



REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE
Union – Discipline – Work

MINISTRY OF STATE
MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT,
SOCIAL AFFAIRS
AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING



“Providing Africa’s Youth with Skills and Training for Jobs”

The ICQN/TVSD 2014 Ministerial Conference

Abidjan, 21, 22 and 23 July 2014

Hotel NOVOTEL

CONCEPT NOTE

INTRODUCTION

The 2014 event on youth employment in Africa is in keeping with the activities of the Inter-Country Quality Node on Technical and Vocational Skills Development (ICQN/TVSD). The ICQN/TVSD was launched in 2010 under the leadership of Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, which has since become the State Ministry for Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training (MEEASFP). The quality node brings together the employment and training ministers of 25 countries, French-speaking, English-speaking and Portuguese-speaking, from all the sub-regions of Africa. Two meetings of the member ministers of the ICQN were held in Abidjan in July 2010 and September 2011. A third meeting is planned for the July 2014.

The problem of the school-to-work transition for young people and their access to the job market has been one of the priorities of the ICQN from the outset. The 2014 event reflects the ministers' determination to place youth employment at the center of their strategic and operational responsibilities and actions.

THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Africa has recorded annual economic growth of nearly 5% over the last ten years, which under normal circumstances should have enabled African countries to resolve the problem of employing the many young people entering the job market. The available data show, however, that job creation is largely insufficient. From 2000 to 2007, Africa's working population increased by 96 million while jobs increased by only 63 million (according to the ILO), and four out of five of these new jobs were

created by the informal economy. This situation led to a severe deterioration in the economic and social situation of youth.

- Young people make up 60% of the unemployed population, not counting those who have become discouraged or are clearly under-employed (ILO, World Bank).
- The exclusion of young people from the job market has strong negative impacts on their personal and occupational development. For example, one of every two young people who join an insurgent movement states that the main reason is unemployment (World Bank). Similarly, the future careers of young people are largely determined by the skills and experience that they acquire or are not lucky enough to acquire at the outset of their working lives (OECD/AfDB).
- The great majority of young people entering the job market hold unstable jobs and, as a result, have no assurance concerning the earning potential and permanence of their work.

All these data show how important, and even urgent, it is to tackle the problem of young people's access to the working world. Their exclusion from employment is a social time bomb threatening the entire African continent and detracts from countries' ability to fight poverty and enter the virtuous circle of sustainable development.

ICQN/TVSD ACTIVITIES SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

As early as 2010, the ministers and public and private sector representatives of the member countries of the ICQN/TVSD affirmed that they were determined to do everything possible to ensure that training and occupational skills for all Africans, particularly young people, become a strategic and operational priority at the continental level.

In 2011, these same ministers and representatives strongly emphasized the need to step up inter-country cooperation regarding the integration of young people into the workforce by expanding apprenticeship and all forms of cooperation with the private sector: the expressed aim was to enable young people to acquire skills that could facilitate their transition to the working world. An inter-country seminar followed in 2012, in accordance with the ministers' recommendation. At the seminar, experts from ten countries analyzed the difficulties and constraints that prevent young people from finding employment as well as the reforms needed to improve the effectiveness of the various paths for integrating them into the workforce. The proceedings of the seminar will be presented at the third meeting of the ICQN, scheduled for the fall of 2013.

The 2014 event follows on from all this preparatory work. It is intended not only for the member countries of the ICQN/TVSD but also for other African countries that are undertaking reforms, experiments and innovations aimed primarily at improving young people's access to employment.

The purpose of the event is to initiate a deep-rooted process of study and action regarding the type of social and economic measures to be promoted and the type of skills to be developed so that young Africans can find employment and earn a decent living while participating as much as possible in their countries' wealth creation process.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF THE 2014 EVENT

The overall objective of the event is to come to grips with the problem of youth employment, which is one of the biggest challenges facing Africa in its efforts to fight poverty and, more fundamentally, ensure the sustainable development of the continent. Its specific objectives are to identify and analyze (before the meeting) the effectiveness of the training, workforce integration and job creation systems that countries have begun to implement in order to address the real needs of the labor market and, on this basis, to formulate a regional action plan that can significantly facilitate access to employment for youth.

TO IDENTIFY AND ANALYZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNTRIES' TARGETED ACTIONS TO PROMOTE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The 2014 event will be a success only if it is preceded by a strong effort to identify and analyze experiments and actions conducted in African countries to give young people the greatest possible chance of joining the workforce. This operation will be conducted according to a predefined format and will focus on targeted measures serving objectives such as the following:

- investing in priority in development of the skills required by the sectors that are creating growth or jobs;
- designing and implementing work-study training systems offering young people the greatest possible chance of joining the businesses that act as partners of these systems;
- building the occupational skills of entrepreneurs and apprenticeship managers in the informal sector to help them train and integrate the young people for whom they are responsible;
- designing and implementing specific tracks for the social and occupational inclusion of vulnerable population groups;
- creating centers of expertise in the provision of support to the creation or strengthening of economic activities.

The plan is to identify and analyze such actions in more than 20 countries from all the sub-regions of Africa. The identification and analysis processes will be conducted in a uniform manner, with the agreement and support of those responsible for training and employment in each country and with the participation of one or more national experts appointed for this purpose. They will request support from a number of bilateral and multilateral technical and financial partners. This work will lead, before the event, to the production of a document describing the flagship

measures adopted by each country selected, as well as the criteria determining their effectiveness in integrating young people into the workforce.

TO PROPOSE WAYS AND MEANS FOR EFFECTIVE, CONCERTED AND POOLED INVESTMENT IN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Presentation and analysis of the systems and tracks implemented by countries to facilitate young people's access to jobs will help to identify criteria of effectiveness for the actions to be conducted or designed in order to combat youth unemployment or exclusion from the workforce.

Inter-country dialogue between the government authorities responsible for youth employment and training, business and sector organizations, and civil society organizations will lead to proposals for action and recommendations for:

- reforming skills development systems and tracks for young people in order to focus them more closely on the real needs of the labor market;
- guiding young people toward existing and accessible jobs;
- facilitating the school-to-work transition;
- designing measures to give formal and informal sector entrepreneurs incentive to hire young people;
- creating jobs in the trades and sectors that are regarded as creating wealth and value added at the national, sub-regional and regional levels;
- designing effective measures to support business creation by young people themselves;
- etc.

The overall outcome of the event will be a proposal for an action plan on the regional scale to promote youth employment. The aim will be to engender strong mobilization across countries to address the urgent need to take all necessary measures to facilitate young people's access to employment.

In this respect, the ICQN/TVSD could serve as a forum for dialogue and monitoring of the implementation of these measures and make this the theme of its work program for 2014-15.

PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

Preparation for the event will be conducted according to the phases and timetable below:

Phase of preparation	Completion date
Proposal of a model for analysis, evaluation and presentation of the experiences identified	Late August 2013
Identification of countries having employment/training experiences that should be analyzed and promoted	October/November 2013
Finalization of agreements between countries, ADEA and the TFPs (AFD, AfDB, GIZ, LuxDev, LORRAG, IRCD, OIF...etc) on procedures for the case	September/November 2013

studies and contracting with local experts	
Analysis of country experiences begins	January 2014
Experts meeting	End of March 2014
Finalization of the case studies analysis	End of April 2014
Draft of a first synthesis and proposal of a preliminary program for the event	End of May 2014
Mailing of invitations and the preliminary program for the event	Beginning of June 2014
Mailing of the final program and the background document for the event	End of June 2014
Holding of the event	21/22/23 July 2014

BUDGET

The budget for the event will be funded from three sources:

- Côte d'Ivoire's State Ministry for Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training (MEEASFP) will cover the costs of accommodation and travel to Abidjan and related costs (secretariat, coffee breaks, gala dinner, etc.).
- The technical and financial partners (AFD, AfDB, GIZ, NORRAG, IRCD, LuxDev, OIF etc.) will finance the production of the case studies in the countries where these TFPs operate and, if possible, the participation costs of these countries' public and private delegates to the event.
- ADEA will cover the participation costs of other country delegates as well as the costs of event organization, translation and expertise.