

Republic of Rwanda



Ministry of Education



African Union

**Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015
Kigali, Rwanda 9-11 February 2015
Sub-Saharan Africa Statement on Education Post-2015
(Kigali Statement)**

Preamble

1. We, Ministers of Education of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Minister of Education of Mauritania - in his capacity as a member of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF) Bureau, senior government officials, United Nations (UN) and multilateral agencies, representatives of civil society organizations, development partners, academia, teacher organizations, parent associations, youth representatives and journalists, meeting in Kigali from 9-11 February 2015, thank H.E. President Paul Kagame, government and people of Rwanda for hosting this conference and their kind hospitality.

2. Drawing from the assessments of achievements and challenges of the implementation of Education for All (EFA) and the African Union (AU) Second Decade of Education for Africa, we have noted the uneven pace of progress across the continent. Bearing in mind the unfinished education agendas, there is a need to revisit our priorities, strategies and targets for post-2015 within a context of new perspectives and emerging challenges.

3. Informed by the outcomes of the consultations on the post-2015 education agenda already held, including: the Muscat Agreement, the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG) for Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2015 Common African Position, the Africa Agenda 2063, National EFA Reviews, initiatives such as the EFA 'Big Push' and the mid-term evaluation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa, we endorse the overarching goal of the OWG to '*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all*' and adopt the present statement.

Sub-Saharan Africa perspectives on the post-2015 education agenda

4. We reaffirm our commitment to the pursuit of quality education for lifelong learning as a fundamental human right and imperative for sustainable development, which must be unequivocally guaranteed to every child, youth and adult. Taking into account progress made, continued development challenges and emerging development issues, we are resolved to construct new education paradigms in developing human capabilities for inclusive growth, wealth creation, peace and security, to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend of SSA.

5. Recognizing appreciable progress in education over the last 25 years since the EFA movement started in Jomtien, we are cognizant that most countries have not achieved EFA and Second Decade of Education for Africa goals and targets: Several countries do not have universal access in the first grade of primary education, while completion in primary education is only 67 %; 35 % at lower secondary and 17% at upper secondary. Enrollment at TVET is 606 students per 100,000 inhabitants, while only 636 students per 100,000 access higher education and adult literacy levels stand at 69 %. We therefore call for a rethinking of policies, strategies, and target setting to respond to the new priorities in the African context cutting across all levels of education, using an integrated approach for sustainable development. This requires a focus on quality, equity, gender equality and inclusion, teachers, skills development, governance and leadership, innovation, regional cooperation and financing, to make the quantum leap to achieve Africa's vision of peace, prosperity and integration.

Regional priority action areas

6. Equitable and inclusive access for all

Recognizing the right to access inclusive, equitable and quality education, we reaffirm our commitment to ensure that every child, youth and adult, including minorities and the most disadvantaged groups, complete high-quality education from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to higher education with at least a minimum completion of free and compulsory basic education of 9 -10 years.

We commit to an integrated approach for ECCE, which requires collaboration between all relevant ministries, especially the ministries responsible for planning, education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, social welfare and security to build early foundations for every child.

7. Inclusion, equity and gender equality

Exclusion and discrimination, disparities and inequalities, in access to and completion of education and learning cycles, processes and outcomes, remains an ongoing challenge for Africa. Therefore, we commit to eliminating all forms of exclusion and inequality in and through education. To ensure inclusion and equity, we commit to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society and out-of-school children with specific policy action to ensure that all children, youth and adults, girls and boys, women and men, especially the poor at the bottom quintiles have access to and complete quality education to achieve their full potential. We commit to providing flexible options for education for those populations that are in hard-to-reach locations and/or have disabilities.

We recognize the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development, the issue of violence against boys, girls and women in educational institutions, the importance of literate mothers in girls' attendance to school, and the large number of illiterate women.

We therefore commit to support gender sensitive policies and planning; mainstream gender issues in teachers' training; stop violence in education institutions, unwanted teenage pregnancies and early marriages; reduce sexual risk behaviour and HIV/AIDS through age-appropriate reproductive health education; address harmful cultural practices; ensure that girls stay in school and can have opportunities to participate up to tertiary level, supported by, among others, feeding and nutrition programs, sanitation, health, accessible secondary schools and provision of scholarships; link women's literacy programs with women's rights, leadership, health, nutrition, peace and security, entrepreneurship skills etc.; and ensure gender sensitive learning environments.

8. Teachers and teaching

Acknowledging the impact of the quality of teachers on equity and learning outcomes and noting the shortage of trained and qualified teachers, low status and motivation, and the often weak standards in training, support and qualification frameworks, we affirm the need for comprehensive teacher policies and call for concerted action to increase investments for the recruitment, training, deployment, management, evaluation and continued professional development and improved welfare of teachers across all levels of education, both formal and non-formal. Action should also include the establishment of national and regional teacher qualification frameworks and appropriate mechanisms to facilitate regional mobility.

Commending the AU Heads of States and Governments for the Malabo Summit Decision that called for a study on the training, living and working conditions for teachers in Africa, we invite policy makers, teacher organizations and education stakeholders to engage in ongoing and constructive social dialogue to improve teachers' working conditions, enhance mutual accountability and promote safe, peaceful and productive learning environments. We further encourage innovation in teacher education and pedagogical practice, including the use of new media and information and communication technologies (ICT) and distance education.

9. Educational quality and learning outcomes

We recognize that achieving quality of education is a matter of urgency in Africa. Noting that educational quality and learning are determined by inputs, processes and outcomes, we commit to putting in place policies, legal frameworks and strategies at the national and regional levels to: a) provide sufficient resources including teaching and learning materials accessible to all; b) define standards and review curricula to ensure relevance to global as well as the African context, values, culture and knowledge and gender responsiveness; c) promote the use of African languages and multilingualism across all levels using multiple learning pathways; d) develop appropriate mechanisms for assessing, and monitoring learning outcomes at all levels; e) explore innovative approach including use of ICTs; and f) further strengthen institutions, school leadership, and governance through greater involvement of communities, including young people in the management of schools, and g) ensure learning environments are safe, free from violence, inclusive and gender responsive.

10. Science, technology and skills development

Recognizing the importance of science, technology and skills development for innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship and employability, that are key to social, cultural and inclusive economic development, we affirm our commitment to strengthen policies and legal frameworks, programmes and structures to increase access to science, technology and skills development across all levels of education, with particular focus on youth, girls and marginalized groups.

We commend the African Heads of States and Governments for adopting the Science, Technology and Innovations Strategy (STISA 2024) and the continental TVET strategy, and for calling for the ratification and implementation of the revised Arusha Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa.

Acknowledging the importance of indigenous knowledge systems, we commit to the promotion and inclusion of the development, use and dissemination of indigenous science in education systems.

We therefore call for: (a) strengthening of research, teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, at all levels of education, including formal, non-formal and informal, with dynamic linkages to the social, productive and service sectors; (b) a holistic transformation of TVET and higher education systems, with a focus on quality, regional cooperation towards joint programmes, the recognition and transfer of credits and the flexible entry and re-entry of students to the world of work and continuing education; (c) recognition of skills and prior learning acquired beyond the formal system; (d) transforming tertiary education to increase the stock and enhance the quality of graduates from science and technology programmes, and work closely with employers to strengthen relevance of programs to country development strategies; (e) developing mechanisms for quality assurance and benchmarking progress at national and regional levels; and (f) strengthening labor market information systems (LMIS) linked to national human resource development plans.

11. Education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED)

We recognize that we are living in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, confronted by emerging human and environmental issues that create conditions and tensions, which require greater cooperation and harmony between humankind and nature. We further acknowledge the importance of GCED in promoting the development of values, attitudes and skills that are necessary for a more peaceful, just, inclusive, and harmonious world. We therefore resolve to institutionalize ESD-GCED through formal, non-formal and informal education by: a) promoting a humanistic approach to education (Ubuntu Spirit) that reinforces among others respect for self, others and the planet, b) involving all stakeholders in promoting the ESD-GCED agenda, c) using existing regional protocols and ongoing regional initiatives to promote the ESD-GCED agenda, and d) reviewing and integrating ESD-GCED components in curricula across all levels of education.

12. Youth and adult literacy, skills and competencies for life and work

We recognize the high percentage of youth as a potential asset to be harnessed for Africa's transformation. Noting the high adult and youth illiteracy levels, particularly of girls and women, and the huge numbers of out-of-school children and youth, we are determined to ensure that all youth and adults, especially women, have access to continuous lifelong learning and functional literacy, numeracy and requisite skills programmes for life and work. We commit to the use of mother tongue instruction before transiting to use of national/international languages for literacy programmes. We further call for the promotion of literacy programmes at the work place.

13. Financing, governance and partnerships

We take note that government is the primary duty bearer for efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of education. Recognizing the limited financial investment in education, the weak governance and administrative structures of educational systems, we are strongly committed to strengthen governance and increase domestic resource allocation and internal resource mobilization for education with specific focus on under-resourced sub-sectors, including ECCE, youth and adult literacy, TVET and higher education, among others. We recommend adherence to the internationally recognized benchmarks of at least 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or 20% of public expenditure on education as well as the efficient use and equitable targeting of these resources.

We recognize the contribution of all development partners including those participating in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and call upon them to recommit to increase, better target and coordinate official development assistance (ODA) in alignment with regional and national education priorities and plans. In particular, we call upon the GPE mechanism in meeting the financing gap and broaden the areas of support towards the achievement of the post-2015 education targets.

We recognize and promote the role of civil society organization within a coalition of partners working on education in Africa.

We endorse open and transparent governance systems and mechanisms for budget tracking, reporting and accountability for efficient use of resources.

We commit to strengthening comprehensive Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) in Africa and improve capacities to collect quality disaggregated data at the sub-national, national and regional levels for effective monitoring and evaluation of education goals and targets.

We call for strengthening the role of parliamentarians in ensuring allocation of adequate budgets for education.

14. Education in crisis situations

Conflict, crises, natural disasters, terrorist attacks and pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola are major challenges to education in this region.

We underline the importance of education being maintained during emergency, conflict and post-conflict situations and for reconstruction. We recognize the important role that education plays in preventing conflicts, crises, disease, and in addressing the needs of displaced persons. Therefore, we commit to undertake initiatives for the protection of students, education personnel, and school infrastructures in times of conflict, develop plans for preparedness and response to emergency situations for education, as well as promote education for a culture of peace and non-violence, and intercultural dialogue and understanding.

We commit to include in education policies, sector plans and budgets relevant risk assessment and planning to respond to the education needs of children, youth and adults affected by disaster, conflict, displacement and epidemics, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Effective education response requires good coordination between neighbouring countries, therefore we commit to support existing sub-regional and regional mechanisms and strategies to address the education needs of displaced and refugees populations. We commit to planning and financing for education services in protracted crises.

We commit to develop systems and ensure capacity building for disaster risk reduction (DRR); resilience and peace education. We pledge to secure multi-year funding to establish budget lines for crisis response.

Towards the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 and beyond

15. We commit ourselves and request relevant UN agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, youth representatives and the private sector under the leadership of UNESCO and the African Union to maintain the momentum to finalize a comprehensive, well-coordinated post-2015 education agenda and Framework for Action.

16. We pledge our support to continue the negotiation for the promotion of a future education agenda in all upcoming fora to reach final agreement on priorities for the next global development agenda. We will continue to ensure that the education goals and targets are mainstreamed and receive pride of place in every aspect of the *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* and the *Common African Position on the Post-2015*.

17. We further recommend that UNESCO continue to lead the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda after its adoption at the United Nations Special Summit in September 2015 at the global level.

18. We commit to strengthening the partnership between AU, UNESCO, civil society organizations, teacher organizations, youth representatives and other development partners, to develop and implement the African regional education strategy