

Regional Consultation on the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-25

May 8, 2024 In-person: Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka, Zambia

Online: Register at https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_siFId4B5ScKJOf7C7iDyuQ

“The African Union envisions a ‘peaceful and prosperous Africa, integrated, led by its own citizens and occupying the place it deserves in the global community and in the knowledge economy.’ CESA 16-25 is meant to deliver the necessary human capital for the realization of the AU Vision.”

(Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-25)



CESA 2016-25, the Agenda 2063, and the African Union's Year of Education

Education remains a top priority for Africa, and it serves as the bedrock for which the aspirations of African Union's continental development blueprint, the Agenda 2063, and the objectives of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) can be achieved.

Additionally, the global targets enshrined in the UN Strategic Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and other policy instruments like the declaration of the UN Transforming Education summit, are also critical to the continental education transformation agenda. Thus, the African Union Commission's commitment to supporting AU member states in strengthening national education development and management processes, as well as achieving national priorities is geared towards building the capacities to realise the continental aspirations and global targets stipulated in the SDGs.

CESA 16-25 is driven by the desire to set up a "qualitative system of education and training to provide the African continent with efficient human resources adapted to African core values and therefore capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the African Union. Those responsible for its implementation will be assigned to "reorient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels". It is to be noted that the Pan African Conference on Education 2018 (PACE 2018) decided that the monitoring and reporting process for CESA 16-25 and the SDGs be streamlined to reduce the burden of having to concurrently report on two frameworks. Multiple reporting needs may cause reporting fatigue which may lead to lack of data on key indicators of SDG 4 and CESA

The African Union has declared 2024 as the Year of Education with the theme "**Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa**". To successfully celebrate this important year of advocacy for education development in Africa, it is important to take stock of progress and achievements realized by member states in implementing the different strategic objectives of CESA, as they are well enshrined within the theme. The stock taking exercise will review how well the member states have domesticated the strategy by its adoption in the design and development of their national education sector plans. The result of this exercise will help the AU and other stakeholders in designing the appropriate intervention to mitigate whatever gaps and challenges that may be identified.

Aims and Objectives of the Review of CESA (16-25)

CESA (16-25) has gone past midway in its implementation timeframe and challenges and limitations continue to emerge on the current education models at all levels. Compounding inequalities in education and the threats to set back progress made in education over the years, posed by Covid-19 Pandemic the leverage of the potential of new and emerging technologies has necessitated the review of CESA (16-25). On the impact made so far, all aspects of human capital development, and the review exercise will take stock of the progress made in achieving its Strategic Objectives. The review will evaluate the effectiveness of its implementation arrangements and identifying areas for adaptation of the strategy to respond to the pandemic and post-pandemic recovery needs and leverage the potential of technologies and innovative solutions. The review will also assess the achievements to date against strategic objectives, and implementation mechanisms, collate and analyse lessons learned, challenges faced, and best practices obtained and provide recommendations for improving or adjusting the strategy to enhance its impact until 2025.

Objectives, Research Questions, and Partnerships for the CESA (2016-25) Review

The objectives of CESA (16-25) review include the following: (1) Assess progress against the strategic objectives and outcomes of the CESA (16-25), including what has/hasn't worked well in its implementation and reasons why; (2) Determine the successes, challenges, gaps and missed opportunities in line with the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact of CESA (16-25); (3) Evaluate the effectiveness of the clusters as a partnerships-based implementation mechanism and how the cluster mechanism can be further strengthened to enhance education outcomes in line with the national education sector plans; and (4) Suggest strategic and important programmatic elements, structural and management considerations to be incorporated/prioritized when readjusting and implementing the remaining part of the CESA (16-25) putting in consideration the COVID-19 pandemic context of and similar types of crises that may affect its implementation.

Questions guiding the review include the following: (i) To what extent have we achieved our Strategic Objectives so far? What is the evidence for the outcomes we have achieved? What have been our successes, challenges, gaps and missed opportunities?; (ii) To what extent have the Clusters been effective as a partnerships-

based implementation mechanism and how can the cluster mechanism be further strengthened to enhance education outcomes? ; (iii) What is the level of adaptation of CESA 16-25 by Member States in developing or improving National Education Strategies? How has the national education sector plans responded to CESA 16-25?; and (iv) What recommendations as ways of improvement can be drawn, if any, for the remaining period of CESA 16-25 and the early strategic directions for the next Continental Education Strategy for Africa – also assessing the context of COVID-19 pandemic and similar types of crises in the future?

The review of CESA 16-25 will involve various stakeholders, including but not limited to: (i) the African Union Commission (AUC) - Responsible for coordinating the overall review process and implementing recommendations; (ii) UNESCO, including UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) for technical expertise and support, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics for data collection and reporting on educational indicators, and other UNESCO Institutes and thematic teams; (iii) AfECN for support on early childhood education; (iv) National governments for participation in the review process and contextual perspectives; and (v) Regional economic communities (RECs) and other specialized agencies as well as Africa's research community on education matters.

Consultation at the AFTRA Annual Conference

The African Union Commission's Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (ESTI), in partnership with the Africa Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (AFTRA) and UNESCO IICBA, is hosting a Regional Consultation on the CESA 2016-25 at the annual conference of AFTRA. The consultation event is expected to bring together representatives of the Ministries of Education, Teachers, Teachers' Unions, Teacher Training Institutions, Employers of teachers, AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities, CESA (16-25) Cluster Coordinators, Academics, Civil Society Organizations, International Organizations and UN agencies who have directly or indirectly contributed or are well placed to influence the implementation of the strategy and its implementation. It will be hybrid, combining in-person and online participation.



Box 1: CESA Strategic Objectives and Themes for the African Union Year of Education

In implementing the CESA review, the focus will be on progress achieved and challenge remaining in the 12 strategic objectives, which are shown in Figure 1. There are however a lot of commonalities between the strategic objectives of the CESA review and the 10 priority themes of the African Union Year of Education, shown on Figure 2. This implies that the CESA review will also contribute to the Year of Education.

