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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**CONTINENTAL EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR AFRICA
(CESA 16-25)**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER
TECHNICAL MEETING**

Bagatelle, Mauritius

21- 22 March 2019

COMMUNIQUE

INTRODUCTION

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) clearly states that Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) is the pillar for future learning and identifies it as the next frontier if Africa is to realize sustained quality education and training. CESA 16-25 identifies pre-primary education as a neglected sub-sector that deserves special attention. The CESA ECED cluster was therefore established to strengthen this critical sub-sector.

In this light, the first Technical meeting of the CESA-ECED Cluster was held from 21st – 22nd March, 2019 in Bagatelle, Mauritius. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research of Mauritius in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN).

The meeting was officially opened by the Honourable Minister for Education, Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun of Mauritius, who underscored the importance of ECED in creating the foundation for life-long health and productivity in all of our countries. Dr Beatrice Njenga, the Head of Division for Education at the African Union Commission (AUC) reiterated AU's commitment to advancing the Early Childhood agenda. Dr Lynette Okengo, Executive Director, AfECN shared the progress report outlining the work of the cluster since its launch on 4th September, 2018 at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa.

The meeting was attended by eleven Member States, Regional Economic Communities, Civil Society Organisations and International Development partners. Member States and partners shared experiences and updates on ECED implementation.

MEETING OUTCOMES

All members of the ECED Cluster renewed their commitment to CESA 16-25 and the AU Agenda 2063 which are in line with the global SDGs.

To achieve objectives of the cluster, four (4) Working Groups (WGs) were operationalised, namely: Policy, Advocacy and Communication; Access to quality ECED Programmes and Services; Governance and accountability; Knowledge generation, documentation and dissemination. Each with a Chair and Convener and a two-year (2019-2020) Work Plan. The Chair and Convener of each working group will be part of the ECED Cluster Technical Committee whose Terms of Reference were also agreed upon at the meeting. In this regard, the WGs' leadership was established as follows:

- i. **Policy, Advocacy and Communication:**
 - Chair: Zambia
 - Convener: UNICEF
- ii. **Access to Quality ECED Programmes and Services**
 - Chair: Senegal
 - Co-Chair: Burkina Faso

- Convener: TBD
- iii. **Governance and accountability**
 - Chair: Seychelles
 - Convener: Commonwealth Secretariat .
- iv. **Knowledge generation, documentation and dissemination**
 - Chair: AAU
 - Co-Chair: Mauritius Institute of Education
 - Convener: Prof Hasina Ebrahim, UNESCO Co-Chair in ECD/UNISA
 - Co-Convener: Esther Wanjiku Njihia (Kenya)

It was agreed that partnerships cuts across all WGs and shall be coordinated by AfECN. It was agreed that some WGs needed more roles in addition to the Chair and Convener to support execution of their mandate.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBER STATES

- i. Prioritise ECED in line with National commitments to CESA and SDG 4;
- ii. Ensure sound ECED policy in alignment with overall education development and overall care and nurture of children;
- iii. Establish multi-sectoral National Technical Working groups on Early Childhood;
- iv. Champion the work of the cluster at the highest political levels;
- v. Prioritize effective planning and allocation of resources for sustainable programming, while taking advantage of local contexts and financing;
- vi. Strengthen Education Management Information Systems that include ECED, and mainstream data collection for knowledge-based planning and management;
- vii. Prioritise the establishment of a professional ECED Workforce and better working conditions for the ECDE workforce;
- viii. Harnessing digital and emerging knowledge and technology to ensure innovation in ECED.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARTNER AGENCIES

- i. Incorporate the ECED Cluster workplan into regular programmes in order to strengthen synergies and optimise resource use;
- ii. Collaborate with Member States in designing, financing, implementing and monitoring multi-sectoral ECED programmes;
- iii. Undertake generation and dissemination of knowledge including the establishment of an African Journal on ECED;
- iv. Engage in other pertinent CESA clusters related to ECED;
- v. Promote experience sharing within and outside the continent.

Endorsed this day of 22nd day of March, 2019 in Bagatelle, Mauritius