



FAWE

Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines

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**SPEECH OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FORUM FOR AFRICAN
WOMEN EDUCATIONALISTS AT THE LAUNCH OF THE GEM GENDER
REVIEW REPORT IN AFRICA,**

26 APRIL 2018, SAFARI PARK HOTEL, NAIROBI

[ALL APPROPRIATE PROTOCOLS]

All invited distinguished guests.

Good evening.

On behalf of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Africa Board and indeed on my own behalf, we are very delighted to join the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Education AMB. Hon. Amina Mohamed at this launch of the 6th Gender Review Report in Africa of the 2018 Global Education Monitoring Report under the theme *'Accountability for Gender Equality in Education'*

Ladies and gentlemen,

FAWE is a pan-African NGO led by African Women working towards achieving gender equality and equity in education across the continent.

As a member of the GEMR Global Advisory Board whose composition reflects the joint ownership of the GEM Report and the commitment to make the promotion of education for all especially for girls and women a broadly shared endeavour, FAWE is very proud to be part of the 2018 Global Education Monitoring Report.

In the 25 years of its existence, FAWE has influenced positive change in the policy landscape of many African states. FAWE has engaged with governments, schools and communities to develop, implement and promote policies and practices that promote girls' and women's education.

For example, The '*Send your girl-child to School*' campaign in the early years convinced many parents to allow their girl children to exercise their rights to education, resulting in the majority of countries attaining gender parity in primary enrolment and to take action to ensure that girls do not just enrol but are supported to remain in school until they are complete.

We strongly believe that many of the achievements highlighted in the report being launched this evening are the fruits of some of our engagements earlier on.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This launch comes at an opportune time when the African Leaders and key education stakeholders are meeting in Nairobi to reflect on the successes and lessons learnt from transformative and transformed education systems and how these are contributing to the African Union's Agenda 2063 vision of 'The Africa We Want'; a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development; and, an Africa whose development is people-driven, relaying the potential of the African people, especially its women and youth.

This launch also comes at a time when FAWE, and its partners have brought to this conversation the Gender Equality Strategy for the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa CESA 16-25. This Gender Equality Strategy is not only **a tool to** guide African States on how best to integrate inclusion, equity and gender equality in education but also a gender-sensitive monitoring framework that will enable Africa Union Member States to measure progress towards gender equality and its benefits to development at the national, sub regional and continental levels.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This Gender Review Report for Africa speaks to: the need for a makeover in gender biased attitudes and stereotypes in the school

learning environment; the plight of women in leadership; and, the capacity or lack thereof for data collection by African countries, including the use of ICT tools.

There is an urgent need for a radical transformation in gender biased attitude and behaviour among teachers, communities and the students, especially girls and young women. According to a review of 24 countries, more than half of teachers found that codes of conduct had a very significant impact on reducing misconduct. The report recommends the use of school-wide approaches to address student behaviour that undermines their peers' right to education.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Concerning the plight of women in leadership positions, this report confirms the existence of a hard ceiling for women in school and leadership positions. Interestingly, even with all that we know about feminisation of the teaching workforce, less attention is still being given to the continued imbalance in education management and related positions of leadership, in favour of men. This all runs in the face of documented evidence that women in leadership positions in education provide role models that can encourage the retention of female students in school. This indeed has to stop and the time to act is NOW!

Ladies and gentlemen,

This Gender Review Report highlights the capacity issues of African countries in data collection. Specifically, the report speaks to the capacity, or lack thereof, to regularly collect and publish gender disaggregated data and the need to harmonize the monitoring and data collection instruments across the continent with a gender lens in both collection and analysis.

It further goes on to highlight the fact that most countries do not regularly collect and publish data on gender in education leadership. In the case when data is available, it is often not easily comparable with countries since the definitions and titles differ from country to country, as do the education levels at which data are aggregated or published.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Gender Equality Strategy for CESA 16-25 outlines strategic approaches for African Member States to address gender inequalities and provides a mechanism for integrating gender into education plans to attain gender equality in education. Moreover, it also helps implementers of the CESA 16-25 to understand how to position gender in respective action areas including how to operational monitoring and reporting frameworks.

Recommendations:

We therefore urge the African governments to;

1. Integrate this Gender Equality Strategy for CESA 16-25 into their respective National education plans and implementations processes.
2. To strengthen the National Education Information Management systems (EIMS) including allocating the adequate human and financial resources as well capacities the relevant institutions in the gender-sensitive data collection and analysis.
3. In order to better monitor the progress, countries will need to strengthen a Monitoring and Evaluation framework to **track the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the education** sector. This is besides the Gender mainstreaming of quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

In conclusion Ladies and gentlemen,

To bring about systemic change and embed equity, equality and quality principles in education requires applying both upstream and downstream approaches. Given that African Member States are at different levels of development, there is need for individual countries to prioritise their areas of focus as they develop their own education plans and programmes.

For Member States to achieve positive transformation, they must prioritize gender equality as a fundamental requisite for both national and continental development.

It is also therefore important for each Member State to utilize available lessons in the renewed focus on girls' education and inclusion to improve their own systems.

Above all, Member States are especially encouraged to prioritize the inclusion of the most disadvantaged and marginalized; to close the learning gap for girls with multiple disadvantages, including the economically disadvantaged, the orphans, the rural poor, those living with disabilities, the refugees, the internally displaced and those living in conflict and post conflict areas.

It is my sincere hope that this report will contribute to the work that you all do in advancing girls and women's education.

I thank you for your attention;

Good evening.