



## **NOTE ON THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING FOR RECS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR AFRICA**

### **1. Introduction**

The Commission of the African Union will organize a high-level meeting in partnership with AfDB, UNESCO and ADEA that will bring together:

- The COMEDAF III Bureau of Ministers;
- The African Union's Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) as well as Director of HRST, Head of Education, Head of Youth; and NEPAD Advisor for Education;
- The Executive Secretaries/General Secretaries/ Directors of the 8 Regional Economic Community Commissions (RECs) recognized by the African Union as well as their education officers;
- Senior representatives of the African Development Bank, UNESCO, World Bank, UNICEF and ADEA.

The meeting is organized within the context of implementing the conditions and factors for the Second Decade of Education (2006-2015) to succeed. RECs are the pillars of the African Union. In this respect, the RECs hold a key position in the chain of actors as they will be responsible for facilitating, coordinating and monitoring implementation of the Plan of Action of the Second Decade, particularly in the articulation between the continental and the national level. Furthermore, the RECs are a foundation for building the integrated development of Africa, in all areas, including education.

### **2. Background**

In January 2006, the 6th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and government of the African Union, that was held in Khartoum (Sudan), considered the Report of the first extra-ordinary session of COMEDAF II that had been held in Addis Ababa in January 2006 and proclaimed 2006-2015 Second Decade of Education for Africa. Among the lessons learned from the First Decade of Education, the evaluation report of the African Union Commission lists the following:

- evidence of the continuing critical shortcomings in education in spite of the political will and efforts perceived and expressed by the launching and implementation of the First Decade ;
- the challenge of ownership by countries and RECs of the objectives of such continent-wide initiatives, which is essential because integration in planning of such initiatives is a condition for their success;
- the challenge of mobilizing development partners to support the initiative at continental and regional levels.

The Plan of Action for the Second Decade takes into account the lessons learned from the First Decade.

It was launched at the Second Extraordinary Session of COMEDAF in Maputo (Mozambique) held September 4-8, 2006. The Maputo declaration stemming from the meeting stresses the importance of, *inter alia*:

- “reinforcing the role of education for the promotion of regional and continental integration via the bilateral and regional networks”;
- “mobilizing resources to strengthen the AU Commission’s Department of Education as well as the education desks within the RECs through capacity building and strategic recruitments”.

In light of these challenges and following on the recommendations of COMEDAF, two meetings were organized in July 2007:

- The high-level meeting on partnership and mobilization of resources held in Tunis, (Tunisia) July 9-10, which brought together AfDB, the Commission of the AU, NEPAD and ADEA. Outcomes of the meeting include:
  - the decision to create a Trust Fund for education, science and technology aimed at supporting innovation and facilitating the development of investment programs and projects within the framework of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education and Africa’s Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action;
  - support for the strengthening of capacities of the Commission of the AU, NEPAD and the RECs in order to enable them to fully take up the roles assigned to them to implement the plans.
- The second meeting was held July 11-12, 2007 in Paris (France) and brought together the African Union Commission, UNESCO and ADEA to examine the concrete modalities of the support to be given to the AU for implementing the Second Decade. In the conclusions of the meeting, both UNESCO and ADEA express their commitment to facilitate ownership by and integration of the Plan of Action in the RECs’ regional programs.

At both meetings, ADEA was tasked to organize consultations between the AUC, the AfDB, UNESCO and the RECs in order for a high-level meeting with the RECs to be held before the end of 2007.

### **3. Goals and objectives of the High-Level Meeting**

The High-Level Meeting has the following goals that should guide its objectives and actions :

- mobilization of stakeholders and partners in the process of accelerating qualitative changes in education in Africa in order to address the continental shortcomings in this key sector;

- promotion of African education systems that will have a positive impact for Africa's successful integration in a global world and will enhance the endogenous potential of development through scientific and technological improvements and relevance vis-à-vis African identity, the specific needs of economic development and social demand ;
- acceleration of economic growth, poverty alleviation, eradication of pandemics (HIV/AIDS, malaria...), environment protection, building social and national cohesion (against civil conflicts), promotion of democratic and active citizenship through building qualitative human and social capital on a wide scale based on equity.

The African Union's Plan of Action, which has 7 priority areas, has been prepared with the following objectives in mind:

- Gender and culture;
- Education management information systems;
- Teacher development;
- Tertiary education;
- Technical and vocational education and training, including education in difficult situations;
- Curriculum and teaching and learning materials;
- Quality management.

The general objective of the high-level meeting is to exchange information in order to arrive at a consensus on the definition and the realization of the conditions which would lead to the full participation of the eight REC recognized by the African Union through the preparation and implementation of regional strategies for the integration of the Plan of Action of the Second Decade.

More specifically, the meeting will aim at attaining the following objectives:

- to pool the RECs' experience concerning the relationship between education and integration;
- to share with the RECs the objectives and strategies of the Plan of Action of the Second Decade;
- to define roles and specific responsibilities at each level (continental, regional and national) for the implementation of the Plan;
- to prepare strategies and methodologies which will facilitate the integration of the objectives of the Plan of Action of the Second Decade into the RECs' programmes;
- to analyze the RECs' needs for support for strengthening their technical and institutional capacities, in order for them to be able to carry out on a long-term basis the roles allotted to them;
- to define, within the same framework, the sources and means necessary for the mobilization of resources in favor of the REC.
- to agree on a follow-up and reporting mechanism for the implementation of the Plan of Action