

Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education

Bridging continental and global education frameworks for the Africa We Want

Nairobi, April 2018

Preamble

1. We, the Ministers of Education of Africa, high-level government officials, representatives of the United Nations organizations, the African Union (AU), as well as Pan-African and sub-regional organizations, civil society and youth organizations, and international development partners, have gathered for the Pan-African High-Level Conference on Education (PACE2018) in Nairobi, Kenya 25-27 April 2018, setting out a harmonized vision for the educational transformation to meet our commitments to the **2063 Agenda for the Africa We Want** and the **global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. We thank the Government and people of the Republic of Kenya for their support and the Ministry of Education for hosting this important event.
2. We reaffirm our commitment to the 2015 Kigali Statement and to **SDG4-Education 2030**, a centrepiece of the global Sustainable Development Agenda aimed at ensuring equitable inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, as well as to the **Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)** aimed at reorienting Africa's education and training systems, Africa's response to and domestication of SDG4-Education 2030.

Building skilled African citizenry as agents of change

3. We commit to promoting quality **lifelong and life-wide learning** for all at all levels, using diverse and relevant modes of learning with flexible pathways between formal and alternative education and training models, including strengthened systems of recognition and equivalence, to cater for all children, youth and adults in and out of school.
4. Recognizing that **access to and quality of education and training at all levels** remain critical challenges within the African continent with millions of children, young people and adults lacking foundational skills and relevant competencies needed for life and work in a globalized world, we commit to:
 - a. Integrated approaches to **early childhood development, care and education** policies, programming and financing with an emphasis on marginalized and vulnerable children, with the commitment to progressively ensure at least 1-year of free and compulsory pre-primary education and with the active participation of families and communities.

- b. Implementing diversified learning policies and programmes, inclusive and gender-responsive curriculum, promoting multilingual education, sign languages and Braille, to **reach the unreached**.
 - c. Ensuring that education **sector planning effectively addresses out-of-school children and all forms of exclusion**, including among others disabilities and albinism, and that data and indicator systems are adequately disaggregated and owned at continental, regional, national and local levels.
 - d. Promoting teaching and learning in **the language of the home and neighbouring environment**, especially in early years of education; and developing policies to safeguard and raise the status and value of African languages
 - e. Ensuring adequate recruitment and deployment, motivation and professional support of teachers, and to strengthening teacher training and professional development programmes at all levels including early childhood education, non-formal education; and recognizing teachers as full-fledged professionals and agree on **common qualification frameworks**.
 - f. Developing and strengthening regional and national **learning assessment systems** ensuring their effective use for informing policies and teaching and learning practices; sharing of good practices across regions; and increasing investments for regional assessments.
 - g. Making our **educational systems more responsive, flexible and resilient** to include refugees and internally displaced people, and increasing investment for Education in Emergencies and Crises.
 - h. Making the **learning environment** more healthy, inclusive and safe through adequate responses to school-related violence and discrimination based on gender, disability, origin, religion or any other factor.
5. We commit to achieving **gender equality** through
- a. Rendering all aspects of the education system gender-sensitive, responsive, and transformative.
 - b. Implementing the Gender Equality Strategy of CESA 16-25.
 - c. Ensuring access to sexuality education for adolescents and young people
6. We recognize the importance of improving the relevance of education policies and practices to strengthen **skills for life and work**, and to foster resilient, sustainable, healthy and peaceful societies in an interconnected global world, and commit to:

- a. Increasing equitable access to **quality technical and vocational education and training** in all its forms, and recognizing that TVET should be crosscutting and encompass continuous learning towards entrepreneurship, employability, capacity building, retraining and versatility.
 - b. Adapting programmes/curricula, qualifications and pathways offered and expanding labour market information systems to cover the **informal sector** and to better assess and anticipate changing skill needs, strengthening skills development to increase, reinforce and value the education and training in the informal economy, and further enhance Public Private Partnerships (PPP).
 - c. **Leveraging digital opportunities** by strengthening the development of digital skills and competencies at all levels through partnerships in support of ICT in education, including adoption of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Internet safety within curricula, and integrating ICTs into education policies, incorporating Open Educational Resources and assistive technology, and creating mobile and online education and training platforms providing equitable access to all learners regardless of their circumstances.
 - d. Improving the relevance of teaching and learning by integrating **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** in our education policies and practices at all levels and learning programmes, and ensuring critical youth engagement.
7. We recognize that the transformation of Africa requires strengthened efforts to move towards knowledge-based societies through the advancement of **higher education and research** in Africa with special focus on relevance and equitable access, strengthening of research, and teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). We commit to:
- a. **Ratifying the Addis Ababa Convention** and strengthening national quality assurance systems, and allocating necessary resources.
 - b. Strengthening concerted, integrated, articulated and effective actions and partnerships to achieve the 2063 objectives for STEM, to develop and implement policies that **promote STEM** at all levels, especially among girls and women.
8. Recognizing the potential, strength and leadership of young people, we commit to the systemic **inclusion of youth and youth-led organizations** in continental, regional and national education decision-making, sector dialogue, and monitoring processes.

Building a conducive environment for education transformation in Africa

9. We recognize the importance of ownership of the CESA16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030 at continental, regional and national levels, in congruence with wider development ambitions, and that their achievement requires more **integrated approaches to education policies and strategies** in a **lifelong learning** perspective, fostering truly **system-wide articulation and inter-sectorial collaboration**.
10. Recalling the commitment of governments to progressively allocate at least 4-6 percent of national Gross Domestic Product, and/or at least 15-20 percent of total public **expenditure for education**, we undertake to:
 - a. Ensure more equitable allocation of education resources taking into account diversity, inclusion, and contingency funding for emergencies
 - b. Improve efficiency, transparency and accountability (including among other measures optimizing teacher allocation, budget tracking, public expenditure reviews/national education accounts)
 - c. Promote innovative financing for education including consideration of the proposed Africa Education Fund
 - d. Advocate for tax reforms to increase public revenue and the share of public resources for education and related social services
11. We commit to strengthening **national assessment and monitoring mechanisms** for CESA 16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030 targets and commitments and commit to using the results of these assessments to improve the performance of education systems, to enhance equity, quality and relevance of educational outcomes at all levels, and to strengthen **public accountability and transparency**. We further commit to:
 - a. Strengthening mechanisms for data collection, analysis, dissemination and use at the national level and data reporting at the regional, continental and global levels for monitoring of progress toward CESA 16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030
 - b. Expanding spaces for public participation including youth, as well as media engagement in education dialogue and decision-making
 - c. Further engaging with parliaments and parliamentarians at national, regional and at the Pan-African Parliament level to mobilise support for education
 - d. Working with the AU/IPED and UNESCO/UIS/GEMR to produce a biennial report monitoring progress on achievement of CESA 16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030 implementation at continental level
 - e. Reviewing legislation on the right to education so that they meet the CESA 16-25 and SDG4-Education 2030 commitments
12. We commit to improving and strengthening **sector-wide and cross-sector coordination** at continental, regional and national levels for lifelong learning through:

- a. Developing legal frameworks, policies and strategies
- b. Strengthening capacities to create and enhance delivery modalities to support flexible learning opportunities that are formally recognized, validated, and accredited
- c. Developing mechanisms and tools to operationalise national and regional qualification frameworks (NQF/RQF) for articulation across sub-sectors and mobility

Towards the Future

13. Recognising the importance of strengthening mechanisms for effective partnership and coordination at national, regional and continental levels and calling on international and regional organizations, in particular the AU, RECs, the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), UNESCO and SDG4 co-conveners, development banks and other multilateral and bilateral development partners, to work together to **ensure coherence and coordination** in support of national education development, we commit to:
 - a. Establishing a **joint CESA- SDG4 Education 2030 mechanism**, to ensure coordinated consultation, joint action, capacity strengthening, review, monitoring and reporting on both the continental and global education commitments by extending CESA coordination structure to existing SDG4 regional coordination mechanisms.
 - b. Promoting cross-national exchange and the dissemination of successful education policies and strategies, building on existing national and regional communication and knowledge-management platforms.
14. We commit to strengthening the global-regional nexus by ensuring that the voice of Africa is reflected in the deliberations of the global SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, the Technical Cooperation Group on Indicators, and contribution of inputs for the UN-led annual HLPF Review process.
15. We call for the strengthening of partnerships with and commitment of international development partners in supporting African education development around national priorities, including in low-income, fragile and conflict-affected contexts, and in promoting innovative approaches to education and training.
16. We agree to convene the Pan African High-Level Conference on Education (PACE) biennially to take stock of the progress made by Africa and support the implementation of CESA 16-25 and SDG4- Education 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want.