The 2nd High Level Dialogue on enhancing policies and practices to promote STEM-focused TVET for Women and Girls has called on Member States to contribute to the vision of Agenda 2063.

Addis Ababa, 24 January 2018 – It is imperative for African States to move from commitment to action, to invest in human capital and financial resources so as to build self-confidence of girls and young women and boost their interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) or Higher level of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Against that backdrop the 2nd High Level Dialogue for enhancing policies and practices to promote STEM-focused TVET for women and girls kicked-off today in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at the African Union Headquarters. The High Level Dialogue was co-hosted by the African Union International Centre for Girls and Women education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA), and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Addis Ababa as well as AU partners.

The aim of The 2018 High Level Dialogue is to engage policy dialogue and reach commitment for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) or Higher level of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) subjects related to labour markets.

The specific objectives of the Dialogue are to: Share best practices and challenges on returns on investment in girls and women’s education, especially in STEM focused TVET areas; Improve understanding of the necessity to support girls and women accessing...
STEM and STEM focused TVET; Generate and engage in policy dialogue among stakeholders on STEM and STEM focused TVET as one of the entry points for empowerment and development of girls and young women; and Ensure gender inclusiveness in STEM and TVET areas.

While making her remarks during the opening ceremony, the Commissioner, Human Resources Science and Technology (HRST), H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, welcomed the participants on behalf of the AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and thanked them for accepting the invitation to take part in this meeting and to exchange and share valuable experiences on a topic that constitute one of the major priorities of the African Union in its domain of education in general and girls’ and women’s education in particular. The Commissioner noted that “The retention of girls’ and women’s education to quality deliverables has become a non-negotiable quest for all education actors and for all AU Member States”. “In our common efforts to reach the outcome and accomplish the development goals, we have made commitments for the urgent implementation of adopted frameworks and decisions related to gender equality in education systems”, H.E Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor concluded. She underlined the importance of education to contribute to the vision of Agenda 2063: A peaceful integrated prosperous Africa driven by its own competent and skilled citizens.

The Commissioner urged participants in the dialogue to advocate for enhancing political commitment and support in investing in girls’ and women’s education to strengthen confidence in STEM and TVET education. She further recommended a continental review in quality learning and high rates of retention of girls and young women in STEM and TVET education as assets for labour market for competitive jobs.

In his Keynote address to the High Level Dialogue H.E. Mr Jakaya Kikwete, Former President, Tanzania & Member of International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity highlighted current statistics regarding girls’ and women’s education in Africa and He reiterated the need to prepare African girls to have a place in the 4th Industrial Revolution. H.E. Mr Jakaya Kikwete added that the rhetoric of investing for girls’ education should be reinforced with strong legal and institutional frameworks to eliminate gender stereotypes in teaching and learning environments.

H.E. Prof. Mary Teuw Niane Minister of Education of Senegal underlined the need for emphasis on STEM and TVET education in Africa and establishment of higher training institutions and to adopt measures for balancing equities in our societies.

In the statement delivered by H.E. Ine Eriksen Soereide, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs it has been underlined that investing in education is the most important thing we can do to promote sustainable development and no one should be left behind in this process.
The 2nd High Level Dialogue for enhancing policies and practices to promote STEM-focused TVET for women and girls expected to achieve the following:

a. Continental review outlining progress made by countries in retention of girls and young women in STEM and TVET as well their future access to labor markets.

b. A Commitment of the AU Member States to adopt, domesticate, implement and fully finance existing policies to invest in girls’ and women’s quality education, with a special focus on retaining girls' and women in schools, building girls’ and women’s self-confidence and boost their interest in STEM and TVET, by improving the quality of STEM teacher, promoting female role models in STEM sectors, mainstreaming gender responsive teaching and learning skills and prioritizing the financial support for girls and women to pursue STEM and TVET education;

c.

d. Enhance the collaboration and partnership with development partners, public and private sectors, NOGs, scientific think-tanks to advocate and promote girls and women's STEM and TVET education and professional opportunities;

e. Review national policies and strategies at national, regional and continental levels in line with AU agenda, education sector plans, and gender-responsive budgeting, especially in STEM and TVET education;

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