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Association for the
Development of
Education in
Africa



Kigali, Rwanda, 10 February, 2015 - the sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015

The sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015 opened in the Rwandan capital, Kigali on Monday February 9, 2015. The conference is discussing post-2015 education in Africa and reviewing progress made in the implementation of the EFA plan of action. Workable recommendations are expected to emerge from the conference that ends on Wednesday February 11, 2015. The opening ceremony was chaired by Prof. Silas LWAKABAMBA, Minister of Education of Rwanda, on behalf of the Head of State, His Excellency Hon. Paul KAGAME, in the presence of 44 other African Ministers of Education, and more than 300 delegates and media practitioners, members of civil society groups and a number of African Union and UNESCO partners. Also present were Ms. Julia Gillard, former Australian Prime Minister and Chair of the Global Partnership for Education as well as representatives of the African Union and UNESCO.

Prof. Silas LWAKABAMBA welcomed the selection of his country to host this important preparatory meeting for the World Forum scheduled in May 2015 in Seoul, South Korea. He noted that Rwanda as other African countries works actively towards the achievement of the goals of Education for All (EFA). To this effect, Rwanda has made substantial efforts to relieve households from the burden related to school fees and children's nutrition. The country is currently working to develop quality education for all in partnership with all the sectoral stakeholders and partners.

His speech was preceded by those of the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union, Dr. Martial De Paul Ikounga, the Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO, Dr. Qian Tang, the Chairperson of Trust Africa, Ms Aicha Bah Diallo, and the Chairperson of the Global Partnership for Education, Ms. Julia Gillard.

Dr. Martial De Paul Ikounga stressed the urgent need for Africa to build a common position in relation to the global agenda on education. He was concerned about the persistence of the numerous educational disparities between countries within a region. He noted that situations may have worsened in some parts of the continent as a result of the impact of certain phenomena such as Ebola and HIV/Aids. He called on African countries to promote good governance in the education sector, and also highlighted the ever present education and science conundrum. "The two should not be considered exclusive but mutual. The proposal is for a new premise that views education as a science", he said, warning against the tendency to produce school graduates whose skills are not linked to national priorities or demands of a

country. “This calls for change in curriculum”, Dr Martial de Paul Ikounga added. He called for the member states of the African Union to prioritize education in their national finance planning.

The Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO, Dr. Qian TANG, recalled the EFA situation in Africa and stressed that the progress achieved on the development index were real. He noted that gender parity experienced a dramatic increase. However, what needs to be corrected should be rectified to consolidate the advances made to date. The Seoul World Forum will provide the opportunity for the adequate formulation of Africa’s position relative to the post-2015 agenda. It is imperative that African countries streamline their positions in order to speak with one voice at the Post-2015 World Education Forum in Seoul next May.

Ms. Aicha Bâ DIALLO, chair of TRUST Africa, regrets that at the time when we are taking stock of EFA, none of the goals set in 2000 in Dakar were globally achieved. She noted the conspicuous absence of quality in education.

Ms. Julia GILLARD, also a former Australian Prime Minister expressed regrets that 50 million children are out of school. She told the gathering that it was a fact that 250 million children who accessed education worldwide do not learn properly. The situation could be worse for disabled children, and those living in conflict and/or disaster-affected countries. Ms. Gillard warned against celebrating the current gains in education and called on delegates to focus on the challenges ahead in order to reach the desired levels of literacy.

Challenges in Africa include the more than 30 million young people out of school – 60% of them being girls. There is also a notable low morale in the teaching profession. The Africa region has also organized itself so as to ensure that an African perspective be heard with regards to the definition of post-2015 global sustainable development goals.

It can be recalled that consultations with education stakeholders indicated so far that the direction for the post-2015 agenda should be anchored in a sector-wide and life-long learning perspective. These should address concerns regarding access, equity and quality for all – children, youth and adults – at all levels of education, ranging from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to higher education and adult education, and for all other forms of education, whether formal, non-formal or informal.

This conference coincides with the 70th anniversary of UNESCO and a period in which the African EFA Development Index has improved significantly.

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