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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 COMMITTEE MEETING**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

5-6 December 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.

The Technical Committee of the Cluster met in an ordinary session from 5-6 December 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to among other things, discuss strengthening of the Working Groups of the Cluster towards meeting its objectives. The Technical Committee is composed of the Chairs and Conveners of the four (4) Working Groups (WGs) under the Cluster, namely: Policy, Advocacy and Communication; Access to quality ECED Programmes and Services; Governance and accountability; and Knowledge generation, documentation and dissemination.

The meeting was officially opened by Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo, Director of the Human Resources, Science and Technology Department of the African Union Commission (AUC) who acknowledged the importance of the Technical Committee for achieving the Cluster's objectives as part of realising the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25). Ms Janet Mouko, representing the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN) highlighted the gains made by the Cluster since its inception and called for continued support from the African Union Commission to enable the Cluster to achieve its objectives.

The meeting developed the Cluster workplan for 2020 and acknowledged the importance of promoting Early Childhood Education and Development at the upcoming Third Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST 3), further commending the Working Group on Policy, Advocacy and Communication for developing a policy paper which shall be presented.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the African Union Commission, Member States, and Partner Organisations on the Technical Committee including: Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Burkina Faso, Republic of Seychelles, Republic of Zambia, Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN), UNICEF, Save the Children, ChildFund International and UNESCO.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING

The meeting made the following key recommendations for strengthening the Cluster and its Working Group mechanism to ensure that the latter delivers effectively and efficiently on its mandate under the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) and Agenda 2063.

- i. Technical Committee and Working Groups should each meet at least once a year in a face-to-face meeting, while other meetings may be conducted virtually.

- ii. Working Groups need to focus their work on development of policy guidelines and frameworks in their respective themes as it is more aligned to the mandate of the African Union Commission.
- iii. The Cluster Coordinator and Chair need to find innovative ways to deal with the language barrier towards ensuring sustainable participation of all members.
- iv. The African Union Commission should maintain an active role in provision of logistics support to facilitate the work of the Technical Committee, Working Groups and Cluster at large.
- v. It is important for the Cluster to leverage the network of Regional and International Organisations which are part of the Cluster to reach out to more stakeholders towards increasing its membership.
- vi. Given the multisectoral nature of ECED, the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, and the Social Affairs Department of the African Union Commission need to work together towards realising the objectives of the Cluster.
- vii. The Cluster needs to find synergies with other CESA Clusters and Programmes within the AUC to advance the ECED Agenda.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6th December 2019