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Inaugural Workshop on Developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework

2nd – 3rd September 2019

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Communiqué

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An Inaugural Workshop on Developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) was convened by the African Union Commission (AUC) at its headquarters in Addis Ababa from 2nd – 3rd September 2019 in partnership with the European Union (EU), GIZ and European Training Foundation (ETF).

Welcome remarks were made by H.E. Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union and Ms Anna Burylo Deputy Head of Delegation of the EU to AU. Seventy-five participants represented relevant national authorities from thirty-five AU Member States (ministries, national qualifications and quality assurance agencies); regional economic communities and regional qualifications frameworks; regional higher education associations; education development associations; CESA clusters; social partners and students' union.

The workshop created an opportunity to discuss and develop stakeholders' views for a coherent and participatory ACQF development process, under the political leadership of the AUC. The workshop was action-oriented. It emphasised sharing of African experiences of qualifications frameworks both at national and regional levels.

The participants approved and adopted the following Communiqué.

Acknowledging that:

- i. The First ten-year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 foresees that a Continental Educational Qualification Framework is developed and a common educational qualification system is in place by 2023.
- ii. The Heads of State launched the operational phase of the “African Continental Free Trade Area” (AfCFTA) and Article 10 of the Protocol on Trade Service of the AfCFTA makes reference to recognition of education and harmonization.
- iii. The “Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment”, in its Article 18 specifies that “***The State Parties shall establish a continental qualifications framework to encourage and promote the free movement of persons.***”
- iv. *An Integrated Africa* is a core element of the vision of the African Union, as well as a major transformational outcome of the Agenda 2063, and it encompasses, amongst others, free movement of persons, free trade, customs union, common transport market, and an African common education space.

- v. The African Union and its Member States have decided to equip the continent with the necessary conditions and mechanisms to facilitate mobility and transparency of skills and qualifications, in support of the AU Agenda 2063.
- vi. Fair mobility of students and workers implies recognition of their qualifications in other countries. It is therefore necessary to break the barriers to continental cooperation in education which impact on the mobility and employability of students and workers outside of their home countries.

Recommend the following:

1. All AU Member States and the relevant stakeholders should commit to support the process of ACQF development, by contributing to the planned mapping study and actively participating in the consultation process.
2. The African Union Commission shall steer the ACQF development process with a view on the key outcome for 2022 – A comprehensive ACQF policy and technical document that serves as a key reference for facilitating comparability and alignment of national and regional qualifications frameworks in Africa.
3. The ACQF development process shall be coherent and articulated with the other continental policies and initiatives in the domains of education, training, innovation and science. This contributes to open up the ACQF to digital innovation, and qualifications to the wider range of skills and competences for the 21st Century society and work.
4. Youth organisations, and stakeholders of the world of work and education should cooperate and join forces to develop an ACQF that makes a difference for the society, learners, workers and employers, and for the future of Africa.
5. The AUC, the Member States, and the relevant stakeholders should support experience sharing and mutual learning on the continent and with the world to build common understanding on education systems and qualifications.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3rd September 2019