



FAWE

Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines

CONCEPT NOTE

Conference on Girls' Education in Africa and FAWE 10th General Assembly

*Theme: "Towards gender equality in
education: Positioning youth to champion
Africa's education agenda"*

Introduction

Africa has embarked on an ambitious development journey driven by Agenda 2063; a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years. Agenda 2063 brings an African development perspective to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030. The post 2015 global resolution is that education holds the key to achieving most of the SDG goals. Africa has seized the opportunity presented by SDG number 4; *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,”* to renew its commitment to transforming education to ensure girls and boys; women and men participate and benefit equally from increased education opportunities and resources. For this to happen, Africa’s education and training systems need to fully shed off the encumbrance of its colonial legacy and embrace an education that will enable them “create” a new African citizen who will be an effective change agent for the continent’s sustainable development. One major step towards this goal was demonstrated through the African Union Heads of State and Governments’ declaration of 2017 as the year of youth, under the theme *“Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investment in Youth.”* The theme falls within the Decade on Youth Development in Africa (2009-2018).

FAWE believes that harnessing this demographic dividend calls for a robust education-training continuum to enable all youth, with a special focus on adolescent girls and young women, to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to drive the continent’s development and to fulfil their own aspirations. In August 2017, FAWE will host a Conference on Girls’ education in Africa. The event presents a great opportunity to reflect on the work done to place girls’ education issues in national, continental and international education policies and laws, conventions and agreements and find possible solutions to challenges that still hinder gender equality and women’s empowerment. The FAWE/CIEFFA commissioned Gender Equality Strategy for the African Union (AU) Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 16-25, which will be launched at the conference, will serve as a tool for influencing ministers of Education to invest in the provision of an education that guarantees quality learning for all, at all levels. Special considerations will be given to; girls’ low participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) and in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET), improve teacher pedagogy, support alternative learning programmes for out-of-school youth, address school related gender-based violence and create school environments that support quality learning outcomes for both girls and boys. As a follow-up to the 2017 Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Triennale in March, under the theme: ***“Revitalizing education towards the 2030 Global Agenda and the 2063 African Agenda,”*** the FAWE conference on Girls’ Education in Africa is a necessary second step to exploring solutions to advancing gender equality in the commitments made towards education for Sustainable Development.

Background

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) was founded in 1992 by African women ministers of education on the realization that without putting measures to accelerate girls’ education, no African country in Sub-Saharan Africa would be able to meet the Education for All goals. It was registered as a pan-African NGO in 1993 in Nairobi, Kenya. FAWE was established on the conviction that education is a fundamental human right of every African child. FAWE has since its inception, worked to transform education systems by advocating for gender responsive policies, and equity programmes in order to attain equality. FAWE has been playing ‘watchdog’ to ensure that education policies are not implemented in a way that disadvantage girls and women.

The Tripartite Event

The Conference for Girls' Education in Africa is unique in that it will be a convergence of three landmark events for FAWE; the 10th General Assembly coincides with FAWE's 25th anniversary and the visioning for FAWE's next five-year strategic plan 2019-2023. The tripartite event will bring together about 200 people drawn from the FAWE Africa membership, associate members – male ministers of education, researchers and other prominent educationalists - National Chapters members and staff, FAWE Alumni, funding partners, private and corporate establishments, philanthropists, collaborating partners and other education stakeholders.

The event, to be held under the theme: **Theme: "Towards Gender Equality in Education: Positioning youth to Champion SDG Agenda 2030 & agenda 2063,** will be executed through the following objectives;

- a. Identifying strategies and opportunities for promoting youth leadership and engagement in regional, continental and international education dialogue on the gender equality goal in education
- b. Visioning FAWE's position and contribution to African countries' efforts to meet the CESA 16-25 goals
- c. Exploring opportunities for establishing strategic partnerships focused on promoting of girls and women's education in Africa.
- d. Celebrating FAWE's 25 years of work in Africa
- e. Electing the FAWE Executive Committee members to govern for the three-year term -2018 to 2021

Sub-Thematic Area

Sub Theme 1 - Youth Leadership and Engagement:

FAWE will host a youth conference and facilitate young people's engagement with adults to identify opportunities and solutions to possible challenges to realizing the gender equality goal of the AU CESA 16-25, SDG 2030 and Africa's Agenda 2063. During the conference, young people drawn from current FAWE beneficiaries and alumni as well as youth from partner organisations will be involved in the main conference to give their perspectives on how to build momentum on gender equality at national and regional level and moderate and chair some of the conference sessions; lead the parallel exclusive Youth Conference dubbed, "Youth Engagement in moving the continental and global Agendas," where also, young entrepreneurs, innovators, professionals and leaders will share experiences; lead the launch of the **African Girls' Education Fund**, which will be preceded by a National Chapter fundraising challenge involving 10 Alumni Groups; participate in speed mentoring by female and male leaders of corporate, government, CSO and civic entities; and conduct the Microsoft sponsored STEAM Innovation challenge for girls to enhance girls' interest, participation and performance in technology.

Sub-Theme 2: Repositioning FAWE to effectively engage and contribute to CESA 16-25, SDG 2030 and Agenda 2063.

The FAWE network will share evidence based models for delivering quality, relevant, and accessible education, and collate and sift through ideas thrown into the pool by various partners on the strategic direction of FAWE in the post 2015 era, as Africa embarks on the post 2015 development journey through CESA 16-25. This theme will be further segmented as follows;

Target 1 – Reviewing strategy 2013-2017 and visioning strategy 2018-2022: FAWE will send out a call for abstracts targeting FAWE NCs for documented evidence of successful interventions and good practices that are scalable. This will be coupled with presentations by researchers on new

findings/learning, emerging issues in specific thematic areas and presentations on implications of SDG 4 and 5 and CESA 16-25 on girls' education, which will be the basis for FAWE's strategy 2019-2023.

Target 2 – engaging with governments and partners on scaling up/mainstreaming models that have accelerated girls and women's education. The platform will be an important springboard for initiating a conversation with governments on the need to account for girls and women's needs as they move to universalise primary and secondary education and expand TVET opportunities, as defined by CESA 16-25. FAWE will introduce and launch the Gender Equality Strategy for CESA 16-25, and discussion will centre on strategies on how FAWE can expand and sustain its interventions and make them responsive to issues/gaps prioritized by CESA 16-25.

Target 3 - Establishing and nurturing strategic partnerships to promote girls' and women's education: FAWE will pitch for possible partnership to support scaling-up and/or replication of interventions that have proven successful in increasing female participation and enhancing quality teaching and learning, including launching the **'Ready to Learn' campaign**, which will be preceded by a relay sport involving 5 local schools after which five big books and five large pencils, which will be presented to EAC, ECOWAS, ECEAS and SADC to symbolize the start of a youth-led campaign for education for out-of-school children. FAWE will also produce a newsletter for distribution and provide space for display of publicity materials during the Conference for Multinational corporations, private companies and African philanthropists involved in corporate social responsibility projects as a way to encourage others to support girls' education.

Sub-theme 3 - Celebrating FAWE's 25 years work in Africa: The celebration of FAWE's Silver Jubilee will be a fun fair event characterised by stories of its journey - its achievements, challenges, low and highs in the past 25 years. Using various symbolisms, the vision carriers of yesterday, today and tomorrow will converge around the shared vision and make a commitment to continue expanding the network across Africa. In addition, a short film on the history of FAWE will be shown and the book on the History of FAWE will be launched.

Sub-theme 4 - The 10th FAWE General Assembly (GA): The supreme governing body of FAWE Africa is the General Assembly that comprises full members drawn from female leaders in education across Africa. FAWE constitution dictates that the General Assembly meets every three years to review progress towards meeting organisational goals, and to elect the Executive Committee (EC) whose key function is to provide overall policy guidelines to the FAWE Africa network on behalf of the FAWE General Assembly. Given that the constitution allows only FAWE Africa members to participate and vote in the GA, this will be a closed session held on the third day. FAWE Regional Secretariat will, before the conference, identify and invite several members to expand the pool of Full members.

Participants:

About 200 participants are expected to attend - FAWE full members, affiliate and associate members and FAWE beneficiaries and alumni as well as representatives from regional education bodies, NGOs, researchers and gender specialists from regional and sub-regional organizations, representatives from Africa-based private and corporate enterprises, international development agencies and African philanthropists.

Approach

The conference will be facilitated through a combination of presentations, panel discussions and parallel sessions. A Rapporteur-General to be identified prior to the meeting, working with session note takers, will summarize the key elements covered during the conference. All conference materials will be in both French and English, and there will be simultaneous interpretation to facilitate communications. On the third day, FAWE members will retreat into a closed meeting for the General Assembly, where they will reflect on the outcomes of the conference and reach an agreement on the direction with regards to the development of the FAWE strategy; follow-up on various commitments, and youth communiqué. FAWE will collate all research papers, case studies, project documentation into a Journal, after being reviewed and edited by professional editors.

Expected outputs

It is expected that at the close of the Conference on Girls' Education in Africa and the 10th FAWE General Assembly and the following will have been accomplished;

- Communiqué by the youth outlining their proposed areas and scope of engagement in the SDG efforts at national, regional and continental levels
- Outcome document on the Conference for Girls' Education in Africa, outlining proposed priorities for the FAWE strategy for 2019-2023, representing FAWE's direction towards influencing implementation of CESA 16-25 and SDGs.
- 25th anniversary celebrations marked.
- Resolutions by private sector, corporate houses, international development agencies and individuals to initiate/strengthen partnership and support to FAWE at national and REC level.
- An elected FAWE Executive Committee.

Conclusion

At the end of the three-day conference, FAWE members and partners will have reached a common understanding on the key role FAWE will play towards Sub-Saharan Africa's attaining CESA 16-25, SDG 4 and 5 and education goals in Agenda 2063. To strengthen her niche in girls' education, FAWE will draw on existing relationships with Ministries of Education in many African countries where it has a presence by influencing them to utilize the Gender Equality Strategy for CESA 16-25 as the reference document as they formulate/review their post 2015 education strategies, develop and implement education programmes and report on CESA 16-25 and SDG 4.