

AFRICAN UNION

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**REPORT OF THE 6TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AU
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION (COMEDAF),
YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON, 21 – 25 APRIL 2014**

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF
EDUCATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION (COMEDAF VI)
YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON
21-25 APRIL 2014**

AU/MIN/EDUC/Rpt(V)

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF MINISTERS

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COMEDAF VI
21-25 APRIL 2014**

Introduction

1. The sixth Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF VI) took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon from 22nd to 25th April 2014. COMEDAF VI began with the meeting of Senior Officials held on 22nd to 23rd April, followed by a meeting of the Ministers Committee of the Pan African Conference on Teacher Development (PACTED) on 24th April. The Ministers met on 25th April to consider the report of the meeting of Senior Officials. They made key recommendations on education as a major tool for achieving African renaissance and the African Vision 2063. A new COMEDAF VI Bureau was elected to interface with the new AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Education, Science and Technology.

In attendance

2. Representatives from the following Member States participated in the meeting: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia.

- a) Only the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was present from the Regional Economic Communities.
- b) The following AU specialized Agencies participated: Centre International des Filles et des Femmes en Afrique (CIEFFA), African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD agency).
- c) The following partners participated in the meeting: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Association of African Universities (AAU), Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), African Development Bank (AfDB), Centre for Mathematics and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA), the European Union (EU), African Virtual University (AVU) and African Council for Distance Education (ACDE)

ITEM 1: Opening Remarks

3. Her Excellency Mme Youssouf Hadidja Alim, Minister of Basic Education in Cameroon as COMEDAF V Vice Chair, chairing the meeting since the honourable Minister of Education of Nigeria was not present, provided the introductory remarks of the meeting welcoming the Participants and opening the meeting to the speakers.

4. H.E. Dr Martial De-Paul Ikounga, AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, in his opening remarks recalled the progress that the Senior Experts made in regards to driving education forward on the Continent. He welcomed all the participants and thanked them for their commitment and attention to education on the Continent.

5. The representative of the Minister of Education for the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Outgoing COMEDAF V Chair made special note of the work that the hosting government, Cameroon, had achieved. He recalled the focus areas of the Plan of Action for the 2nd Decade of Education for Africa and briefly reported on progress of implementation over the last two years.

ITEM 2: Presentation and Adoption of the Agenda and Program of Work

6. The Agenda and Program of Work was adopted without amendment.

ITEM 3: Election of COMEDAF VI Bureau

7. The following were elected to the COMEDAF VI Bureau:

- i) Chair - Central Region – Cameroon;
- ii) Rapporteur - Western Region – Nigeria;
- iii) 1st Vice Chair – Southern Region- Angola;
- iv) 2nd Vice Chair – Northern Region- Mauritania;
- v) 3rd Vice Chair – Eastern Region- Tanzania.

8. H.E. Mme Yousouf Hadidja Alim, Minister of Basic Education in Cameroon. Cameroon expressed appreciation for the opportunity to Chair COMEDAF VI. The Minister noted that Cameroon's main objective would be a search for excellence, effective main streaming and show-casing the progress of education on the Continent. She appreciated the quality of recommendations made by the Senior Officials in conjunction with the Secretariat of the meeting. The Minister highlighted the crucial role of education for Africa's future competitiveness. She pointed out that 2015 will see the end of the MDGs and the 2nd Decade of Education and the need to have realistic Decade under the post 2015 agenda. She emphasized the need for the development of programs for teacher development at all levels. She notified about the 2035 Plan of the Cameroon Government and underlined the role of education in creating the human capital development. Finally the Minister gave special mention to the Pan African University (PAU) that has an Institution in Cameroon as a beacon of excellence in education on the Continent and the Cameroon government hopes to host the Rectorate and request all Member States for support and ownership of the PAU.

ITEM 4: Presentation on Agenda 2063

9. Dr. Abdul-Hakim Elwaer the Director for Human Resources Science and Technology presented the Africa Agenda 2063. He noted that the 22nd Ordinary Session of the Summit of Heads of States and Government of the AU in January 2014 considered the Framework of Agenda 2063, and requested the AU Commission to finalize the same for submission in July 2014 Summit, after discussion with stakeholders. Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework that provides policy space for Member States to pursue individual and collective actions to attain the collective AU Vision. It is a call for action to all segments of African society to work together to build a common future and destiny focusing on gender equality, women empowerment and peace and security among other rights. Agenda 2063 will seek to translate this vision

into concrete milestones and targets enabling Africa to remain focused and committed to the ideals envisaged. Dr. Elwaer concluded that COMEDAF VI, like other ministerial meetings provided opportunity for respective honourable Ministers to make their inputs to be taken on board in the Agenda 2063, before it is finalized.

Discussions on presentation

10. The honourable Ministers noted that attainment of the collective African vision would require that education takes centre stage, and called for strengthening the education dimension within the Agenda 2063 document.

11. A request was made to provide a roadmap for the implementation of agenda.

12. The key role of RECs was reiterated and their importance as a major link in the chain was highlighted as a critical issue to be addressed to ensure attainment of Vision 2063.

13. Finally the honourable ministers endorsed the document as amended.

ITEM 5: Presentation on the General History of Africa

14. Dr Firmin Matoko, UNESCO Representative to AUC re-called the recommendation of the 5th Session of COMEDAF (Abuja, 2012) for the establishment of a Fund to support the implementation of the 'Pedagogical Use of the General History of Africa (GHA) Project, and called for implementation of the decision by Member States.

ITEM 6: Presentation on the Proposal by ADEA

15. Mr. Dzingai Mutumbuka, ADEA Board Chair, in his presentation made an appeal for enhanced support by Member States to ADEA, by increasing their contributions from 2,500 to at least 10,000 USD per annum; and for more Member States to become full members of ADEA by contributing at least USD 50,000 per annum.

ITEM 7: Presentation of the report on Continental TVET Strategy

16. Dr. Elwaer, Director for HRST presented the new continental TVET strategy. He also provided an update on TVET noting that UNESCO and AfDB provided support to some RECs and countries in establishing framework for implementation of TVET. He mentioned post conflict TVET Programs implemented in Liberia, Congo Brazzaville and Burundi. Dr. Elwaer pointed out that the new TVET strategy was developed as one of the most important tools for addressing youth employment challenges.

Discussion on Presentation

17. In the discussions that ensued, the following were highlighted

- i) There is need for Member States to increase public funding for TVET.

- ii) TVET centers have various curricula and there is need for standards and qualification frameworks to ensure quality and relevance.
- iii) Member States should share and exchange experiences in TVET and encourage mobility of trainers across countries.
- iv) TVET should be an integral part of Agenda 2063, as a major instrument for skills development, youth empowerment and social economic development.
- v) The honourable Ministers endorsed the new TVET Strategy as presented.

ITEM 8: Consideration of the Report of the Meeting of Senior Officials of COMEDAF VI

18. The report of the Senior Officials of COMEDAF VI was considered and adopted. Ministers considered the decisions in the report and re-ordered them as cast in paragraph 27 below.

ITEM 9: Presentation on Specialized Technical Committees

19. Mr. Alimamy Sesay, Senior Legal Officer representing the Office of the Legal Counsel (OLC) of the African Union gave a presentation on the nature, character and operationalization of STCs. He noted that STCs are vested with decision making powers within the structure of the African Union. He said the education sector would be covered under the STCs on Education, Science and Technology. He noted that there are currently 14 established STCs which should be operationalized by the end of 2015. The COMEDAF VI Bureau will therefore preside over the transition to STC.

ITEM 10: Date and venue of the next meeting under STC

20. It was agreed to hold the first Specialized Technical Committee meeting consisting of Education, Science & Technology in the last quarter of 2014.

ITEM 11: Presentation and Adoption of Recommendations and Decisions of COMEDAF VI

21. The Recommendations and Decisions of COMEDAF VI were considered and duly adopted. It is notable that Algeria entered a reservation on 'Article xxi.'

ITEM 12: Closing Session

22. H.E. Dr. Martial De-Paul Ikounga thanked the participants for their contribution and closed the session.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION

23. Following the discussions and presentations, the Ministers adopted the following as the recommendations of COMEDAF VI:

- i) Ensure implementation of recommendations of COMEDAF V that are still outstanding;
- ii) Urge RECs to ensure that they attend COMEDAF meetings; be more diligent in providing education monitoring reports; and strengthen their education desks in order to follow-up the education sector activities of their Member States;
- iii) Request COMEDAF VI Bureau to monitor implementation of collective decisions and recommendations; and report on progress and challenges to the next STC meeting;

Concerning the Plan of Action for the 2nd Decade of Education

- iv) Request Member States to undertake self-evaluation with respect to their implementation of the Plan of Action for the 2nd Decade of Education for Africa in their respective countries. The AUC should develop the necessary framework and tools for this exercise; follow up on the end-term evaluation and develop a new ten-year strategy for education in line with the aspirations and expectation of African citizens and the Agenda 2063;
- v) Promote ICT, e-Learning, ODL and cross-media at all levels of education to reinforce their contribution in increasing equitable access to quality and relevant education;
- vi) Call for enhanced funding for capacity building of the African Education Observatory as well as Member States capacities for reliable data collection, policy analysis and reporting;
- vii) Call for enhanced support to the area of Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Materials ensuring relevance, responsiveness and gender balance;
- viii) Reiterate that national governments allocate at least 6% of the GDP and 20% of the national budget to education in order to sustain education systems;
- ix) Urge that the African common position on post 2015 agenda should have a stand-alone goal on Education with clear indicators and time-bound measurable targets aligned to the vision of the AU; and that the global policy framework take into account the African common position;
- x) Accept single deposition of the Revised Arusha Convention under UNESCO and call on Member States to sign and ratify the Convention in order to promote mutual recognition of academic qualifications across the

Continent; and promote the development of Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework;

- xi) Request the Commission to mobilise all stakeholders of education development in Africa at the national, regional and continental levels, in collaboration with Member States, RECs and education development agencies, in order to:
 - a) Support education in Africa;
 - b) Carry out an end-term evaluation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa;
 - c) Develop a new 10-year strategy for education within the overall framework of the Africa Agenda 2063.
- xii) Further request the Commission to present the draft strategy to the AU Summit.

Concerning the Pan African University

- xiii) Call upon the AUC to quickly engage with the Southern Africa region to expedite the designation of the Host Country for the PAU Institute for Space Sciences for presentation to the July 2014 AU Summit;
- xiv) Request the Commission to extend the deadline for Calls for Hosting the PAU Rectorate;
- xv) Further request the Commission to identify an eminent African of outstanding academic and social profile to be the PAU Council President, and serve as PAU Patron or Sponsor, in order to enhance the image of the PAU and attract resources. In view of this, there is need to amend the PAU Statute article on the appointment of PAU Council President and Vice President;
- xvi) Request the Bureau of COMEDAF VI to go through the provided short list of candidates for the PAU Council, and nominate one candidate per region, to be submitted to the Commission by 5th May 2014, for the June 2014 Summit to elect the PAU Council Vice President;
- xvii) Ensure the sustainability of the Pan African University and other key education programs of the AUC by establishing African alternative funding mechanism through the involvement of Member States to reduce high dependency on donor support.

Concerning PACTED

- xviii) Urge all Member States to consider the improvement of the working and living conditions of teachers as a prerequisite for the provision of quality education for achieving post 2015 development goals and the African Agenda 2063; and to give special attention to the place of the teacher in the education system in Africa;
- xix) Support the establishment of regional teacher development centers in SMT based on the CEMASTEAM model;

Concerning TVET

- xx) Adopt the AU Continental TVET Strategy and Call on Member States for enhanced support of Technical and Vocational Education and Training as it is fundamental for skill development of the youth to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and employability; and to align national TVET strategy to continental TVET strategy for better effectiveness;
- xxi) Request the development of mutual recognition and certification of TVET at the regional and continental levels to promote comparability of qualification and enhance employability and intra-African mobility;

Concerning the General History of Africa

- xxii) Reiterate the call upon Member States to contribute to the establishment of a Fund for the implementation of the pedagogical use of the General History of Africa (GHA) project and request the AUC and UNESCO to work out the operational modalities of the Fund and submit a technical proposal to the next meeting of the Bureau of COMEDAF;
- xxiii) Encourage Member States to incorporate the GHA in school and university curricula to promote African identity in the spirit of Pan Africanism and African renaissance;

Concerning Agenda 2063

- xxiv) Request that education is sufficiently addressed in the Africa 2063 Agenda. Member States should advocate that priority focus areas of education are incorporated;

Concerning ADEA

- xxv) Support the request of ADEA for more support from Member States, in view of the crucial role that ADEA plays in the development of education and training in Africa;

Finally

- xxvi) Call on international partners and agencies to align their support programs to these recommendations of COMEDAF VI.

2014

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