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Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment

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DRAFT REPORT

on the challenges and opportunities of education and vocational training in
ACP countries

Co-rapporteurs: Musa Hussein Naib (Eritrea) and Francesc Gambús

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

At its meeting of 16 March 2014, the Bureau of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly authorised its Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment to draw up a report, pursuant to article 2(8) of its Rules of Procedure, on the challenges and opportunities of education and vocational training in ACP countries.

At its meeting of 29 November 2014, the Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment appointed Musa Hussein Naib (Eritrea) and Francesc Gambús as co-rapporteurs.

The Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment considered the draft report at its meetings of 19 and 20 March 2015 and 13 June 2015.

At the latter meeting, it adopted the accompanying draft motion for a resolution.

The following were present for the vote: ...

The resolution was tabled for adoption on 17 June 2015.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on the challenges and opportunities of education and vocational training in ACP countries

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,

- meeting in Port Vila (Vanuatu) from 15 to 17 June 2015,
- having regard to Article 18(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000¹ (the ‘Cotonou Agreement’), as first amended in Luxembourg on 25 June 2005² and as amended for the second time in Ouagadougou on 22 June 2010³, in particular Article 25(1)(a) thereof on improving education and training at all levels,
- having regard to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular Goal 2A, to achieve universal primary education, and 3A, to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015,
- having regard to European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2012 on the EU 2011 Report on Policy Coherence for Development⁴,
- having regard to the establishment of the Education for All (EFA) movement in Jomtien, Thailand and the signing of the Declaration on Education for All on 9 March 1990,
- having regard to the EFA goals adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal on 28 April 2000,
- having regard to the conclusions of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) on 22 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro entitled "The Future we Want",
- having regard to the five-year Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in September 2012,
- having regard to the report on the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda published in September 2013 by UNESCO and UNICEF,

¹ OJ L 317, 15.12.2000, p. 3.

² OJ L 287, 28.10.2005, p. 4.

³ OJ L 287, 4.11.2010, p. 3.

⁴ OJ C 72 E, 11.03.2014, p.21.

- having regard to the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education for All Meeting in Muscat, Oman on 14 May 2014,
 - having regard to the African Union Strategic Document to Revitalize TVET in Africa of 31 May 2007,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment (ACP-EU/101.717/14/fin.),
- A. whereas the Cotonou Agreement calls for special attention to be paid to ensuring adequate levels of spending in the social sectors, including improving education and training at all levels, working towards recognition of tertiary education qualifications, establishment of quality assurance systems for education, including education and training delivered online or through other non-conventional means, and building technical capacity and skills,
 - B. whereas the worldwide movement for Education for All, initiated in Jomtien in 1990 and reaffirmed in Dakar in 2000, has been the most important commitment to education in recent decades and has helped to drive significant progress in education,
 - C. whereas the Global Education First Initiative aims to accelerate progress towards the Education for All goals and the education-related Millennium Development Goals, in particular to rally together a broad spectrum of actors for the final push to 2015, to put quality, relevant and transformative education at the heart of the social, political and development agendas and to advocate for the necessary funding for education through sustained global advocacy efforts,
 - D. whereas the EFA agenda and the education-related Millennium Development Goals are unlikely to be achieved by 2015, and whereas the continued relevance of the EFA agenda is to be acknowledged, in particular concerning six goals covering all aspects of basic education from early learning and adult literacy to education quality,
 - E. whereas there is a link between the level of economic, social, cultural and political development and the progress a country can achieve in the attainment of MDGs and EFA Goals,
 - F. whereas more than 57 million children and 69 million adolescents still do not have access to effective basic education, whereas in 2011 an estimated 774 million adults, of whom almost two-thirds were women, were illiterate and at least 250 million children are not able to read, write or do basic arithmetic even after having spent at least four years in school,
 - G. whereas non-completion of formal schooling, insufficient levels of basic skills acquisition, and the poor quality and relevance of education are serious problems and there are persistent inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes at all levels of education, particularly for the most vulnerable groups and minorities,

- H. whereas gender inequality in education is of particular concern, as only 60% of countries had achieved gender parity at the primary level and 38% at the secondary level by 2011,
- I. whereas there is a severe lack of financial resources for education and vocational training in many ACP countries, both at national and international level for the sector, which has seriously undermined progress towards providing access and quality education for all,
- J. whereas there is increasing violence and attacks against children and personnel working in educational institutions in certain ACP countries, in particular in Nigeria and neighbouring countries,
- K. whereas there have been significant socio-economic and demographic transformations that have occurred since the adoption of the EFA goals and the MDGs, and there are changing requirements in the type and level of knowledge, skills and competencies for knowledge-based economies,
- L. whereas the brain drain in ACP countries constitutes a big challenge to the economy as well as the human resources in these countries that they cannot resolve within their limited resources,
- M. whereas education can play a pivotal role not only in environmental sustainability, health and economic growth, and in the achievement of the MDGs in general, but also in peace-building and, perhaps more than any other sector, education can provide the highly visible early peace dividends on which the survival of peace agreements may depend if education systems are inclusive and can create sustainable and equitable economic development and geared towards fostering attitudes conducive to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect, thereby making societies less susceptible to violent conflict,
- N. whereas there must be a flexible educational system (schools, teachers, universities and administrators) that have both the confidence and methods to meet both ordinary and extraordinary challenges, and must be related with a stable family environment for their education; the role of the family is basic in the whole life formation, but especially during childhood, for values and personal skills,
- O. whereas fragmentation and low capacity of governance structures, lack of connections with the labour market and poor infrastructures prevent vocational training from empowering people to develop their full capabilities and to seize social and employment opportunities,
- P. whereas under the 10th EDF the EDULINK programmes for higher education and research, financed by the EU and implemented by the ACP secretariat, are an excellent foundation for cooperation in the field of education and training,
- 1. Recognizes that there is a strong need for a new and forward-looking education and training agenda for ACP countries that completes unfinished business while going beyond the current goals in terms of depth and scope, as well as providing people with the understanding, competencies and values they require to address the many challenges that our societies and economies are facing;

2. Recognizes that education is a shared responsibility of both families and schools, and calls for the adoption of the measures needed to support families in their role as educators;
3. Calls for the full implementation of the six EFA goals, firstly for primary education for expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and ensuring that all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
4. Calls for the learning needs of all young people and adults to be met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes with the aim of achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
5. Calls for the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
6. Calls for the improvement of all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills;
7. Calls for ACP countries to strive for the attainment of sustainable, equitable and self-reliant economic development to meet the demand for the equitable access and quality education, adult literacy, lifelong learning and the acquisition of skills for all its citizens;
8. Calls for education to be a stand-alone goal in the broader post-2015 development agenda and ensuring equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030 as the overarching goal. In this regard, Vocational and Educational Training will play an important role for ensuring skills for decent work and life of youth and adults;
9. Calls on ACP States to respect cultural, moral and religious values and other values such as self-reliance and independent thinking in their primary and secondary education curricula and to fight against any form of radicalisation either on the part of teaching staff or external influences;
10. Calls for educational programmes in ACP states to address common educational challenges through regional integration and cooperation, in particular in the areas of higher education and technical and vocational training;
11. Calls for the establishment of a sustainable infrastructure for technical and vocational training in order to meet the goal of highly skilled citizens achieving a good transition from school to the labour market and for there to be incorporation of training programmes into national skills strategies, involving industry, to ensure that entrepreneurship is integrated into these programmes; considers that the development of an internationally competitive labour market must respect human dignity;

12. Calls for national education and training strategies to incorporate measures to prevent the "brain drain", including proper incentives, in terms of salary, housing and other entitlements, to encourage trained teaching staff and trainees benefitting from vocational training programmes to remain in or return to their country of origin, thereby contributing to their own society and economy rather than being lured abroad to work in developed countries and calls for the ACP-EU partnership to be instrumental to ameliorate this challenge in ACP countries;
13. Calls on ACP states to ring-fence a proportion of their national budgets for the primary and secondary education sectors, with a view to spending at least as much on education as is allocated to military and defence spending;
14. Condemns any action undertaken to prevent children from attending schools, in particular the terrorism of the Boko Haram insurgency, which literally translates as "Western education is forbidden", since its main aim is to destroy the education of children, in particular of girls, in northern Nigeria but also spreading its activities in the neighbouring countries in the region, and calls for concerted international action to fight this scourge;
15. Praises the work of the EU and the ACP authorities in the implementation of the EDULINK programmes and calls for the experiences obtained from this initiative to be rolled out in other areas in education and vocational training in the 11th EDF;
16. Welcomes the initiative on the part of the European Commission to reform its Vocational and Educational Training (VET) programmes for developing countries and other VET-related projects in order to introduce a new strategy based on labour market intelligence, public-private partnership, and better governance;
17. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the UN Children's Fund.