Mechanisms to promote critical core competencies

The focus here will be on developing strategies and mechanisms to *integrate* ESD into primary to tertiary education and beyond. Essential activities in this regard will be curriculum reorientation, capacity building, especially for policy makers and teachers

b. Group 2: ESD and Higher Education, Research and Development for Employment and Sustainable Development

The focus will be on ESD Research, Development and the Economy, Food insecurity, Indigenous Medicines, Access-Benefit Sharing

The recent Rio+20 conferences have sharpened focus on higher education as a crucial driver of ESD. At the converging point of research, innovation and development, higher education is pivotal in promoting social change processes with an emphasis on educational quality and curriculum transformation, educational responses to poverty, risk and vulnerability as well as critical research methodologies. Additionally, Higher Education Institutions educate and train decision-makers to empower them in their role towards creating new paradigms that will foster sustainable societies. Their mission is to promote development through research and teaching, disseminative new knowledge and practices and capacity building that will percolate to other levels of educational intervention (pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary, adult and community levels) and through different pathways (formal, non-formal and informal). In addition, higher education guides development and creates innovative and SD-directed employment opportunities.

c. Group 3: Literacies: An effective approach to ESD

The focus is on employing literacies with special focus on non-formal and informal educational pathways: Asset-Based Community Development towards Poverty-reduction and Inter-generational equity, Environmental Literacy, Health Literacy, Parental Literacy, Multiple or Accelerated Literacies.

**6. Objectives of the platform**

The ADEA recognises that ESD is a proactive measure for climate change adaptation and mitigation, essentially and for the other aspects described under the ESD umbrella. To achieve its vision, the core strategies of the ICQN will be as follows:

- a. Adopt critical pedagogy as a conscientization instrument towards fostering awareness, attitudinal and behavioral change in formal, non-formal and informal educational pathways
- b. Develop and implement a series of educational programs that comply with the above
- c. Consolidate contextualized foundations on which to build future initiatives towards conscientising and responsabilizing individuals regarding the environment so that sustainable development goals are collectively achieved
- d. Adopt a systemic approach to rationalize, optimize use of resources and avoid duplication of initiatives
- e. Coherently improve the efficient and effective coordination of institutional work at national level(s) and integrating the work of different sectors and ministries.
- f. Continuously highlight the environmental dangers that we generate and/or with which we consensually live and act upon these
- g. Gain public informed attention, awareness and their engagement towards being positively discriminatory in their choices, attitudes and habits
- h. To regularly evaluate interventions, provide feedback to relevant participants or organizers so that practice is continuously recalibrated.

## **7. Possible outcome of the Conference**

ADEA, in its vision to promote dialogue for education and leadership has in place numerous mechanisms for action and engagement. Within this vision and aimed at a wide range of participants, it proposes to establish a platform for dialog that may eventually become an Inter-Country Quality Node for Education for Sustainable Development (ICQN-ESD). The objectives of the platform are as follows:

- a. Advocate for education for sustainable development across levels including K-20 and pathways including the formal, informal and non-formal education based on a critical pedagogy approach
- b. Enable formulation, strengthening and implementation of ESD policies and strategies
- c. Ensure the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and recalibration of ESD programs
- d. Engage in capacity building programs at all levels
- e. Develop strategic linkages across disciplines, regions, sectors with a range of stakeholders
- f. Encourage evidence-based policy development as well as strategic interventions
- g. Use media and ICTs extensively to develop future scenarios to promote individual conscientization and to achieve ESD objectives