



Africa launches platform to enhance collaboration between countries for the delivery of quality Early Childhood Development programs

Kigali, February 9, 2015. A regional platform to improve the provision of quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs in Africa was launched today, during the Ministerial Conference for sub-Saharan Africa on Education Post-2015.

The Inter-Country Quality Node on Early Childhood Development (ICQN-ECD) is created at the instigation of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Higher Education and Scientific Research of Mauritius, which has taken the responsibility of its leadership.

The ICQN is a regional platform for the sharing of knowledge, peer learning and the establishment of a community of practice. Its main objective will be to improve ECD policies and practices, so that “every African child gets a good start in life through the implementation of effective ECD programs”.

The ICQN will bring together representatives of the education ministries of various countries, experts in education and ECD, and strategic partners.

It will pursue and bring to new heights the work accomplished by the ADEA Working Group on ECD, which has been coordinated by UNESCO since 2007.

In her address, the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Higher Education and Scientific Research of Mauritius, Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, cited the 98% enrolment rate achieved by Mauritius at pre-school level, which has been achieved through a system based on children’s rights.

The Minister called upon African countries and development agencies to support the new Inter-Country Quality Node. *« We can no longer wait. Every child who dies because of a disease that could have been prevented... every child who does not have access to education... is our responsibility. We have the power to change the destiny of our children and the history of Africa. »*

Today, nearly half of all children who die before the age of 5 and one third of all children who are malnourished are African.

African children also have the least educated mothers in the world: 30% of African women from 15 to 24 years of age and 50% of those over 25 are illiterate. The children of these mothers are fewer to attend school, and when they do, they perform less well than their peers.

In addition, Africa is the continent with the most primary-age children out of school. According to UNESCO’s 2012 global report on Education for All, half of all children out of school live in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly one child in four (23%) of primary school age has never been to school or has dropped out without completing primary education.

About ADEA

ADEA is a pan-African network whose mission is to inform and facilitate the transformation of education and training in view of accelerating Africa's sustainable development. It is a partnership between African ministers of education and development agencies. Its programs focus on research, policy dialogue, advocacy and networking, as well as advisory services and capacity building. ADEA is hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB).

ADEA's Working Group on Early Childhood Development (WGECD) was created in 1998. It has spearheaded ECD in Africa through its activities in the area of research, dialogue, advocacy and networking.

Today, WGECD passes the torch to the Inter-Country Quality Node on Early Childhood Development (ICQN-ECD).

More information on ADEA at www.adeanet.org

Press contacts:

Thanh-Hoa Desruelles, Principal Communication and External Relations Officer, ADEA, tel: +216/ 21 69 11 46, e-mail : t.desruelles@afdb.org

Lawalley Cole, Coordinator, Working Group on Communication for Education and Development (WGCOMED), ADEA, tel : +216/ 21 69 11 46, e-mail : t.desruelles@afdb.org

Rokhaya Diawara, program specialist - education, UNESCO, e-mail: r.diawara@unesco.org; tel. +234/ 805 412 0190; cell +234/ 805 404 4963

Maya Soonarane, Director, Planning and International Relations, Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Mauritius, tel. +230/ 601524, e-mail: msoonarane@govmu.org