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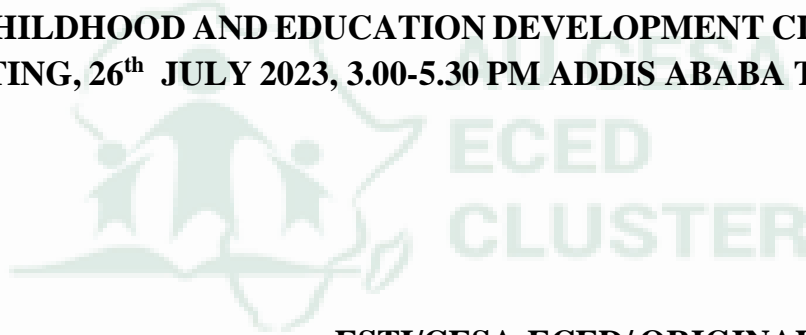
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**FIFTH SESSION OF THE  
CESA EARLY CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER  
VIRTUAL MEETING, 26<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023, 3.00-5.30 PM ADDIS ABABA TIME.**



**ESTI/CESA-ECED/ ORIGINAL: English**

**CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA**



ADEA Inter-country Quality Node  
Early Childhood Development

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) was developed as a strategic intervention for realizing the African Union’s (AU’s) vision for education as articulated in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. CESA’s mission is 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’.

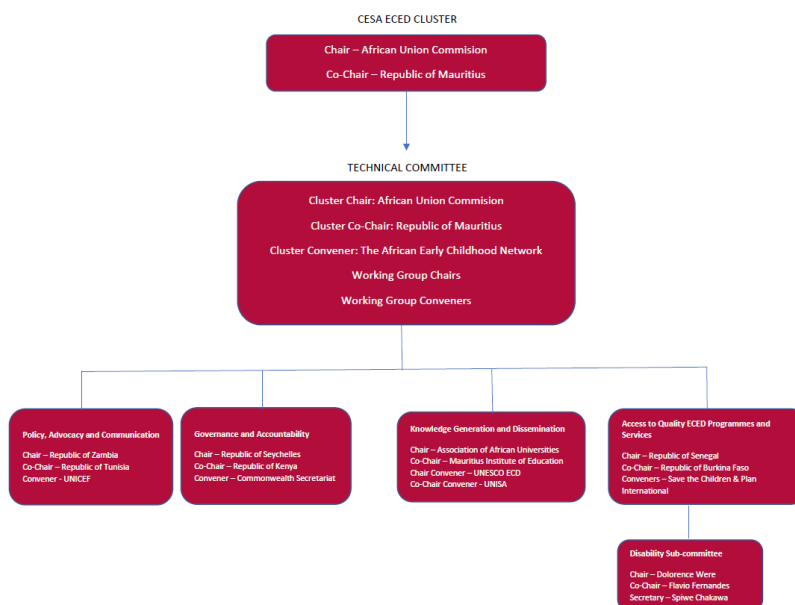
Agenda 2063 calls for universal access to quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, ensuring that no child is left behind, and that the potential of every child is nurtured. CESA16-25 identifies pre-primary education as a neglected sub-sector that deserves special attention, in this: Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) is the pillar for future learning and is identified as the next frontier if Africa is to realize sustained quality education and training. To implement the continental framework (CESA16-25), the African Union Commission (AUC) has adopted as an Implementation Platform, a Coalition of stakeholders covering all thematic areas in education and training as identified in the CESA Strategic Objectives. Clustering under thematic areas has therefore been identified as an effective tool for enhancing coordination and strengthening partnerships around common themes. This ensures greater alignment and harmony among stakeholders and facilitates the identification and deployment of synergies in the attainment of the CESA strategic objectives. As of January 2019, twelve Thematic Clusters had been launched. The ECED Cluster was officially launched on 4th September 2018 to support the implementation of CESA 16 -25 objectives related to the early years as shown in Table 1.

## 2.0 STRUCTURE OF ECED CLUSTER

The Cluster is chaired by the African Union Commission, with the Government of Mauritius, which is also the Coordinator of the Inter Country Quality Node on Early Childhood Education as the Co-Chair. The African Early Childhood Network (AfECN) acts as coordinator and Secretariat to the Cluster. To operationalize the cluster and further streamline operations, during the Cluster’s first technical committee, held in Mauritius, four

<b>Table 1: AU CESA 16-25 ECED Cluster Objectives</b>
<b>Objective 1: Enhance Policy, Advocacy and Communication.</b>
1.1 Increase advocacy to strengthen political will and financing for policy development and sustainable implementation of strategies.
1.2 Enhance Policy Development
<b>Objective 2: Intensify action to improve equitable access to quality. ECED programmes and services.</b>
2.1 Enhance advocacy for equitable access to quality services.
2.2 Improve early learning infrastructure.
2.3 Increase ECED programmes and services
<b>Objective 3: Improve Quality of ECED systems, programmes, and services.</b>
3.1 Strengthen the capacity of the ECED workforce.
3.2 Support relevant and comprehensive regional and national curricula.
3.3 Enhance quality assurance and assessment mechanisms.
<b>Objective 4: Improve Governance and Accountability</b>
4.1 Enhanced accountability
4.2 Improved governance and management
<b>Objective 5: Enhance Research Generation, Documentation and Dissemination</b>
5.1 Knowledge generation improved.
5.2 Improved dissemination of ECD knowledge and experiences
<b>Objective 6: Strengthen partnership and collaboration across all key stakeholders including state and non-state actor.</b>

working groups were formed namely: i) Policy, advocacy, and communication; ii) governance and accountability; iii) access to quality ECED services; and iv) knowledge generation and dissemination. Each working group has a Member State serving as chair and a development partner as the convener. The chairs and conveners of each working group as well as AUC, AfECN and Inter-Country Quality Node (ICQN) together form the technical Committee.



### 3.0 PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF CLUSTER OBJECTIVES

Since its inception, the cluster has made key milestones:

- 1) Establishment of the cluster working mechanism such as the Technical Committee and working groups. The technical committee provide overall guidance to the working group plans activities including review and adoption of reports and products before submission to the Cluster. On the other hand, the working groups bring together key stakeholders as communities of practice to advance knowledge exchange, promote policy dialogue and enhance advocacy and support to AU member states in establishing and strengthening systems to accelerate positive early childhood education and development outcomes at national, sub-regional and regional/continental levels.
- 2) Development and adoption of the ToRs for the working groups, including selection of chairs, convenors, and members of the working groups. A platform for more stakeholders to join the specific working group was established.
- 3) Regular convening of both the Technical Committee and the full cluster. Since inception, The Cluster has had 4 sessions of the technical Committee and 4 sessions of the Full cluster with the 5<sup>th</sup> Session planned to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
- 4) Mobilization of partners' support and commitments to lead in knowledge generation and dissemination, development of tools and frameworks to guide and support member states identify and address service delivery gaps.
- 5) Strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders to advocate for and support policy reforms and quality programming in the ECED subsector across the continent.
- 6) Working with and across other CESA Clusters to identify areas of convergence, advocate for

knowledge exchange and integration of ECED in relevant cluster plans.

- 7) Mobilization and engagement of cross-section of stakeholders and experts to participate in Working Group activities, provide input to improvement of Cluster tools and resources, exchange knowledge and innovations to advance ECE outcomes across the African continent.

**The following are some of the key milestones that the cluster has realized over the last 3 years through the working groups.**

- a) ***Development and Adoption of Draft AU Early Childhood Education Framework, 2021 and Regional ECD Research Strategy.*** The ECED Cluster through support from UNICEF ESARO drafted the ECE framework to support and guide AU Member States in the process of planning and strengthening systems for the ECE sub-sector to deliver quality at scale. The draft framework was presented and adopted during the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the ECED Cluster meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and was cleared for submission to ESTI- STC for review and adoption.
- b) ***Development and Adoption of Draft AU Regional ECD Research Strategy, 2021.*** The regional ECD research strategy focuses on improvement of knowledge generation, documentation, and dissemination to inform policy and practice in the ECED sub-sector across the continent. The draft strategy was presented and adopted during the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the ECED Cluster meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and was cleared for finalization and dissemination.
- c) ***Development of Regional ECD Status Report, 2022.*** ECED Cluster supports development and adoption of a regional mechanisms for enhanced governance and management. In this regard, the cluster through the knowledge generation working group drafted the Regional ECD Status Report- aimed at providing up to date and comparable information across the key indicators on Early Childhood Development as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals. This report provides a snapshot view of progress made across the continent, the strides that have been taken, and the gaps that need to be filled if Africa is to achieve the outcomes for its youngest children. The report once finalized will be published and disseminated this year (2023) to support advocacy efforts towards improved investment as well as enhanced access to quality ECED services for children in the region.
- d) ***Completion of various studies on topical issues relevant to Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) Programs in Africa.*** Four knowledge products were produced:
  - i. Situational analysis of early learning workforce in Africa;
  - ii. Landscape analysis of the governance mechanisms for ECD services;
  - iii. Resource on cultural relevance in early childhood care and education;
  - iv. Sharing Ideas Collaboration.

These products have been shared with respective working groups and disseminated through various platforms reaching policy makers and practitioners from across the region, thus informing policy dialogues towards improved access to quality, inclusive and equitable ECD programs across the continent. While the early learning workforce report synthesized existing evidence and identified gaps about status of early learning workforce for pre-primary education on the continent, the landscape analysis report on governance mechanisms highlighted key policy and institutional frameworks which could be considered to strengthen multisectoral coordination for ECD services in the region. Lastly, the reports on cultural relevant resources and sharing ideas offer strategies for understanding community aspirations for children which could be adopted to provide contextualized ECD programs that are relevant local and regional contexts.

- e) ***Strengthening Cross-Departmental and Inter-Cluster Collaboration to promote regional advocacy efforts towards better child development outcomes.*** The ECED Cluster collaborates with the AUC Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and key partners such as WHO and UNICEF to promote regional advocacy efforts towards advancement of better child development outcomes on the African continent. The Cluster is also involved in several inter-cluster collaborative activities to promote better educational outcomes on the continent. The inter-cluster collaborative efforts include:
- i. Africa School Curriculum Survey Framework, incorporating ECED in the survey items;
  - ii. Facilitating a peer learning session for the Africa Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF);
  - iii. Provided input to the White Paper for the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme;
  - iv. Facilitated a session on professionalization of ECED workforce during Teacher Development Cluster meeting.

#### **4.0 OPERATIONS OF THE CLUSTER & THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

The Technical committee is the organ of the cluster that brings together the leadership of the 4 working groups. The technical committee approves the agenda and structure of the full cluster meeting. The first meeting of the Technical Committee was held between 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019 at Voila Hotel, Bagatelle, Mauritius. The meeting which was co-hosted on behalf of the African Union Commission (AUC) by the Mauritius Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, in collaboration with the African Early Childhood Network (AfECN) renewed commitment from partners and members of the ECED Cluster. Key milestones of the meeting included:

- a) Formation of Working Groups with clear TORs, drafting and endorsement of a 3-year Work plan for the Cluster,
- b) Renewed commitment from partners and members of the ECED Cluster.

The second meeting of the Technical Committee was held 5-6 December 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to among other things, discuss strengthening of the Working Groups of the Cluster towards meeting its objectives. The meeting was officially opened by Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo, Director of the Human Resources, Science and Technology Department of the African Union Commission (AUC). The meeting developed the Cluster work plan for 2020 as below:

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>
Policy, Advocacy and Communication	Develop and validate a systemic diagnostic tool(s) for ECED in Africa building on the study adopted by STC
Governance and Accountability	Develop a governance and accountability framework for ECED in Africa using Seychelles experience as a case study
Access to Quality ECED Programs and Services	Develop a paper on access to quality ECED Programs and services focusing on the workforce issues in the region
Knowledge Generation and Dissemination	Create an online database on ECED in Africa. Guide all other working groups in development of documents and frameworks

Cluster Coordination	Reach out to key stakeholders and programs to strengthen the work of the Cluster
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It was agreed during the meeting that the work plan would be shared with the ECED Cluster, early in 2020 for discussion and adoption. The meetings were held virtually 3<sup>rd</sup> technical committee brought together members of the technical committee. During the meeting, the work plan was approved and extended to cover 2 years (2020 & 2021). The technical committee also reviewed draft COVID 19 strategies for the Cluster and recommended it for presentation during a full Cluster meeting. The Technical committee also agreed that it was critical to convene a cluster meeting to take stock of the progress of each working group. The 3<sup>rd</sup> cluster meeting was held on **8<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 2pm Addis Ababa time**. During the meeting, members were updated on the cluster progress including reports on the activities of various working groups. Members also discussed and adopted the COVID 19 Cluster strategy as well as an action plan to guide ECED Cluster response to Covid 19 pandemic. The meeting recommended prioritization of the following action points in the 2021 Work plans:

Working Groups	Action Points
Policy Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Support the dissemination of the ECE Accelerator Analysis and Planning Toolkit developed by UNICEF to support systemic diagnostic for ECED as recommended by STC.</li> <li>– Regroup and mobilize new members to join the working group activities.</li> <li>– Deliberate the development of an engagement strategy.</li> <li>– Explore strategies of positioning ECED within the work of AUC plans and activities.</li> </ul>
Governance and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop a governance and accountability framework for ECED in Africa using Seychelles experience as a case study.</li> <li>– Explore opportunities for the establishment of a more resilient system to deal with challenges affecting ECD i.e., COVID 19.</li> <li>– Deliberate and support development/finalization of the Commonwealth Secretariate ECCE toolkit</li> </ul>
Access to Quality ECED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop and implement a programme to facilitate knowledge exchange events (webinars) on topical issues of interest.</li> <li>– Develop a paper on access to quality ECED Programs and services focusing on the workforce issues in the region</li> </ul>
Knowledge Generation and Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Create an online database on ECED in Africa.</li> <li>– Work with other working groups to map out challenges/ problems that may need knowledge generation through research.</li> </ul>

The 4<sup>th</sup> Technical committee meeting took place virtually on **May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023**. The Technical Committee Considered the progress the 4 working groups have made, reviewed challenges, and discussed ways of strengthening working groups’ leadership. The meeting approved the agenda and structure of the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the CESA ECED Cluster to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Virtually, with the following objectives.

#### 5.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> CLUSTER MEETING:

1. Take stock of progress, key achievements, challenges, and lessons learned.
2. Discuss the cluster’s strategic engagement in the AU 2024 Education Year Whose theme is ‘ **Educate an African Fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century- Building Resilient Education Systems for increased access to inclusive, Lifelong, Quality and relevant learning in Africa Towards attainment of AU Agenda 2063 and SDG 4.**
3. Build consensus on the Cluster’s engagement with follow up actions of the Tashkent Declaration
4. Present the proposed Work plan for the YR 2023/2024 Work plan for adoption
5. Strengthening Cluster Leadership

## 6.0 AGENDA

Time	Details	Facilitator
15:00 – 15:10	Welcome, Introductions, Agenda, Objectives and Expectations of Meeting	<b>Dr. Lynette Okengo</b>
15:10 - 15:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opening Remarks by Dr. Caseley Stephens (ECED Cluster Chair AUC – ESTI)</li> <li>▪ Opening Remarks by Vice Chair (Ms. Maya Soonarane - MOE Mauritius)</li> <li>▪ Overall Cluster Progress to Date (Dr. George Owino - AfECN)</li> </ul>	
15:40 -16:15	<p><b>Working Groups Updates and Discussions</b></p> <p><i>During this session, working group chairs / convenors updates on the working groups</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy, Advocacy and Communication</li> <li>▪ Governance and Accountability</li> <li>▪ Access to Quality ECED Programmes and Services</li> <li>▪ Knowledge Generation and Dissemination</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderator: Maya Soonarene</b></p> <p>Mr.Charm Kalimbika - Zambia Ms. Shirley Choppy - Seychelles Mr. Tenguella Ba – Senegal Prof.Hasina Ibrahim - UNISA</p>
16:15 – 16:25	<p><b>Presentation of Work Plan for Adoption and Discussion on Strengthening Working Groups</b></p> <p><i>Proposed work plan for 2023/2024 for adoption</i></p> <p><i>Strengthening working groups’ Leadership (Virtual Survey)</i></p>	<b>Moses Abiero - AfECN</b>
16:25 – 16:35	Tashkent Declaration - UNESCO	<b>Rokhaya Diawara UNESCO</b>
16:35 – 16:45	AU 2024 Education Year ‘‘ <b>Educate an African Fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century- <i>Building Resilient Education Systems for increased access to inclusive, Lifelong, Quality and relevant learning in Africa Towards attainment of AU Agenda 2063 and SDG 4.</i></b>	<b>Dr. Caseley Stephens AUC - ESTI</b>
16:45 – 16:55	AUC Taskforce on Advancing Holistic Child Development	<b>AUC ESTI</b>
16:55 – 17:00	Closing Remarks and Wrap Up	

## 7.0 ZOOM MEETING DETAILS

Meeting ID: 852 4573 8684

Meeting Registration Link: [Fifth Session of AU CESA ECED Cluster | AfECN](#)