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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Un Peuple – Un But – Une Foi

Ministère de l'Enseignement
supérieur et de la Recherche

REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE MOBILIZATION OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

PRESS RELEASE

UNESCO Dakar will co-organize, on 24 and 25 October 2016, a Regional high-level consultation on how to make Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) support Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) capacity accumulation in French speaking countries of the ECOWAS and ECCAS regions. The consultation is jointly organized with Yaoundé Offices, the OECD and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Senegal.

The reunion will involve the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo; Minister of Scientific Research and Innovation of Cameroon; Ministers of Mines, Quarries and Energy of Burkina Faso, Minister of Mines of Mali, Ministers of Mines and Industry of Niger and of Senegal, Minister of Commerce and of the Promotion of the Private Sector of Niger, Minister of Commerce, of the Informal Sector, Consumption, and the Promotion of local products and SMEs of Senegal, Minister of Industrial Development of Mali, and experts from Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. 82 participants are expected, among which 17 Ministers.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, one of the main challenges with foreign direct investments is the lack of adequate capacities to effectively use the investments flowing into the countries and the need to create relevant STI policy measures that have components of technology.

Several studies have shown that science and technology (S&T) capacities are closely linked to variations among countries in productivity. Countries with a larger S&T capacities generally tend to be the most prosperous and most industrialized. It therefore is necessary to revisit the issue of building the necessary capacities in STI needed to encourage knowledge and skills development locally.

The FDI's spillover potential - the productivity gain resulting from the diffusion of knowledge and technology from foreign investors to local firms and workers—is perhaps its most valuable input to long-run growth and development. Multiple factors ranging from adequate physical and human capital to SME development, competition, investment and trade policies, can influence this capacity.

Integrated and targeted policy approaches might thus be required to make the most of FDI's capacity to generate knowledge spill-overs.

The Agenda for the first day, 24 October, will address issues related to **policy instruments for enhancing FDI knowledge spillovers, measurement of FDI spillovers and the understanding of the relationship between skills development and innovation.**

On the second day, 25 October, the Ministers attending will hold a **round table discussion exchanging views on “How to make FDI work for technology transfer and innovation” work in their various countries.**

The objectives of the consultative meeting of experts and ministers are threefold: Sensitize the high-level policy makers on how FDI could be guided through policy to deliver a number of important contributions to economic development in terms of capital accumulation, employment, and foreign exchange; Assist planners and policy makers to align to the call of African leaders to propel rapid development as enshrined in the AU Agenda 2063; Support the achievement of Agenda 2030, Goal 8, which requires nations to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.”

During the two days, OECD, UNESCO and the African Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation (AOSTI) will provide the key presentations to guide the discussions of experts and Ministers.

At the end of the two days, the experts and the ministers will come out with recommendations on how to actualize the goals of the meeting, that is the accumulation of human capital through FDI inflows. One area that these recommendations will impact upon will be the national STI policies and instruments.

For more information on how UNESCO supports member states in the area of developing strong and responsive STI policies please visit the following link:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/science-technology/sti-policy/>

For more information about the event, please kindly contact the communication focal point at UNESCO: (**Gaia Paradiso** g.paradiso@unesco.org) or the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Senegal (Mme SECK srsissokho@gmail.com)