



United Nations
Economic Commission
for Africa



OUTCOME DOCUMENT

of the 6th GIMAC Strategic Engagement
with AU, RECs and Partners

THEME:
Educational Transformation
for Gender Equity and Sustainability

Date: 15th July 2024, Accra, Ghana



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Preamble

We, the participants at the 6th GIMAC Strategic Engagement with AU, RECs and Partners, held in Accra, Ghana from 13-15 July 2024, in line with African Union Theme of the Year on *'Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning.'*

CONSIDERING that the achievement of Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063 for “*A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development*” requires that Africa makes significant investments in education with the aim of developing human and social capital through an education and skills revolution emphasizing innovation, science and technology.

NOTE WITH CONCERN the heightened vulnerability of women and girls in Africa to trans-generational poverty due to various underlying factors including low literacy levels and skills development; underpaid and unpaid care work; harmful cultural practices; insufficient legislations; and limited legal protection against gender-based inequality practices that are deeply ingrained in society.

REAFFIRM the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) aims to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure the protection of women's rights as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. Article 12 provides for their right to education and training on the basis of the principles of

non-discrimination and equal opportunity. It calls for the elimination of all stereotypes and gender sensitive education curricula; their protection against sexual harassment and the need for specific positive actions including promotion of literacy amongst women.

ACKNOWLEDGE that the AU through the African Youth Charter (2006) Article 13 recognises the right of every young person to education of good quality, including non-formal and informal. Article 20 also provides for gender equality and the use of African languages in teaching.

RECALL that the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) underlines strong partnerships between government, civil society and the private sector within the Global Education Coordination Mechanism framework, the African Union is a primary driver of regional coordination of CESA and SDG4. Although the engagement of RECs with CESA is weak and that inequalities and discrimination in African education are minimally addressed. Particularly, given that Africa will account for more than 90% of global external financing needs for education by 2030 to achieve SDGs for education and Africa's Agenda 2063.

RECOGNIZE the AU and UNESCO Experts Meeting, which took place on 25th February 2021 that sought to bridge CESA and SDG4 and identify the common indicators across the frameworks and monitoring strategies in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities, and Member States to provide required data for the selected indicators.

COMMEND the African Union for the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) continental strategy, which provides a comprehensive framework for the design and development of national policies and strategies to address the challenges of education and technical and vocational training to support economic development, creation of national wealth and contribute to poverty reduction through youth entrepreneurship, innovation and employment. Further, recognize that the strategy includes the accreditation of training

structures (informal, non-formal and informal sectors), evaluation and certification, quality assurance, and portability of TVET qualifications.

BUILDING ON THE MOMENTUM generated by the Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (STC-EST4) on 2nd September 2022, and echoing the request of Ministers in their Declaration, the Year of Education tackles the critical challenges highlighted by the 7 UNSG's High Level Panel on the Teaching Profession. It aims to address the burdens and disruptions caused by COVID-19 on education systems while promoting the systematic implementation of transformative education across Africa.

EXPRESS DEEP CONCERN about the structural and institutional barriers that hinder women and girls access to education and skills development opportunities as well as the shrinking of space and resources for the effective participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Africa's development agenda.

NOTE WITH CONCERN the devastating situation that women and girls in Sudan, Mozambique, DRC, the SAHEL region and other war torn territories on the continent continue to face and its impact on education, reaffirm their call for the cessation of hostilities and the full, equal, meaningful and safe inclusion of women and women's rights organizations in all peace and political processes and call for humanitarian support.

URGE the AU, RECS and partners to address the intersectional systematic and structural challenges African women and girls face and scale up strategies anchored in gender responsive skill development, education and the emancipation of women, girls, and the African people. That education should be designed to expand the African people's individual and collective freedoms.

WE COMMIT and AFFIRM our unwavering support and active involvement in the continued advocacy for women's and girl's empowerment in all spheres of society. We believe in leveraging gender equality as a strategic means to achieve our overarching goal.

We therefore make the following recommendations to the African Union, Regional Economic Committees and Partners to:

1. Increase the number of women and girls enrolled in STEM, digital technology, and entrepreneurship programs by at least 30% across the continent through targeted investments in vocational training centers, mentorship programs, and financial support for women-led businesses in agriculture and trade sectors by equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to leverage regional integration opportunities, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. Furthermore, financial literacy programme as well as Climate-Smart practices should be included in agricultural education for women farmers
2. Member States should partner with NGOs and CBOs in ensuring that schools in targeted insecure areas provide gender-responsive education, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, free sanitary products, and necessary infrastructure backed up with functional monitoring and review mechanisms.
3. Invest in peace education and conflict prevention across all levels of education, with a targeted emphasis on youth in alignment with the Women, Peace, and Security agenda including the creation of safe and accessible schools in conflict-affected regions including marginalized groups, such as girls, people with disabilities,.
4. Prioritize nutrition education and school feeding programs to address food and nutrition security. Ensure that education policies and programs support the holistic development of children, considering their diverse needs including development of comprehensive digital education initiatives across all demographics, prioritizing participation of women and girls to enable them to maximise the benefits of digitalisation

5. Accelerate the implementation of the 20% budget allocation for education or a minimum of 6% of GDP, as per the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework and Education 2030 Framework through effective utilization of women and youth-focused gender-responsive macro-economic policies and budgeting including monitoring at various levels to address gender disparities and promote equity through holistic systems change approach. The financial and resource base for education should be enlarged through progressive taxation and curbing of illicit financial flows; management of the growing debt crisis on the continent
6. Promote positive masculinity in school and ensure Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (C-EVAGW) to address and eradicate gender-based violence, patriarchy and other systematic challenges that drive and enable gender inequalities through the effective implementation of comprehensive prevention and response programs, including education, legal reforms, and support services for survivors. A strong awareness programme should be developed for girls and young women to understand the undercurrent and drivers of violence including domestic and public dynamics and engagement that make women and girls vulnerable at all levels.
7. Promote the decolonization of education in Africa by expanding African educational institutions that adopt decolonized curricula, integrating indigenous knowledge. Achieve this by offering capacity-building programs for curriculum developers and training teachers in culturally responsive pedagogy. Monitor progress by assessing the percentage of schools implementing decolonized curricula and evaluating student performance based on global competencies and Pan-African values.
8. Call on Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to emulate the African Union by appointing a Special Envoy for Youth as a way of enhancing information flow and strengthening youth programme as well as ensuring their integration into the governance structures within the RECS



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