

Africa Network Campaign on Education For All



Policy Statement, For Immediate Release

Date: 8th September 2011

LITERACY FOR PEACE IN AFRICA: 2011 LITERACY DAY STATEMENT

Introduction

The focus for 2011 International Literacy Day is literacy for peace with special consideration about gender equality. Literacy is a critical catalyst for reinforcing peace at individual, household, community, national and international levels. Literate empowers society with skills for dialogue, peace building, democracy consolidation, and conflict transformation. A literate society is more likely to value peace especially for the vulnerable groups such as women, and those excluded due to disabilities, languages and cultural orientation.

It is therefore a great concern to ANCEFA that there are high illiteracy levels in African countries. The 2011 UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report has some startling statistics on sub Saharan Africa. At least 160 million adults are illiterate (of the world's 793 million); at least 28.8 million children are out of school (representing 43 % of global figure of 67 million). The majority of the illiterate are women, girls and children with disabilities.

It is not surprising therefore, that Africa is home to more countries in conflict than the rest of the world. Somalia, Sudan, DRC, Burundi and Uganda are only a few examples.

In commemoration of the International Literacy Day, ANCEFA therefore calls upon African governments to put priority in investing more in literacy related programs and address inequalities in access and quality of literacy and education programs at all levels. Countries should implement literacy benchmarks including allocating at least 6% of their GDP to education and 3% of education budget to literacy. There should be a lot of emphasis on lifelong learning, and new approaches to literacy such as REFLECT should be promoted including linking literacy to peace building.

Furthermore, governments need to fully commit to the Belem Framework of Action developed at CONFINTEA VI in 2009 and ensure adequate space and consultations with Civil Society and donors in formulating and implementing creative and people-focused strategies that empower the citizens, women in particular.

Finally, ANCEFA would like to congratulate governments of Burundi and DRC that have been awarded the 2011 UNESCO Literacy Prize in recognition of their efforts at linking literacy to peace and tolerance.

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