

AFRICAN UNION

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UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
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Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

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REPORT OF THE THIRD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AU
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION
(COMEDAF III) – 6-10 AUGUST 2007
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

**REPORT OF THE THIRD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AU CONFERENCE OF
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INTRODUCTION

The Third Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III) took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 9th to 10th August 2007, preceded by a meeting of senior government experts. This was the first COMEDAF meeting since the launch of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa in September 2006 in Maputo. An exhibition of educational materials and equipment for teaching science and technology was also held. A total of forty-two (42) AU Member States attended the meeting. Also in attendance were three (3) RECs, Specialized institutions of the AU and a number of International Organizations:

The Meeting elected the following Bureau:

Chairperson	-	South Africa
First Vice-Chairperson	-	Republic of Congo
Second Vice-Chairperson	-	The Sudan
Third Vice-Chairperson	-	The Gambia
Rapporteur	-	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

ISSUES DISCUSSED

The Ministers discussed the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action, with special reference to Higher Education, TVET and Teacher Development. The Ministers also discussed an implementation and monitoring mechanism for the Second Decade of Education.

OUTCOME OF THE MEETING

The outcomes included adoption of the following:

- (i) Strategy for Harmonisation of Higher Education in Africa;
- (ii) Strategy for a Quality Rating Mechanism for African Higher Education;
- (iii) Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education with special reference to countries in post-conflict situations;
- (iv) Policy framework on access to post-primary education for refugees and displaced persons;

- (v) Decision for ADEA and the Commission to pursue merger of the COMEDAF and ADEA Bureaux of Ministers; and for ADEA to invite Northern African Member States to become its members;
- (vi) Strategy for developing a mechanism for the establishment of an African Education, Science and Technology Fund;
- (vii) Mechanism for establishing strategic partnerships to ensure greater harmonization and coordination of education sector programmes in Africa;
- (viii) To follow-up on commitments by key stakeholders to the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa, the Conference endorsed a mechanism for reporting on implementation of the Plan of Action, with specific roles for Member States and RECs.

DOCUMENTS APPENDED

The following documents are appended:

1. Report of COMEDAF III
2. Communiqué

EX.CL/386 (XII)
Annex I

REPORT OF THE MINISTERS

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**THIRD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE
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THE AFRICAN UNION (COMEDAF III)
6 – 10 August 2007
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AU/MIN/EDUC/RPT (III)

REPORT OF THE MINISTERS

REPORT OF THE MINISTERS

INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III) took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 9 to 10 August 2007. The Ministers discussed the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action, with special reference to higher education, TVET and teacher development. The Ministers also discussed an implementation follow-up mechanism for the Second Decade of Education. An exhibition of educational materials and equipment for teaching science and technology was also held.

ATTENDANCE

2. The following Ministers of AU Member States attended the meeting:

Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, DRC, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe,

3. The Following Countries were represented by Senior Officials:

Botswana, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), Togo and Tunisia.

4. Also in attendance were the following Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the International Organizations, NGOs and specialised institution of the AU.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization-International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (UNESCO-IICBA), African Development Bank (AfDB), NEPAD, CIEFFA, IPED, Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Fund for Population Africa (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP), Association of African University (AAU), International Organization for Migration (IOM), African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), Commonwealth, African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA) and Pan-African Association for Literacy and Adult Education (PAALAE).

Agenda Item 1: OPENING SESSION

5. The South African School Choir provided entertainment, and then sang the anthem of the African Union followed by the national anthem of the Republic of South Africa.

6. The Director of ceremonies, Dr. Njenga called for a minute of silence in honour of the late Minister of Education of Mali, Hon. Mamadou Lamine Traoré, whose contribution to the sector is of inestimable value. He passed away in July 2007. She then invited the following in turn to make opening remarks: Prof. Nagia Essayed, H.E. Dr. Musa Bin Jaafar Hassan, H.E. Dr. Boubekour Ben-bouزيد and H.E. Mrs. Naledi Pandor.

a) **Welcoming Remarks by Prof. Nagia Essayed, AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST).**

7. Prof. Nagia Essayed, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the Commission of the African Union underscored the following:

- The success of the outgoing Bureau under the chairmanship of Algeria, under whose leadership an evaluation of the First Decade of Education was carried out, and the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa was launched.
- Greater participation of all stakeholders was commended with a call for a more enhanced involvement of the RECs in collaboration with the Bureau to formulate well-integrated implementation and follow-up mechanisms of the Plan of Action.
- The role of Partners such as the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the Association of African Universities (AAU), in the implementation of the Plan of Action and the initiatives towards formalizing relationship between some of the partners and the Commission through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).
- The Commission, NEPAD and ADEA with the assistance of the African Development Bank (AfDB) are in the process of establishing an African Education, Science and Technology Fund in line with a decision of the Head of States and Government of the African Union in 2007 to mobilise financial resources to support the implementation of the Plan of Action.
- The Commission's confidence that South Africa as chair of COMDEAF III with the support of the new members of the Bureau, would move the education development agenda forward through the implementation of the Second Decade of Education in Africa.

b) **Remarks by Ambassador Dr. Musa Bin Jaafar Hassan, President of the General Conference of UNESCO**

8. The President of the General Conference of UNESCO, Ambassador Dr. Musa Bin Jaafar Hassan, thanked President Thabo Mbeki for his contribution to the development of the Continent, and the Government of the Republic of South Africa

and the African Union for having invited UNESCO to participate in COMEDAF III. He recalled the defining moments in the history of South Africa, especially its struggle against apartheid and the remarkable role of people such as Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

9. Ambassador Dr. Musa Bin Jaafar Hassan underscored the opportunity offered to participants by the Conference to draw inspiration from the intellectual and cultural creativity of the African society. He called on the delegates to share in the conviction that education and culture can overcome the barriers between human societies and that the education of today defines the society of tomorrow. Without education, social bonds would weaken, thus hindering society from meeting the challenges of the future and from building a more just and equitable world. Well-educated young girls and women, he said, can effectively play their role in nation building. Girls and children from rural and remote areas, as well as nomadic children, deserve special attention in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

10. UNESCO is especially interested in cooperating with the African Union, the Ambassador said. This is why among the objectives of the Dakar World Forum on Education priority was given to the fight against illiteracy and the attainment particularly of Universal Primary Education, especially on the fight against HIV/AIDS.

11. Ambassador Dr. Musa Bin Jaafar Hassan seized the opportunity to pay tribute to African countries for their efforts towards achieving Education For All. These efforts necessitated the cooperation of international organizations and donors following UNESCO's intervention, thanks to which the Sultanate of Oman became a contributor to the efforts.

12. In concluding, he thanked the national committees and the permanent representatives to UNESCO and also congratulated the organizing committee of the Conference.

c) Remarks by Dr. Boubekeur Ben-bouزيد, Minister of Education of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

13. In his address, Dr. Boubekeur Ben-bouزيد, Minister of National Education of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and outgoing Chairperson of COMEDAF II, thanked delegates for having accepted the invitation to participate in COMEDAF III. Giving the report on COMEDAF II, he noted that much ground had been covered since the Second Ordinary Session of COMEDAF II in Algiers, in April 2005. In this regard, among other achievements, are: i) the evaluation of the First Decade for Education, ii) the formulation of the draft Plan of Action for the Second Decade for Education and the programme of activities for its first biennial and iii) the launching of the second Decade for Education. There is no doubt that we have made great progress, but some failures also have to be admitted. It is also important to ask ourselves whether the results achieved came up to expectations. It is necessary to assess the relevance of the results, the respect for time limits and work schedules, in order to take appropriate corrective measures.

14. Dr. Boubekeur Ben-bouزيد, outgoing Chairperson of COMEDAF II, urged the new bureau to work with dedication.

d) **Remarks by Mrs. Naledi Pandor, MP, Minister of Education, Republic of South Africa**

15. Mrs. Naledi Pandor, MP, Minister of Education of the Republic of South Africa acknowledged the women in the meeting in celebration of 9 August, Women's Day in the Republic of South Africa. She highlighted the following in her opening remarks:

- The need to achieve access to quality educational opportunities, as this is the basis for democracy and sustainable development of African countries.
- The need for the expansion of secondary and tertiary education and promotion of scientific research and intellectual development.
- The question of whether the biennial meeting of COMEDAF was sufficient to enable the continent to drive its programmes of Education.
- The concern that some African countries are failing to achieve their goals due to inadequate planning and in some cases due to lack of financial resources.
- The need for Partners and donors to play a greater role not only by providing financial resources, but also technical assistance to departments of education. COMEDAF should proactively follow-up on commitments made to support education in this regard.
- The need for annual conferences on education at regional levels to facilitate compilation of regional reports on the Decade. This could be done through regional consultations for the follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of education programmes, leading to sharing of experience, collaboration and assistance to countries facing challenges.

Agenda Item 2: VIEWING OF THE AFRICAN UNION EXHIBITION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT FOR TEACHING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

16. The delegates visited the exhibition that was held parallel to COMEDAF III, where they were welcomed by the Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic of South Africa. A representative of the African Publishers Network made a brief presentation in which he called for development of Book Policies in Member States. He introduced a book "Changing Public/Private Partnerships in the African Book Sector". A representative of the AU Commission thanked the exhibitors, ADEA and the host Republic of South Africa for their support.

Agenda Item 3: ELECTION OF BUREAU OF COMEDAF III

17. The Meeting elected the following Bureau:

Chairperson	-	South Africa
First Vice-Chairperson	-	Republic of Congo
Second Vice-Chairperson	-	The Sudan

Third Vice-Chairperson - The Gambia
Rapporteur - Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Agenda Item 4: PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME OF WORK

18. The Agenda and Programme of Work were adopted by the Third Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of education of the African Union (COMEDAF III).

Agenda Item 5: CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF EXPERTS OF COMEDAF III

19. The Rapporteur of the Bureau of COMEDAF III, Dr. Abulgassem Al-Badri of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, presented the report of the Experts' Meeting that took place from 6 to 7 August 2007 and highlighted the major areas of discussions and recommendations for consideration of the Ministers. The Report is attached as annex.

Discussion:

20. In the discussions that followed, Honourable Ministers raised the following issues:

- i) Implementation of TVET should take into account the need for developing a culture of entrepreneurship and maintenance. There is need for ensuring that literacy and numeracy are not compromised, new technologies are incorporated and credit transfer into mainstream tertiary education is facilitated so that TVET moves away from the status of an option for the illiterate.
- ii) Concerning ADEA, honourable Ministers appreciated the need to speedily sign an MOU with ADEA, invite North Africa to join ADEA and work on ways of merging the Bureau of ADEA with that of COMEDAF.
- iii) Honourable Ministers also agreed on the importance of re-establishing the linkage between education and culture

21. With these remarks, the Experts' Report was endorsed by the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III).

Agenda item 6: CONSIDERATION OF THE DOCUMENT, "FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR AFRICA"

22. Dr. Beatrice Njenga, the Director a.i. of the Department of Human Resources Science and Technology, made a presentation on the "Follow-up Mechanism and Strategic Partnerships for the Implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa" and raised the following:

- The need to address the challenges identified in the First Decade of Education such as inadequate ownership by stakeholders, multiplicity of parallel initiatives, inadequate publicity of the Decade and inadequate resources.
- The importance of new guiding principles such as ensuring enhanced political support, enhancing mutual assistance among Member States, avoiding creation of new structures and duplications; institutionalising collaboration, partnerships, exchange and sharing of experiences and information and establishing effective follow-up mechanisms.
- All stakeholders, including the AU Commission, RECs, Member States and relevant partners should play their respective roles in the domestication and implementation of the Plan of Action.
- The need to establish mechanisms and tools for follow-up in the implementation of the programmes of education in Africa. In this context, an initial questionnaire was sent out to Member States. A more elaborate tool based on statistical indicators will be developed for the longer term.
- The Bureau and Steering Committee members should act as alternative regional focal points and should meet at regional level every six months; Ministers would be given an opportunity to make presentations on the progress they have made during COMEDAF meetings on selected themes.
- The need to establish an incentive mechanism to acknowledge the successes of Member States and RECs in specific areas, e.g. domestication of the Plan of Action, resource mobilisation and investment in Education; and implementation of specific decisions.
- The need to establish strategic partnerships for every area of focus with the identification of a 'lead agency' as key driver of the process, where possible with pan-African or regional mandate and credibility as well as subscribing to similar vision as that of the African Union.
- The proposal that every Member States select at least one area of focus for which it will be a champion.

Discussion:

23. In the discussions that followed, the following issues were raised:
- i) The need to avoid obstacles that were encountered during the First Decade of Education and drive the second to success.
 - ii) The need for an African Education Fund initiative that would support the implementation of the Plan of Action.

- iii) The plan should be largely financed by African resources with diversified support from stakeholders including the private sector and religious institutions.
- iv) The need to mobilise resources with particular emphasis on countries that are emerging from conflicts.
- v) There is need to support countries that have low rates of post-primary education.
- vi) Partners should support the current Plan of Action and avoid coming up with new plans.
- vii) There is need to involve the RECs, in particular those that are not proactive, to come on board and participate in the implementation of the Plan of Action.
- viii) The need to focus on the question of brain drain as it is eroding the capacity of African countries.
- ix) The African Diaspora should be invited to play a role in the area of education in Africa.
- x) Research and Development centres such as CODESRIA require strategic support and capacity building.
- xi) Youth and children of Africa need guidance and counselling skills to enable them to cope with the challenges and difficulties of life. In this regard, there is need to develop strategic partnerships.
- xii) The Plan of Action should also put emphasis on civic, moral and peace education.
- xiii) It is necessary to establish training programmes and institutions for education managers. Such institutions should be developed into centres of excellence for education.
- xiv) There is need to review the role of specialised institutions of AU such as ACALAN, IPED and CIEFFA as well as Agencies such as UNESCO.
- xv) The AU Commission should take the leadership in the second decade by consulting technical working groups for every areas of focus.
- xvi) There is need to clearly define the role of the relevant partners through consultations.

24. The Meeting endorsed the proposed follow-up mechanism and recommended the following:

- Focal points should be designated in the Ministries of Education and the RECs to liaise with the AU Commission.

- RECs should be the focus for follow-up actions and assist in resource mobilisation as well as training.
- Regional conferences should be organized under the auspices of the RECs to prepare for reporting to COMEDAF.
- Support to the establishment of the African Fund for Education.
- Partnerships should be encouraged but there is need to ensure that African countries contribute to the funding of the Plan of Action

Agenda Item 7: PLENARY DISCUSSION

25. Ministers from Malawi, Algeria and South Africa made brief presentations to provoke discussion on the following areas:

a) Technical and Vocational Education and Training

- i) The Deputy Minister of Education for Malawi, Honourable Richard Mswoya (MP) made a brief outline of Malawi's 10-year education plan in TVET.
- ii) The honourable Minister said that their priorities include increasing quality of and access to TVET, and linking TVET to both tertiary education and the world of work. They are also targeting improvement of pre-vocational skills and life skills education in primary and secondary, in preparation for TVET.
- iii) With reference to achievements, he mentioned that Malawi has established a Technical and Vocational Training Authority (TEVETA), revival of technical subjects at all levels, and development of a qualifications framework.
- iv) Among challenges, the Hon. Minister cited inadequacies in modern equipment and financial resources. He also decried the fact that qualified instructs end up in the private sector instead of teaching.
- v) Speaking on the way forward, the honourable Minister gave a list of activities and strategies, including incorporation of private sector in planning and delivering of TVET, strengthening inspection and assessment systems, rehabilitating infrastructure and providing vulnerable groups with survival and employable skills.
- vi) In conclusion, he posed questions on how to enhance access to TVET for all interested and able, rather than only dropouts of the formal system, as well as promoting entrepreneurship and support to the informal sector.

b) Teacher Education

- i) The Algeria Minister of Education reflected on teacher development in Algeria.
- ii) He reiterated that training teachers is key to educational reform. Initial training of teachers is carried out at Universities in Algeria, following specialised training in post-secondary colleges. 65% of teachers in 1962 had no university education, 95% were French at independence, and the Government had to use untrained teachers to replace the French ones.
- iii) The deficit in teacher quality lies in academic content as well as in language proficiency. Primary and secondary teachers are being trained in-service over the last 10 years. They have now recruited of 66,000 teachers with university qualification due to government prioritisation of the drive. Grants are provided to teachers for training in modern ICT.
- iv) All teachers are now required to train in computer education. When trained in-service, teachers are rewarded financially. 4.5 billion dollars are annually spent for primary and secondary education, much of it in teacher development.

c) Higher Education

- i) The Republic of South Africa Minister for Education began by correcting a common perception that colonizers left behind university and school systems. In fact, in most cases, universities were built by post-colonial governments (even though some later declined). In Botswana for instance, there were only two secondary schools at independence, while now there are many. The DRC at independence was left with only one Congolese medical doctor, so that all current training of medical staff thus began after independence from Belgium.
- ii) The honourable Minister mentioned the recent past, when higher education was neglected by our international partners. Now, with recognition of the importance of high education for economic and social development, as well as the consolidation of democracy and justice, COMEDAF recognises the importance of higher education, for its support to other levels of education, including gender and culture, curriculum development, and pedagogical research.
- iii) Quality, access, equity, and mutual recognition of certificates are important matters the world over. The Minister cited the Bologna process that has led to a new higher education system in Europe from which Africa should learn.
- iv) There is need for strengthening higher education systems, beginning with focus on growth and quality – creating quality assurance frameworks, institutional audit systems, accreditation and quality

promotion systems, for public and private higher education providers. In South Africa, a qualifications framework will soon be made into policy, ensuring that qualifications from all institutions meet certain common standards.

- v) The Minister reiterated the need for adequate funding for institutions, and financial support means for qualified poor students, particularly girls and young women and marginalised societies. Academic freedom and independence of academic space with accountability are necessary. Adequate resources including infrastructure, libraries and ICT facilities must be provided, and research capacity built.
- vi) Pedagogical skill should be emphasised for quality teaching in higher education. Universities must meet all reasonable expectations from society, including production of human resources. Knowledge production, development of African culture, history and so on must be emphasised, as opposed to being mere repositories of outside knowledge systems. Curriculum reform on an ongoing basis will be necessary for achieving quality and relevance in higher education.

Discussion:

26. In the discussion that ensued, honourable ministers from Chad, Guinea, Egypt, Angola, Ethiopia, Sudan, Ghana commended the presenters and made constructive comments on these topics, with the following highlights:

- i) TVET was recognised as a priority for meeting country needs for middle level technical skills, and calls were made to raise the status of TVET. The challenge of high cost of quality TVET is being addressed in innovative ways in some countries.
- ii) Teacher development is undergoing reform in a number of countries to correct challenges resulting from inadequate training programmes, expensive overseas training, as well as recruitment of large numbers of untrained teachers. In-service training and re-training of teachers is being implemented. Teacher training programmes and certificates are being upgraded to diploma and degree levels.
- iii) The importance of higher education was reiterated, as was the need to enhance mobility of students, lecturers and the labour force in general across Africa according to the vision of integration and economic development. A number of countries are addressing issues of quality in higher education. There is need to allocate resources strategically to different areas of study and research. Loan schemes are helping to enhance access for poor students.
- iv) Post-conflict reconstruction being undertaken includes rebuilding infrastructure for TVET, teacher development and higher education.
- v) Reforms in education systems include enhanced involvement of private sector in education provision, as well as use of distance learning methods for teacher training.

Agenda Item 8: KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, MRS PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA

27. In her keynote address, the Deputy President stated that Teaching is the most important profession in the world, second to parenting. She highlighted the importance of taking a child from poor circumstances to the highest level of education, changing the destiny of a whole family. Education, she said, is therefore the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world. She reminded the conference that Africa's population is made up of the youth, which is an asset and an opportunity for investment and should not be neglected. The Deputy President also reminded the conference that education is a basic human right.

28. With reference to the vision of the African Union, the Deputy President said there was need for more concrete action to support the vision, as the continent is counting on us. She reiterated the need to avoid delay in implementing the Plan of Action for the second Decade of Education, because children cannot afford to wait. We need to move quickly from strategizing to implementation. She offered her support as a Partner for the implementation of the Plan of Action.

29. She mentioned the need to situate Africa within the knowledge economy, even as we address Africa's basic needs. The people of the African continent need to be nurtured to leap forward. She commended COMEDAF's decision to encourage integrating the Plan of Action into national poverty reduction strategies.

30. The Deputy President lauded the decision to enhance collaboration with Partners, to avoid unnecessary duplication and called on Member States to submit their integrated national plans, as agreed in the Plan of Action.

31. Noting that many young people are out of school, and many young graduates of African education systems remain unemployed, the Deputy President said that these young people are a potential resource and a major challenge that we must address. We must mobilize resources to put in place institutional mechanisms for responding strategically. This should begin with an evaluation of the needs of this group of citizens.

32. Concerning TVET, she said that it is a significant pillar for realizing economic growth for countries, and for facilitating entry of young people into the labour market. However, she reiterated the need to pay appropriately for services offered by TVET graduates, among whom are many women. Touching on teacher development, she alluded to the need for harnessing modern ICTs to ensure that we are able to reach large numbers efficiently and effectively and concerning the brain drain, the Deputy President said we should enhance mobility of Africans across Africa, including Africans in the Diaspora.

33. She pledged her commitment to support implementation of the Plan of Action.

34. Noting that women are crucial in ending inter-generational poverty, the DP emphasized the need to invest more in the girl-child and in women, addressing issues of nutrition and the teaching and learning environment. She concluded by

wishing all women a happy South African Women's day, and stated that she is looking forward to hearing updates on progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action.

Vote of Thanks by Minister of Education of the Republic of Congo

35. On behalf of her colleagues, Ministers of Education, all delegations and participants, the Minister of Education of the Republic of Congo, Madam Rosalie Kama-Niama Youa thanked the authorities of South Africa for the special treatment they received since their arrival in South Africa, the symbol of courage and the struggle for liberation. She reiterated the total commitment of Member States to ensure the success of the Conference.

36. The Minister of Education of the Congo recalled that education, when of a high standard, is an essential pillar of socio-economic development as well of good governance and integration. On behalf of her colleagues, she made a commitment to work for the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade of Education for Africa and the concretization of the resolutions of COMEDAF III.

37. Availing herself of the celebrations of 9th August, South African Women's Day, she congratulated and wished good health to all African women.

38. In conclusion, she once more thanked President Thabo Mbeki, his Government and the People of South Africa for their hospitality.

Agenda Item 9: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF REPORT OF PROGRESS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FUND FOR AFRICA

39. On behalf of her President, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, Madam El Bakri, Vice President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), thanked and congratulated the Republic of South Africa and the African Union for the excellent organization of this important event. She also thanked bilateral and multilateral partners of the Bank for their excellent collaboration. Much ground has been covered since COMEDAF II in Algiers 2005, she said. In this regard, she recalled, among other efforts at national, regional and continental levels, the intensive work done by African ministers in charge of Science and Technology, the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission, given the theme of the 2007 Assembly of the African Union which was "*Science and Technology and Scientific Research*".

40. In line with this progress, the AfDB has developed a strategy for Science and Technology in Higher Education which will be submitted for approval to the Board of the Bank towards the end of 2007. The three pillars of this strategy are:

- Support to national and regional Centres of Excellence;
- Construction of infrastructure for Science and Technology in Higher Education;
- Establishment of a link between Higher Education, Science and Technology and the productive sector.

41. As a leading financial institution for development on the Continent, the Bank organized a high level meeting in July 2007 in Tunis in collaboration with the AU, ADEA, and NEPAD on the conditions for the implementation of the Second Decade of Education and its Plan of Action. One of the conclusions of the meeting was the decision to carry out feasibility studies on the creation of an African Fund for Education in Science and Technology. A consultant will be hired to study all aspects of the creation and management of this Fund. Madam El Bakri informed the delegates of the main points in the consultant's terms of reference and the calendar of work. She also drew delegates' attention to the need to learn from the experiences of the management of other Funds and the possible obstacles in the setting up of the Fund, especially:

- The need for Member States to harmonise and align their objectives with those of the Plan of Action for the Decade;
- A strong political and financial commitment of Member States;
- The urgency to strengthen partnerships with other stakeholders, including the private sector, and to be proactive and innovative.

Discussions:

42. In the ensuing debate, the following remarks were made:

- Support of the delegates in setting up the Fund;
- Africa must in the first instance rely on its own resources before turning outside to donors, given that the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade is the responsibility in the first place of African countries and regions;
- The vision, mission, objectives and priorities of the Fund must be clearly established;
- The involvement of the private sector in the process of mobilizing resources for the Fund must be ensured;
- Countries' ability to absorb and transform the resources into meaningful achievements according to countries' needs;
- Existing programmes and funds must be taken into account in order to avoid duplication;
- The possibility of extending the use of the Fund to fields of interest of the Decade other than Science and Technology;
- Draw inspiration from national and regional experiences in resource mobilization in favour of education, and invest in regional initiatives;
- The Fund should support concrete and urgent actions in countries emerging from conflict;
- Establishment of a transparent mechanism for following up the use and management of the Fund;
- The study should take into account the harmonization and possible review of existing funds.

43. In reply to concerns expressed by delegates, Madam El Bakri reassured delegates on the use of a participative approach during the study of the implementation of the Fund.

44. The Conference recommended that the study be based on the principles of non-duplication of resources, of inclusive participation by stakeholders and of the inclusion of the concerns and priorities of Member States.

Agenda Item 10: CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT POLICY DOCUMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR VICTIMS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA

45. In his Presentation, Amb. Emile Ognimba, Director of the Department of Political Affairs of the Commission of the African Union recalled the different Executive Council Decisions EX.CL/Dec.240 (VIII) and EX.CL/Dec. 340(XI) requesting the Commission to develop a policy on access to post primary education for victims of forced displacement in Africa which was done in collaboration with various stakeholders, including Ministers in charge of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons who met during the Ouagadougou Ministerial Conference on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa held in June 2006.

46. He provided statistical analysis on the magnitude of the problem by indicating that there were about 35 million victims of forced displacement in Africa, 7 million of whom are youths and only 3% of which have access to post primary education. He highlighted the fact that the gap exists not only for victims of forced displacement but also for African nationals since most African countries had no policies on access to post primary education, and where such policies exist, there was a gap between the policies and the practice.

47. He further stressed that the period of displacement had increased from 7 years in 1993 to 17 years lately. He, therefore, noted that if nothing was done to enhance access to post primary education for victims of forced displacement, their needs would remain unmet for a very long period of time.

48. He concluded by highlighting the key concepts, the different guiding principles, and the proposed implementation strategies as well as the resource mobilization strategies tabled for the consideration of the Meeting and possible adoption before its adoption subsequently by the Executive Council.

Discussions:

49. During the discussions that followed, the Meeting generally supported the draft policy and suggested the following to enhance the policy further:

- i) The need to provide support to countries coming out of conflicts and enhance education as a tool for reconstruction. To this end, it was suggested that the Commission undertakes a study to review countries in post conflict reconstruction with a view to share experiences that would inform those countries coming out of conflict more recently.
- ii) The need to focus on post primary education as a whole including access for victims of forced displacement and other children in difficult circumstances. To this end, it was suggested that the possibility of

declaration of universal post primary education for all including in areas of emergencies be considered at the national level;

- iii) The need to have a holistic approach to post conflict reconstruction including political action, economic rehabilitation as well education rehabilitation including enhanced access to post primary education;
- iv) The fund be established and practical modalities of its establishment and operationalization be considered, including the possibility of mainstreaming within the special refugee contingency fund in order to avoid creation of too many funds and not to miss out on sourcing of possible earmarked funds for victims of forced displacement;

50. The Meeting adopted the Policy as a useful framework for the formulation of policies that cater for victims of forced displacement at the national level.

Agenda Item 11: DATE AND VENUE OF COMEDAF IV MEETING

51. Libya indicated that priority to host the COMEDAF IV should be given to countries from the West, East and Central Regions which have not yet hosted. In the event that no offers are received, Libya offered to host.

52. The Commission was instructed to write to the Member States requesting for indication for offers to host COMEDAF IV, and the final venue will be decided at the next Bureau meeting.

Agenda Item 12: PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF EXPERTS OF COMEDAF III

53. The Report was adopted with amendments.

Agenda Item 13: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

54. Nothing was discussed under this Agenda Item.

Agenda Item 14: CLOSING REMARKS

55. The Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union Commission thanked the honourable Ministers for their support and productive discussions, which will go a long way in moving the Agenda of the Second Decade of education for Africa. She concluded by thanking the Host country Republic of South Africa and the technical team for their hard work in the preparation and management of the Conference.

EX.CL/386 (XII)
Annex II

COMEDAF III COMMUNIQUÉ

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



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AU/EXP/EDUC/RPT (III)

COMEDAF III COMMUNIQUÉ
10 AUGUST 2007 - JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

COMEDAF III COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The Third Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III) took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 9 to 10 August 2007, preceded by a meeting of senior government experts. The Ministers discussed the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action, with special reference to higher education, TVET and teacher development. The Ministers also discussed an implementation and monitoring mechanism for the Second Decade of Education. An exhibition of educational materials and equipment for teaching science and technology was also held.

2. A total of forty-two (42) AU Member States attended the meeting. Also in attendance were three (3) RECs, Specialized institutions of the AU and International Organizations:

3. The Meeting elected the following Bureau:

Chairperson	-	South Africa
First Vice-Chairperson	-	Republic of Congo
Second Vice-Chairperson	-	The Sudan
Third Vice-Chairperson	-	The Gambia
Rapporteur	-	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

4. The Conference considered a number of presentations on the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa and endorsed the following documents as useful frameworks that can guide policies and programmes in the relevant areas:

- i) Strategy for Harmonisation of Higher Education in Africa;
- ii) Strategy for a Quality Rating Mechanism for African Higher Education;
- iii) Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education with special reference to countries in post-conflict situations;
- iv) Policy framework on access to post-primary education for refugees and displaced persons

5. The Conference also endorsed a proposed strategy for developing a mechanism for the establishment of an African Education, Science and Technology Fund.

6. To follow-up on commitments by key stakeholders to the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa, the Conference endorsed a mechanism for reporting on implementation of the Plan of Action, and for establishing strategic partnerships to ensure greater harmonisation and co-ordination of education sector programmes in Africa.

7. The Conference agreed to the following commitments:

- (i) Member States will take up the role of chief advocates for the Plan of Action by:
 - a) Integrating it into their respective national development strategies and programmes;
 - b) Identifying and institutionalising Focal Points for Education, for purposes of liaison with the Commission of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities;
 - c) Identifying at least one area of focus in which each Member State will act as a champion at local and international levels;
 - d) Preparing reports to present at annual regional meetings and biennial COMEDAF sessions.
- (ii) Regional Economic Communities will take up their role as the focus for co-ordination of activities in Member States, and for reporting to the African Union Commission and COMEDAF by:
 - a) Providing updates on performance of Member States in Steering Committee and Bureau meetings;
 - b) Compiling annual reports and organising annual Regional Conferences for Ministers of Education;
 - c) Developing communication and publicity strategies;
 - d) Establishing strong education desks in their secretariats.

On Collective visioning:

The Conference reiterated the legitimacy of the Plan of Action as the collective African vision and priorities in Education, and urged Partners to adjust their programmes for education in Africa accordingly

On Partnerships:

The Conference urged the Commission of the African Union to expedite formalisation of collaboration with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa

On other issues:

- (i) In order to ensure that our systems of Education reflect African realities and meet the challenges of the African Renaissance, the Conference reaffirmed commitment to realize the process of the rebuilding of African educational

systems taking into account positive African culture, multilingualism and promotion of the teaching and learning of African history and societal values.

- (ii) The Conference committed to development of national Book Policies to strengthen the development and production of quality educational materials;
- (iii) In recognition of the importance of higher education in national and regional development as well as in support of primary and secondary schooling, the Conference reiterated the need to support the revitalization of higher education, to enable it to better respond to human resource and research needs of the continent.

8. Finally, the Conference deferred identification of venue for the COMEDAF IV, and mandated the next Bureau meeting to consider offers for hosting and make a selection.

2008

Report of the third ordinary session of the au conference of ministers of education (COMEDAF III) – 6-10 august 2007 Johannesburg, South Africa

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