

Triennale

Education and Training in Africa



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The Triennale...and after?

President Blaise Compaoré reaffirms his pledge

At the opening ceremony of the Triennale, on Monday 12 February, President Blaise Compaoré had declared that *"the conclusions of the Triennale will be not only implemented but also evaluated before the next Triennale"*. Yesterday, Friday 17 February, during the Triennale closing ceremony, Prime Minister Luc Adolphe Tiao of Burkina Faso reaffirmed the pledge given by Mr. Compaoré, adding that the president *"will communicate the conclusions of the Triennale to the African Union, so that a special summit dedicated to education and training can examine them, adopt them and consider ways and means of implementing them"*.

"President Blaise Compaoré will receive a summary report of the Triennale outcomes by the end of March, in order to facilitate the follow-up to the meeting", stated ADEA Executive Secretary Ahlin Byll-Cataria at the closing ceremony.

Mr. Byll-Cataria also indicated that *"60 percent of the ADEA Secretariat's activities for 2012 will be devoted to follow-up to the Triennale"*. The outcomes and recommendations of the meeting will also be disseminated through regular newsletters.

Kenyan Minister of Education Sam Onger, who is also Chair of the ADEA Bureau of Ministers, called on each minister to communicate the results of the Triennale to the

Council of Ministers of his/her country, so that the government could take them on board. In this way, he added, *"even if we are no longer in the government tomorrow, we are sure that the outcomes of the Triennale will be given close attention and followed up"*. Mr. Onger also emphasized the vital role of the regional economic communities and invited them to become active supporters of the acquisition of critical knowledge, skills and qualifications in order to support the program of sustainable development in Africa. *"Today is the time for Africa to rise and shine. As ministers of education, science and technology, we have a duty to lead this process so that this dream comes true"*, he added.

Participants at the Triennale also agreed that the follow-up should involve all interested parties: governments, the regional economic communities, youth, development agencies, ADEA working groups, the private sector, FAWE, UNESCO, Korea and the inter-country quality nodes.

"It would now be appropriate to request GPE funding", declared a representative of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Young people, for their part, also expressed a desire to be involved in the follow-up activities, while at the same time stressing the need to measure the impact of the Triennale deliberations. ■

“Triennale needs follow-up”

One of the most senior Ministers attending this year’s Triennale has called for a rapid follow-up of the recommendations that will be formulated.

Minister Haroon A. Suleiman was a founder member of Donors to African Education (DAE), the forerunner of ADEA in 1993. At the time he was Zanzibar’s deputy permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. In 2000 he became the Minister of Labour, Economic Empowerment and Co-operatives - but has continued to play a role in ADEA.

He has attended nearly all the ADEA Biennales (now Triennales) since their start and believes the gatherings have evolved into a more dynamic and responsive network providing opportunities for peer learning among senior decision-makers.

“ADEA started off at a low pace and the discourse was largely led by donors. But today Ministers and African roleplayers and their concerns dominate the discussions,” he said.

“This Triennale is particularly worthwhile as it showcased the importance of political will to drive education. African leaders demonstrated that they are willing to give top priority to education. If the Koreans ‘can do we can do’”.

Minister Suleiman said his portfolio focused on tackling poverty by creating skills and employment, particularly among the youth, those who are out-of-school, school leavers and women.

“My Ministry is looking at providing resources to increase employability. We are a small country dominated by tourism which is not employing Zanzibari but drawing from outside the country,” he added.

According to Minister Suleiman this Triennale has been very useful but needed follow-up work.

“This has been a problem of previous Biennales. We must therefore take what recommendations emanate from this Triennale and meet again in 18 months to review progress on a regional basis,” he said.

“Each region needs a country to co-ordinate the process and another country to act as the secretariat. We can review our midterm efforts and then plan our implementation strategy for the next 18 months so that when we attend the next ADEA Triennale we can assess what has been achieved.” ■

Echoes from the floor on training and skills development

One of the key issues that has been raised at the Triennale is youth unemployment. While many young people, including college graduates, are frustrated with the lack of job opportunities, political leaders are beginning to harbor real but mute “fears” about the consequences of the growing anger of their unemployed youth on national stability. This is understandable, in view of the fact that 65% of Africans are under 30 years, most of whom are losing patience over repeated promises of a better future that is slow in coming. How can this potentially dangerous youth revolt “time bomb” be diffused?

The voices coming out of the Triennale plenary and parallel sessions signal a solution in the acquisition of job-relevant employable skills accompanied by government and private sector led post-training technical and financial support systems. Participants expressed the view that government policies that encourage the establishment of businesses can contribute to job creation. Living examples of how an enabling business environment can unleash the entrepreneurial and creative talents of young people were highlighted.

It was acknowledged that rural dwellers are underserved in Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) and are particularly vulnerable to economic hardships. The Triennale discussions emphasized the need for skills provision and low-cost technology applications in the rural and agricultural sectors to boost productivity and enhance sustainable livelihoods. Farmers should be empowered to apply modern as well as indigenous knowledge and skills to combat the challenges of climate variability, deforestation, soil degradation, water conservation In this regard, the use of local languages and media in the dissemination of knowledge and information is advocated. The gender dimension came out strongly. The clear message is: Girls and women should not be left behind.

Participants argued that the often repeated statement that TVSD is expensive does not appreciate the fact that investment in skills gives high returns to the economy.

Participants also agreed that TVSD for employment thrives best in a multi-stakeholder partnership environment in which research findings are applied towards strategy implementation and policy reforms. ■

At the ADEA Innovation and Knowledge Fair

Visitors have the opportunity to learn, share, connect and influence future education and skills development policies and activities. “I came to the Triennale with high expectations. I am glad to say that those expectations were fully met as, during the Fair, I was able to see the application of the models and strategies that were presented during the different sessions,” said one visitor. Exhibitors have been able to share their best practices, creative and innovative experiences and knowledge through a variety of means including posters, publications, audio-visual applications, demonstrations, story-telling as well as films and short presentations. The Fair attracted exhibitors from as far away as Korea. A 3D Educational Broadcasting System, which was part of the Korean exhibit, was a hit amongst visitors. ■

Scientific and technical skills

On relevance and efficiency

The recent events in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya have shown that despite considerable investment by the public sector and the rapid expansion of education, schools and universities produce graduates who often do not have the skills required to succeed on the job market. “Higher education institutions are advised to include the essential skills required for understanding of science, technology, business and society in a series of courses for all students” in order to inculcate a “scientific culture”.

For different - and differentiated - higher education

It would offer a diverse range of knowledge, skills and qualifications suited to developing economies and would meet the differing needs of students. Specialization and concentration of higher education institutions are needed.

Encouraging innovation

We must put our trust in innovation and models of research and development (R&D) for the non-formal and informal sectors. In agriculture, health and the environment, taking advantage of both traditional know-how and the innovative techniques emerging from R&D would develop traditional skills.

Supporting women

Programs should be developed to advise women who choose to enter the fields of science, technology and innovation, because such women constitute an under-represented and still under-exploited potential.

Points requiring urgent attention:

- increasing national funding for research;
- reducing the heavy teaching load imposed on top-quality researchers;
- minimizing dependence on donors;
- installing modern research equipment, facilities and laboratories;
- increasing the resources allocated to educating graduates while also creating university communities through mentoring and peer review;
- access to ICT and scientific journals is also vital in order to raise the level of research;
- centers of excellence and university-industry linkages should be strengthened. ■

What young people thought

“...What I liked was the fact that all interested parties, including young people, were involved in the Triennale debates. I congratulate ADEA on having given young Africans the opportunity to express their opinions and participate in the process of making education policies that will contribute to the sustainable development of Africa... This meeting also gave us an overall view of the state of African education and its issues. **Lourenco, Cape Verde.**

... Participating in the Triennale has allowed us to express our concerns, which we think should be taken into consideration in decision-making processes that concern the young, as it has been recognized that the skills of young people can contribute to the sustainable development of our continent. **Carmel Fansaka, Democratic Republic of Congo.**

Africa needs to count on its young people, because only they can free Africa from its fears, its frustrations and the ills that sap its strength... Our dream is that we all will have equal opportunity to learn, to join the job market and society, and to train for the development and competitiveness of Africa. **Marie Tamoifo, Cameroon.**

The Triennale is a great opportunity for us to make our contributions to building a prosperous Africa on the basis of education and training systems, in a concerted and appropriate way that is accepted by Africans... We participated in discussions on topics such as the match-up between training and employment, the promotion and use of ICT in education, the development of technical and scientific tracks, and regional and continental cooperation... **Silim Madi Atoumani, Dadesim, Comoros.**

I note with a great deal of interest that all the participants recognized the importance of the involvement and participation of young people in discussions on topics such as strengthening employability, employment and the harmonization of our education systems in order to meet the challenges of the employment and social integration of young people... **Alioune Gueye, Mali.**

The meeting was important and now I am just waiting for the implementation stage and the follow-up of this meeting. **Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru, Nigeria.**

We should train young people in accordance with their

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needs, while at the same time teaching them how best to serve their beautiful continent. Thank you for listening to us. We request that you take our opinions into consideration and follow up on the recommendations made at this Triennale. **Kayembe Bitete Benita, Democratic Republic of Congo.**

Ouaga in brief

What do delegates think of the host city of this year's Triennale? And its heat?

Mr. Francois Rwambonera, Rwanda

For me, coming from Rwanda, which has a temperate climate, the heat in Ouaga was surprising. In fact, I feel sorry for the other participants who come from countries with freezing weather.

Professor Titi Oladunjoye, Nigeria/US

"Very nice. Cordial. Friendly. It is a bit hot, but being an African all our places are hot. You have to take off your cool temperature and adapt here and that is what life is about."

Professor Saliah-Hassane, Niger

The first thing that I found is that it is a clean city and people treat you with respect and let you feel very welcome. I was here 20 years ago and I see big changes...

Dr. Aissetou Drame YaYe, Niger/Senegal/Kenya

I come from Senegal and Niger and I live in Kenya, and so I am not particularly inconvenienced by the heat."

Minister Lazarus Dokora, Zimbabwe

It is different. It is unique. Ouagadougou is itself. One has to cultivate a taste for its landscape, a taste for its cultural artefacts, its music and so on. It has given me a sense of a warm, welcoming environment.

ADEA has shown its commitment to sustainable environmental development for this Triennale by being considerate in the use of natural resources.

ADEA has, for instance, attempted to limit the use of paper for its own documentation. Instead, it has relied on USBs as well as its website to serve as a library and distribution center.

However, the use of paper cannot be completely avoided. In those instances where paper had to be used ADEA tried to acquire recycled paper. But recycled paper is more expensive than new paper and therefore the stock of such paper is limited in most African countries, including Burkina Faso. The use of glossy paper for this newsletter and other Triennale documents.

... The Triennale gave us the opportunity to pass on our ideas and hopes to ministers in the most direct possible way. I appreciated the powerful key messages that were finalized by the youth and provided to the ministers... We are expecting ministers to act rapidly to the demands we have made... I extend my request to youth to remain united for the prosperity of Africa. **Heromen Asefa, Ethiopia."** ■

Ms. Hyeji Jeong, Korea

The most interesting thing is that if you walk by people they say: "Bon jour". When people go to work there are so many motorbikes. That is interesting."

Ms. Leah Dotto, Tanzania

It is a very big city - not very different from Dakar and Abidjan - but I did not expect it to be so dry. It is hot, dusty and dry. Still, it is a nice city.

Mr. Atoumi Sim Madi, Comores

The people in Ouagadougou stays up all night. When night falls where I come from we all go home and to bed at 8pm. Here, people carry on all night. Ouaga never sleeps. Finally, the relationship between the people here and their culture was a surprise to me. Their culture has a presence in their everyday lives and manifests itself in the way they live and do things." ■

L'engagement de l'ADEA pour le développement durable s'est aussi traduite pendant cette Triennale, par son souci de préserver les ressources naturelles.

Aussi, l'ADEA s'est elle efforcée à limiter l'utilisation de papier pour la documentation de la Triennale. Elle a préférée s'appuyer sur les clés USB ainsi que sur le site web qui a servi de bibliothèque et de centre de distribution.

L'utilisation du papier ne peut cependant être complètement évitée. Pour les documents principaux l'ADEA a tenté d'utiliser du papier recyclé. Ce papier recyclé est néanmoins plus coûteux et son stock limité dans la plupart des pays africains, y compris au Burkina Faso. L'utilisation de papier couché utilisé pour ce bulletin et pour d'autres documents, ne correspond donc pas à un choix esthétique, mais à des contraintes de disponibilité.

The daily ADEA Bulletin attempts to provide a snapshot only of a day's proceedings. Delegates are welcome to send contributions to cpretor@gmail.com. A newsletter capturing the Triennale in full will be published on April 1.

Le bulletin quotidien de la Triennale a pour objectif de donner un petit aperçu des débats. Les contributions des participants sont les bienvenues et peuvent être envoyées à cpretor@gmail.com. La lettre d'information de l'ADEA, qui sera publiée le 1er avril 2012, donnera un compte rendu plus complet de la conférence.

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