



**FINAL POSITION PAPER**

**THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM PRIOR TO THE SIXTH  
ORDINARY CONFERENCE OF THE MINISTERS OF  
EDUCATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION (COMEDAF VI),  
AURELIA PALACE, YAOUNDÉ , CAMEROON,**

**18-19 APRIL, 2014**

# **POSITION PAPER FROM THE CSO FORUM PRIOR TO COMEDAF VI HELD AT AURELIA PALACE, YAOUNDÉ , CAMEROON, 18-19 APRIL, 2014**

**Date: Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2014**

## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

This position paper has been developed by ANCEFA members and partners, including Educational International, FAWE, IBIS and Plan International. ANCEFA is a 35 member pan African regional education campaign network involved in monitoring and advocacy for the right to education. The statement has been developed after 45 participants from civil society organisations (CSOs) from 21 countries met for two days ahead of the Sixth Ordinary Conference of the Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF VI), scheduled to take place in Yaoundé from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2014. During the meeting participants discussed progress and challenges in implementing the Education for All (EFA) Framework (2000-2015) and the Second Decade of Education for the African Union (2006-2015) and deliberated on the post 2015 agenda.

## **2.0. OBSERVATIONS**

### **2.1. General Observation**

The civil society forum in general observed that education in Africa was in a crisis and there was need for stakeholders and policy makers including Ministers of Education, African Union Commission Human Resource Department, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), civil society organisations, and financial and technical partners to undertake concerted effort to advance education goals and priorities in Africa.

### **2.2. Specific Observations**

Participants specifically observed that:

- Education is a fundamental human right and important for Africa's sustainable development and renaissance; but many people in Africa are denied this right;
- The continent is home to more than half of the world's 57 million out of school children and 182 million illiterate adults; and the quality of education in most countries is poor due to among others shortage trained and well supported teachers;
- The six EFA goals will be missed by at least 31 countries in Africa by 2015;
- There has been slow progress in implementation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa and most of the objectives will be partially achieved by 2015;
- Factors that contributed towards the slow progress included lack of appropriation of the Second Decade plan of action by member states; inadequate human resource capacity for the African Union commission (AUC) and the Regional Economic Communities to coordinate implementation; and inadequate funding and weak strategic partnerships at national, regional and continental levels.
- Increasing funding gaps require serious attention to achieve both the EFA goals and the Second Decade of Education priorities.
- Many countries were not fully involved in the process of developing the African Union Common position on post 2015 and the position itself has some gaps such as lack of definitions for instance for quality

education; the lack of clear goal, targets and indicators; not addressing inclusive education; omitting primary and secondary education and lack of financial targets for countries.

- The emerging global proposal on the post 2015 education agenda has some shortfalls which need to be addressed before being adopted by member states of the United Nations. The shortfalls include diluted financial targets, use of words whose meaning in the given context is not clear; and gaps in the indicators and typographical errors.

### **3.0. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.1 General Recommendations**

The following were the general recommendations from the meeting:

- The Ministers of Education of the African Union, Member States, African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities and partners should promote inclusive quality education with special focus on girls and the disadvantaged and marginalised groups.
- There is an urgent need to increase domestic financing for education by among others promoting fair taxation systems and ensuring that national governments allocate at least 6% of the GDP and 20% of the national budget to education in order to sustain education systems.
- There is need to strengthen partnerships and networking among various partners in order to ensure coordination and harmonisation in education program implementation.
- The African position on post 2015 agenda should have a clear goal, indicators and time- bound measurable targets aligned to the vision of the African union and the global policy framework.

#### **3.2. Specific Recommendations**

Participants made specific recommendations to several stakeholders as follows:

#### **A: RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AFRICAN UNION EDUCATION MINISTERS AND MEMBER STATES**

##### **I. Recommendations to support equality and non-discrimination:**

The African Union Education Ministers and Member States were called upon to ensure that:

- 1) The right to education is re-affirmed and incorporated into their constitutions and education acts. Furthermore they should ensure effective implementation through the adoption of laws, policies and time-bound implementation plans with particular regard to the excluded;
- 2) Steps are taken to address discrimination in education due to gender, race, language, religion, ethnicity, health status, disability, geographical location, emergency, conflict, socio-economic status, age and others.
- 3) The way learning outcomes assessments are designed does not disproportionately affect any particular group.

## **II. Recommendations to support the quality of education and improved learning outcomes:**

The African Union Education Ministers and Member States were called upon to ensure that:

- 1) Quality and relevance of education at all levels is provided by paying due attention to teachers' professional development and training, teacher incentives, promoting mother tongue and bi-lingual education, and ensuring that the curricula contribute to a broad range of learning competences and life skills, including literacy and numeracy, as well as critical thinking and creativity; social and emotional development; mutual understanding and tolerance; healthy lifestyle; etc.
- 2) Provision of inclusive quality education at all levels of the education system targeting especially girls and disadvantaged groups.
- 3) Curricula, teaching methods and learning outcomes assessments are adapted to the national and local context and environment and in consideration of cultural specificities.
- 4) Education meets national minimum standards, and learning outcomes assessments are one tool to measure this. In this regard learning targets and assessments must cover a broad range of learning competencies, including both cognitive and non-cognitive.
- 5) The impacts of learning outcomes assessments are monitored, particularly concerning vulnerable groups, and disaggregated data is collect from the assessments.

## **III. Recommendations to support the full financing of quality education for all and sustainable education systems**

The African Union Education Ministers and Member States were requested to urgently address the challenges in education financing by:

- 1) Increasing domestic financing through ensuring allocation of at least 6% of the GDP or 20% of the national budget to education; ensuring fair and progressive taxation; and maximising revenues from the extractive industries (making sure that multinational companies pay their fair share of taxes) to ensure sustainable education systems.
- 2) Ensuring that foreign aid meant for education is aligned to continental, regional, and national education priorities and plans,
- 3) Better management and equitable and well-targeted spending of resources allocated to education.
- 4) Ensuring open, transparent, and participatory systems for budgeting and spending as well as zero tolerance to corruption to ensure efficient use of resources.

On this same subject donor countries and International Financial Institutions should:

- i) Prioritise spending development aid in countries in most need e.g. those in conflict, emergencies, and highly impoverished.
- ii) Ensure that their policies and programmes do not interfere with the realisation of the right to quality education for all e.g. by putting caps on number of teachers to be recruited.

#### **IV. Recommendations on the Evaluation and Development of a Successor to the Second Education Decade**

The African Union Education Ministers and Member States were called upon to ensure:

- Broad- based participation of all stakeholders in the final evaluation of the African Union Second Education Decade
- That all partners including civil society representatives are systematically involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of a successor to the Second Education Decade through structured mechanisms.

#### **V. Recommendations on the African Union Common Position on Post 2015 agenda:**

The African Union Education Ministers and Member States were invited to:

- Critically review the global post 2015 proposals by the United Nations Open Working Group and Education for All (EFA) Steering Committee (coordinated by UNESCO) to ensure that they reflect the vision of the African Union.
- To provide clear definitions of concepts such as quality education, inclusive education and basic education; and develop a stand-alone education goal with clear targets and indicators aligned to the global framework.

#### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECs)**

The Department of the Human Resources Science and Technology (HRST) of the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were requested to:

- Facilitate mapping of all partners working in education within their jurisdictions including civil society to facilitate sharing, coordination and harmonisation.
- Share plans and major events with partners to facilitate active participation
- Enhance their coordination capacity by recruiting more staff responsible for education program implementation, with support from partners.
- Facilitate broad-based consultations involving all partners including civil society in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs at AUC/HRST and REC levels.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARTNERS OF THE AFRICAN UNION INCLUDING CIVIL SOCIETY**

The partners of the African Union Commission were urged to:

- i) To promote quality inclusive education in their program interventions with particular focus on girls and the disadvantaged
- ii) To provide technical and financial support to enhance timely implementation of education programs and priorities at national, regional and continental levels
- iii) To enhance communication with RECs, AUC and National governments in implementation of their programs by among others sharing plans, coordinating and harmonising activities to minimise duplication
- iv) To support the African Union Commission and Member states in promoting the achievement of the right to education in Africa through active participation in formulation, implementation and review of continental, regional and national education plans.
- v) To align and fully embrace the continental vision of education by integrating and prioritising focus areas for the Second Decade for Education and its successor.

## **D. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EFA STEERING COMMITTEE ON POST 2015 AGENDA**

The members of the EFA Steering Committee were requested to consider the following:

- To improve the draft joint post 2015 education agenda taking into account the concerns and recommendations from stakeholders including civil society in Africa before adoption at the Global Education for All Meeting in Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May, 2014.
- Widely disseminate the final proposal on post 2015 agenda once adopted to ensure alignment at national, regional and international levels.

## **Conclusion**

ANCEFA and its partners are committed to promoting and pushing for the right to quality education for all before and after 2015. ANCEFA calls upon the leadership of the African Union and Member States to work together with CSOs and partners in collaborating towards ensuring that all Africans enjoy the right to quality education.

## **ANNEXES TO THE POSITION PAPER**

## ANNEX 1: EXTRACT FROM THE AFRICAN UNION COMMON POSITION ON POST 2015 (JANUARY 2014)

### III. Statement of our Position on the post-2015 Development Agenda

16. Africa's development priorities are grouped into five pillars: (i) structural economic transformation and inclusive growth; (ii) science, technology and innovation; (iii) people centred development; (iv) environmental sustainability natural resources management, and disaster risk management; and (v) finance and partnerships.

#### Pillar Three: People-centred development

33. **CONVINCED** that the eradication of poverty in all its forms should remain the overarching priority in the post-2015 Development Agenda.

34. **COGNIZANT** of the fact that sustainable and equitable development can only be guaranteed in Africa when people are the means and end of the economic growth process, particularly when the potential contribution of women and youth is fully realized, and that investment in children, youth and women always generates substantial development multipliers with positive effects on all sectors of the economy and society.

37. **MINDFUL** that education is the foundation for development and the need to strive to achieve excellence in education and boost human resource capacities through improvements in the quality of learning and investment in education infrastructure.

38. To achieve our overarching goal of people-centred development; we **COMMIT** to:

#### (a) Eradication of poverty

39. **PROMOTE** the empowerment of all people, including those living in vulnerable situations (including women, children, the elderly, youth, people with disabilities, rural populations, displaced persons and migrants), through: inclusive growth that creates decent jobs; improved access to social protection for them and promoting measures that ensure that no individual remains below the poverty line. In this regard, we commit to ensure that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities.

#### (b) Education and human capital development

40. **ACHIEVE** excellence in human resources capacity development through an improvement in the quality of education and training by: investing in learning infrastructures; increasing the use of ICT; ensuring higher completion rates; promoting pre-schooling, integrated adult education and tertiary education; and improving the quality and conditions of service of educators and trainers;

41. **ENHANCE** equity by: improving and sustaining progress on gender parity at all levels of education, with special emphasis on secondary and tertiary education; creating a positive environment for girls and boys at school; increasing the representation of female teachers especially in science and technology; and eliminating human trafficking and child labour, thus allowing children to benefit from facilities for their full development;

42. **STRENGTHEN** school curricula to include: basic rights and responsibilities of citizens; quality education beyond primary schooling; developing entrepreneurship skills, life skills and vocational and technical training to respond to labour market demands; providing information and technology skills; and introducing age-appropriate and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education for all.



## **ANNEX 2: CIVIL SOCIETY PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING THE AFRICAN UNION COMMON POSITION ON POST 2015 AGENDA**

### **I. Definitions**

- **Basic education** is whereby a learner attains a minimum of 10 years including at least 1 year of pre-primary, 6 years of primary, and 3 years of lower secondary education.
- **Inclusive education** offers equitable opportunities for enrolment and retention of all learners including those disadvantaged by gender, disability, ethnicity, language, geographical location, conflicts, emergencies and social economic status
- **Quality education** is the type of education that provides a conducive environment for learning and follows relevant content which is delivered by properly trained personnel resulting in empowerment of learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes enabling them to take informed decisions and responsible actions in society for sustainable development.

### **II. Quality indicators**

- % of qualified teachers
- % of learners achieving minimum success score in national and international assessments
- % of the marginalized learners completing primary, secondary and tertiary education
- % of class/grade 1 pupils that had completed at least one year of pre-primary education
- % of schools that have structures that support learning of the marginalized including the disabled;
- % of youth and adults enrolling for tertiary and TVET education
- Per cent of primary pupils following early grade reading courses
  
- Number and % of quality teachers, i.e. teachers who are well trained, in sufficient numbers and committed and very motivated.
- % of schools operating in conducive environment-appropriate equipment and infrastructure including classrooms, sports and leisure centres, dispensaries, canteens, toilets, libraries with books, and materials

### **II. Post 2015 Goal, Targets and Indicators**

#### **A. Goal**

By 2030 achieve inclusive and equitable quality education for all children, youth and adults in Africa

#### **B. Targets and Indicators**

- 1) **Target 1: Ensure excellence and continuous quality improvement in education systems in at least 70% of African countries by 2020 and all countries by 2030**

#### **Outcome indicators**

- Achieving a teacher pupil ratio of 1:40 by 2020
- Increasing percentage of numbers of boys, girls, and children with special education needs passing national and international reading and writing assessments
- increasing percentage of numbers of boys, girls, and children with special education needs who pass national and international tests and assessments such as SACMEQ, WASSCE, MLA
- Higher completion rates;
- Reducing dropout rates for girls, boys and children with disabilities
- Reducing repetition rates for girls, boys and children with disabilities

### ***Input indicators***

- Increment in teacher training in line with national demands
- Ensured recruitment and deployment of well trained teachers for all levels of education
- increasing number of countries which adopt mother tongue, bi-lingual and multi-lingual education
- promotion of early grade reading and numeracy skills
- ensured that by 2020 countries have reviewed and harmonised school curriculum to be relevant to the current needs of learners and society by integrating content on entrepreneurship, life skills, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, information, communication and technology (ICT), human rights' and responsibilities, peace education and conflict resolution, social development and accountability, social media and global citizenship skills
- more countries reporting having reached the minimum numbers of instruction times of at least 800 hours a year
- investing in learning infrastructures responsive to the needs of all pupils especially girls and children with disabilities;
- increasing the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT);
- promotion of child friendly teaching methodologies in teacher training and in schools
- promoting pre-schooling, primary, secondary, integrated adult education and tertiary education; and
- Better conditions of service for educators and trainers.

## **2) Target 2: Achieving gender parity, equitable and inclusive access and retention at all levels of education from pre-school to tertiary education by 2020 and sustaining the momentum till 2030.**

### **Outcome indicators**

- Increased literacy and numeracy levels for boys, girls, youth and adults
- Achieved universal basic education by 2030
- Increasing enrolment and retention of girls at all levels of education
- Increasing enrolment and retention of children marginalised due to disabilities, language, ethnicity, conflict, gender, emergencies, poverty, location, and others
- Gender parity achieved in terms of net enrolment in early child education , primary, secondary, higher education, TVET, as well as youth and adult literacy centres
- Reduced number of out of school children

### **Input indicators**

- Ensuring that all countries implement free and compulsory basic education of at least 10 years by 2020
- Increased recruitment of female teachers acting as role models for girls at all levels of education
- increasing the representation of female teachers especially in mathematics science and technology;
- Increased recruitment of specialist teachers taking care of children with special needs including those with hearing, visual, and emotional impairments
- Promotion of child friendly facilities in schools including sports facilities, leisure facilities, exchange visits among schools, sanitary facilities and materials,
- Promotion of affirmative policies and practices to cater for marginalised and discriminated boys and girls particularly in post primary education

**3)Target 3: Ensuring sustainable financing for education by among others promoting fair taxation systems and ensuring that national governments allocate at least 6% of the GDP and 20% of the national budget to education.**

### **Outcome Indicators**

- Reduced education funding gaps at all levels of education
- Reduced inequalities in distribution of education resources including teachers and teaching and learning materials
- Reduced dependency on foreign aid to finance education
- Sustained systems and mechanisms for high transparency and accountability across all levels and structures in education

### **Input Indicators**

- Increased financing of education by ensuring allocation of at least 6% of the GDP and 20% of education budget to education
- Enhanced domestic financing through implementing and managing fair and progressive tax systems with particular focus on multinational companies and extractive industries
- Promoting decentralisation, devolution and community participation in school management
- Intensified resource and policy research, analysis and monitoring by communities, civil society and parliaments to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of resources meant for education
- Better management and equitable and well-targeted spending of resources allocated to education.
- Ensuring open, transparent, and participatory systems for budgeting and spending as well as zero tolerance to corruption so that no one is left behind due to lack of resources.
- Enhanced capacity building for communities, civil society, the media and parliamentarians to carry out their respective roles
- Addressing human resource gaps in public institutions including schools, local councils, national and regional offices responsible for policy implementation
- Promoting partnerships and inter-ministerial and inter-sector coordination in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of education policies

**ANNEX 3: EXTRACT FROM THE EFA STEERING COMMITTEE JOINT PROPOSAL ON POST 2015  
(DATED 17 APRIL 2014)**

**Vision and Principles of the Post-2015 Global Education Agenda**

Education is a fundamental human right and a foundation for human fulfilment, peace, sustainable development, economic growth, decent work, gender equality and responsible global citizenship.

**Education must be a stand-alone goal in the broader post-2015 development agenda and should be framed by a comprehensive overarching goal, with measurable targets and related indicators.**

In addition, education must also be integrated into other development goals in order to highlight their mutual interdependence and catalyze more synergistic action across sectors.

**Overarching goal**

“Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030” is proposed as the overarching education goal. This goal may not be measured as such, but must be translated into specific global targets and corresponding indicators. The targets are specific and measurable, and contribute directly to the achievement of the goal. Countries are expected to commit to the goal and targets, against which they can be held accountable.

**Outcome targets**

Target 1: Increase the percentage of children who start primary education “ready to learn” to x%\*, with age-appropriate development and learning, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 2: All children enrol (enter), progress through and complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least 10 years, and achieve relevant learning outcomes as defined by recognized standards to be measured at the end of primary and lower secondary education, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 3: Increase literacy and numeracy levels of youth (15 – 24 years) and adults (15 +) to ensure at least x% and y % respectively are at a proficiency level sufficient to fully participate in society and to continue as a lifelong learner, with particular attention to girls and women and the most marginalized.

Target 4: Increase the percentage of youth (15-24 years) and adults with the knowledge and skills to access decent work and lead healthy and productive lives to x% and y% respectively, through upper secondary and tertiary education, technical and vocational education and training, and lifelong learning opportunities, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized

**Target 5:** All learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to take informed decisions and responsible actions to face and resolve local and global challenges, through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

**INPUT TARGETS**

Target 6: All governments ensure the provision of sufficient numbers\* of well-trained, motivated and professionally-supported teachers who meet national standards.

Target 7: All countries progress towards allocating 4-6% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 15-20% of their public expenditure to education, using funds effectively and prioritizing groups most in need.

**ANNEX 4: CIVIL SOCIETY FEEDBACK ON EFA STEERING COMMITTEE PROPOSAL ON POST 2015**

- 1) The civil society forum prior to COMEDAF VI recommended that the vision, principle and overarching goal be accepted, that is:

**Vision:** *Education is a fundamental human right and a foundation for human fulfilment, peace, sustainable development, economic growth, decent work, gender equality and responsible global citizenship.*

**Principle:** *Education must be a stand-alone goal in the broader post-2015 development agenda and should be framed by a comprehensive overarching goal, with measurable targets and related indicators. In addition, education must also be integrated into other development goals in order to highlight their mutual interdependence and catalyse more synergistic action across sectors.*

**Goal:** *Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030*

- 2) Targets are close to what ANCEFA has proposed. Notable gaps and recommendations for improvement are:
  - a. Target 1 – contextual differences among countries not factored in and a one-factor fits all approach does not look appropriate here. Different countries should have different value % for X
  - b. What does "ready to learn" mean? Ready to learn should be more specific e.g. school entry age of 5 years. Recast Target 1 to read thus: "Increase the % of children who complete at least one year of ECD to start primary to x %..."
  - c. Target 2 the word, "enter" be replaced with "enroll". Target 2 is still too wordy and should be summarized, ending at outcome, thus should read: "All children enrol, progress through and complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least 10 years, and achieve relevant learning outcomes".
  - d. Target 3. is very wordy and not specific but emphasis on youth and adult to increase literacy is welcome.
  - e. Calling 15+ as adult is questionable and there is contradiction for youth to be in the bracket of 15-25 while adults is placed at 15+. UN standard definition should be used here
  - f. Target 4. be rephrased to read: "Increase the % of youth and adult enrolling for Tertiary, Technical and Vocational training with particular attention on the use of ICT, gender equality and the most marginalized.
  - g. Ensure that percentages in target 4 are country specific.
  - h. Target 5 is a good but it is difficult to measure.
  - i. Target 6 is accepted as presented
  - j. Target 7. There should be no range in the targets in percentage. It must be specific 6% GDP and 20% public expenditure to education. Target 7: All countries progress towards allocating a minimum of 6% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and at least 20% of their public expenditure to education, using funds effectively and prioritizing groups most in need.
  - k. Add Target 8 to read: "All countries progress towards developing sufficient education infrastructure that facilitates teaching and learning".

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