

A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2-DAY RETREAT OF THE HONOURABLE MINISTERS, COMMISSIONERS, PERMANENT SECRETARIES, STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION CHAIRMEN, DIRECTORS AND HEADS OF PARASTATALS/AGENCIES IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR HELD FROM 17TH – 18TH OCTOBER, 2019 AT FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CONFERENCE HALL, 2ND FLOOR PODIUM, ABUJA

1.0 Preamble:

The Federal Ministry of Education organised a two-day retreat for stakeholders in the Education Sector on the Education For Change: “A Ministerial Strategic Plan (MSP) 2018 – 2022” at Federal Ministry of Education Conference Room, Abuja from 17th – 18th October 2019. The meeting was convened to keep stakeholders abreast on the implementation status of the MSP at the Federal, State and Local Government levels and to:

- Present Federal Ministry of Education Short and Medium Term Target/Blue Print and Workplan to stakeholders for their input and validation;
- Identify and align States’ Key Priority Areas in line with the MSP and targets of Education 2030;
- Present the developed MSP Monitoring and Evaluation Instrument for validation;
- Update stakeholders on the draft National Policy on Violence Free Schools for Children in Nigeria;
- Strengthen collaboration with Development Partners for synergy; and
- Brainstorm on Funding and investment issues.

2.0 Attendance

The meeting was attended by the Honourable Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Arc. Sonny S. T. Echono, The Chairman, Senate Committee on Tertiary Institutions and TETFUND,

Distinguished Senator Ahmad Babba Kaita, Deputy Chairman, House Committee on Tertiary Education, Honourable Ifeanyi Ibezim, and other members of the Committee. Also in attendance were the Honourable Commissioners for Education, Permanent Secretaries, Chairmen of State Universal Basic Education Board, Directors of FME, Heads of Parastatals/Agencies in the Education Sector, States Ministries of Education and the FCT. The U.S Agency for International Development and the Head, Education Development Partners Group (EDPG) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also participated in the meeting and the press.

3.0 Presentations

The retreat was enriched by a documentary on the State of Education in Nigeria. The Bad, the Good and the Best. This was followed by presentations, speeches, goodwill messages and technical sessions on the identified five (5) priority areas of the MSP. The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Arc. Sonny S. T. Echono gave the Opening Remarks "An Overview of Education for Change". The Director, Educational Planning, Research & Development presented the developed MSP Monitoring and Evaluation Instruments.

4.0 Technical Session

During the technical session, the participants were grouped into the five Task Teams based on the "Ten (10) Pillars of MSP" as follows:

Task Team I: Out-of-School Children, Basic and Secondary Education and Youth & Adult Literacy Chaired by the Executive Secretary UBEC and Co-chaired by the Honourable Commissioner from Kogi State.

Task Team 2: Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) and Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Chaired by the Executive Secretary NBTE and Co-chaired by the Honourable Commissioner, Akwa-Ibom State.

Task Team 3: Teachers Education, Capacity Building and Professional Development and Curriculum and Policy Matters Chaired by the Director-General (NTI) and Co-chaired by the Representative of the Honourable Commissioner, from Lagos State.

Task Team 4: Tertiary Education Chaired by the Executive Secretary NUC and co-chaired by the Honourable Commissioner, Benue State.

Task Team 5: Education Data and Planning, ICT in Education and Library Services Chaired by the Director ICT and Co-chaired by the Honourable Commissioner, Jigawa State.

5.0 Observations

Arising from the speeches, paper presentations, technical sessions and contributions of participants, the following observations were made:

1. The Education System needs to prepare and arm Nigerians to take advantage of the 21st century knowledge-driven economy for global competitiveness;
2. The Nigerian Education Sector must be able to produce middle and high-level manpower with the requisite knowledge, skills and competences needed to drive the country's quest for sustainable development and national prosperity;
3. In view of the fact that education is on the concurrent list in Nigeria's Constitution, there is a need for synergy and regular communication and consultations among the Federal, State and Local Governments for the achievement of MSP within the stipulated timelines;
4. There is a dearth of reliable data on education in Nigeria for evidence-based planning and policy formulation;
5. There is a need to revamp the STEM and TVET in the Education Sector and align same with entrepreneurship and requirement of the industries;
6. Challenges bedeviling STEM / TVET, at Federal and State levels include poorly-resourced laboratories and workshops, capacity deficit of teachers and low esteem of technical and vocational education to which State Governments are major contributors;
7. State Ministries of Education have important roles to play in the implementation, monitoring and timely reporting of the activities of the MSP in their domains;
8. Challenges facing education in Nigeria include funding, infrastructural deficit, inadequate number and poor quality of staff, frequent interruptions in the

- academic calendar, insecurity, erratic power supply, research capacity deficit, poor attitude of students to work, poor reading culture and low digital literacy;
9. The root causes of the challenges facing education in Nigeria border the following:
 - policy environment,
 - system management and efficiency
 - resourcing funding/investment drive,
 - access and equity,
 - quality and relevance of curriculum teaching and learning environment;
 10. Government alone cannot effectively and fully fund education. The current education funding is grossly inadequate to support that the ERGP and actualization of Education 2030;
 11. The importance of synergy among the Federal, State and Local Governments cannot be overemphasized as education is listed under the Concurrent List.

6.0 Recommendations

1. The capacity of Head Teachers and Principals should be constantly built to equip them on the completion of the Annual School Census Instruments;
2. Government should synergize with private school practitioners and include them in EMIS Committees;
3. Establishment of states offices in the 36 states and FCT to be manned by a Director who will serve as the bridge between states and Federal level in the areas of data collection and planning;
4. There should be a conscious effort to move to E-data collection while exploring the use of mobile technology;
5. Government at all levels should make concerted efforts to make available real-time data that is current (time-bound), (verifiable) credible and accurate for educational planning and budgeting;
6. States should form implementation task teams based on the 5 core priority areas of the MSP in their various states. The team is expected to share the report with the Federal Ministry of Education;

7. The Federal government in collaboration with State governments should deploy appropriate strategies for intervention in improving the capacity of teachers and students in STEM/TVET and ICT deployment;
8. The FME in collaboration with State Ministries of Education, FCT and other relevant stakeholders should embark on advocacy and sensitization programmes to ensure effective implementation and sustainability of policies, programmes and initiatives of MSP including Out-of-School Children, Adult and Youth Literacy; etc
9. Reconsideration of the policy of Re-introduction of the shift school system in the National Policy of education should be considered;
10. Effective monitoring of activities should be embarked upon by the states and shared the outcomes with the Federal Ministry of Education;
11. There should be continuous training and professional development of teachers to keep them at the cutting edge of technology and changing modes of pedagogy in line with current trends and international best practices;
12. Unit cost of learning as well as the hidden cost should be identified so as to compute the actual investment in education;
13. A specific annual timeline for submission of data on investment in education by states to the FME should be determined. (The participants agreed before March of each year);
14. The Inclusion of indigenous language in STEM/TVET Curriculum and translation for faster and quicker adoption;
15. There is a need to produce the National book policy and the Nigerian languages policy Train of more teachers in indigenous languages and to support the Nigerian French Language Village;
16. All accreditation exercises in tertiary institutions should be harmonized;
17. There should be continuous monitoring of teachers for effective service delivery;
18. Drastic attitudinal change should be engendered in parents in the grassroots communities in order to achieve the educational development of rural children while appropriate mechanisms should be put in place to address the challenges of girl-child education and the out-of-school children in various parts of the country;

- 19.State Governments should provide counselling centres for parents who refuse to send their children to school or who withdraw them from school before completion of basic education with appropriate sanctions meted out to defaulters;
- 20.State Governments should invest more in basic education and diversify training in practical works and skills acquisition for out-of-school youths while the required counterpart funding for accessing UBEC matching grants should be made available on time;
- 21.State Governments should be up and doing on the issue of inclusive education with a particular focus on advocacy, sensitization and implementation of programmes and activities that relate with People With Disability (PWD).
- 22.Governments and other stakeholders should make a paradigm shift by considering education an investment rather than expenditure;
- 23.Federal, State and Local Governments should resuscitate and strengthen the existing patterns of linkage and partnership to collaborate, coordinate and cooperate to implement the Ministerial Strategic Plan;
- 24.State Governments should make education one of their top priorities while Executive Governors should constantly be abreast of educational development in their states and bridge the funding gap of state institutions;

7.0 Appreciation

The Federal Ministry of Education was commended for organising the retreat and advocated for its sustainability. The participants were also commended for their dedication and immense contributions to the success of the retreat.

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