



LAUNCH OF CESA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 3-4 September 2018

FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ

Introduction

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA16-25) identifies preprimary education as a neglected sub-sector that deserves special attention. CESA 16-25 clearly states that ECED is the pillar for future learning and identifies it as the next frontier if Africa is to realize sustained quality education and training.

The meeting brought together Member States, RECs and other key ECD stakeholders for the purpose of launching the ECDE Cluster. Draft Terms of Reference were reviewed, a mapping of ongoing ECDE activities was undertaken and the Cluster roadmap was discussed. The terms of reference, work plan and the organizational structure were validated. Member States presented the status of ECDE in their countries while partners presented ongoing programmes and activities as well as ways in which they would meaningfully contribute to the Cluster.

Organizational Structure

- Chair: African Union Commission
- Co-chair: Ministry of Education of Mauritius/ Coordinator of ADEA ICQN-ECED
- Cluster Co-coordinator: The African Early Childhood Network (AfECN)
- Members will include: Member States, Regional Economic Communities, continental organizations, civil society organizations, research organizations, training institutions, UN agencies, development partners and other key stakeholders.
- Working groups will be established to support the achievement of each of the ECDE Cluster objectives
- A technical committee shall be convened following due consultation. It will include Member States, REC, working group chairs.

Work Plan

Affirming the need for intensified action towards strengthened foundations for early learning and development, AU Member States and members present reaffirmed their commitment to take action. As Africa stands ready to implement CESA 2016-2025, the role of the ECED Cluster will be to amplify the work of all partners as a basis for high-level advocacy.

Towards the achievement of this objective, members agreed on specific activities for which the Cluster would be accountable. This was done for each of the ECED outcomes which are:

1. Enhanced policy, advocacy and communication
2. Intensified action to improve equitable access to quality ECED programmes and services
3. Improved quality of ECED systems, programmes and services
4. Enhanced governance and accountability
5. Enhanced research generation, documentation and dissemination
6. Strengthened partnership and collaboration across all key stakeholders including state and non-state actors.

Working Groups

Working groups corresponding to the six outcomes were formed. Each member voluntarily signed up to take part in a specific working group.

Mapping of Activities

A mapping of activities by each member was conducted as per the ECED Cluster outcomes. Members also indicated the work of other organizations not present.

Road Map

Initial discussions on the road map were held and two key advocacy moments were identified. These were the upcoming Innovating Education in Africa Expo meeting that will be held in Dakar, Senegal 4 – 6 October, 2018 and the International Early Childhood Conference that will be held in Nairobi 16 – 19 October 2018. Further to this, it was agreed that a meeting of the technical committee would be held in Mauritius in November 2018.

Key Recommendations for Member States

- Promote comprehensive programming as the first 1000 days of life are critical in laying a strong foundation for successful lifelong learning.
- Maintain a focus on the holistic view of development; strengthen multisectoral collaboration at regional level and advocate for enhanced national multi-sectoral coordination
- Emphasize the important role played by parents and other caregivers as the first teachers in the life of the child
- Engage in high-level advocacy for enhanced political commitment and leadership.
- Intensify action to support policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Campaign for increased access to quality services especially for children made vulnerable by poverty, disease and conflict as well as children with special needs
- Advocate for and strengthen capacity of practitioners in employing child-centered and developmentally appropriate practices including learning through play.
- Intensify action for better working conditions for the ECDE workforce
- Promote the development of play and early learning materials from locally available - low-cost materials
- Prioritize advocacy for increased financing and effective allocation of resources for sustainable programming
- Analyze ongoing ECDE programmes and spotlight ongoing effective practices by member states and other stakeholders
- Strengthen partnership with other partners including Africa Development Bank, DFID, EU, GPE and World Bank.

Official Name of Cluster

Early Childhood Education and Development – ECED was adopted as the official name and acronym of the Cluster.

The Early Childhood Education and Development Cluster was officially launched.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 4th September 2018