

# TVET Center

## CONTINENTAL STRATEGY FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

TO FOSTER  
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT







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# Foreward



The issue of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is important enough to stimulate the production of a strategic document that will be difficult to read, and consequently become more complex to implement. I am glad to notice that my team (Department HRST of the AUC) and myself succeeded in meeting the challenge in the presentation of this TVET continental strategy.

In this world very often marked by inequalities generating all sorts of dangers, TVET, which must become a professional insurance, should be key to our response in terms of youth employment or prevention from idleness and to their valuable integration within the society that is ready to recognize their position, usefulness and merit.

There is no viable socio-economic project without men and women who are ready

to work towards the production of material or non-material goods.

The TVET continental strategy is meant to be an action guide that should be quickly owned in order to develop each line of the strategy to build the TVET national, regional and continental system.

This TVET continental strategy provides a comprehensive framework for the design

and development of national policies and strategies to address the challenges of education and technical and vocational training to support economic development and the creation of national wealth and contribute to poverty reduction. The strategy looks at the cross-cutting issues of employability, relevance, collaboration between training institutions and employers, the accreditation of training structures (in formal, non-formal and informal sectors), evaluation and certification, quality assurance, and portability of TVET qualifications within national borders. In this regard, it is necessary for each country to formulate a national TVET policy and establish a national training coordination structure and its implementation bodies that will be able to manage the TVET policy and entire system.

TVET national policies and strategies must not only be based on related inter-national best practices,

but should also be firmly rooted in indigenous knowledge and learning systems that reflect cultural practices and local values, technological preferences, the challenges of globalization and national development priorities.

Many developed countries drawing lessons from their counterparts have built the success of their economic development on the quality of their TVET and its links with the productive sector. These approaches should always guide that of African countries and be a source of inspiration.

The strategy argues that the development of higher level skills is necessary for the adaptation of technology and innovation, transformation of national production systems, and industrialization of the economy.

Accordingly, TVET policies and strategies should focus on the development of skills from the basic level to the higher education level.

For us, cooperation is understood at the level of inter and intra-african as well as multilateral cooperation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. De-Paul', with a large, stylized circular flourish to the left.

**Dr. Martial De-Paul Ikounga**

Commissioner for Human Resources, Science & Technology  
Africa Union Commission



# 1. Introduction



The growing problem of youth unemployment and underemployment is one of the main socio-economic development concerns of most African governments.

Without job-related skills, youth and adults cannot benefit from the employment opportunities that offer a decent income.

In many countries, one of the key elements of development strategies is to support young people to acquire professional skills through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes. This approach also helps to promote entrepreneurship.

Wars, conflicts and other natural disasters have also destroyed the provision of TVET systems in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations, which unfortunately are too many on the continent. Although there are significant positive efforts to strengthen TVET, and entrepreneurship training, TVET systems in many countries are characterized by under-resourced, obsolete or damaged infrastructure; inadequate inter-sectoral linkages; lack of Labour management Information Systems;



limited curricula and inadequate human resources. These situations are the consequences of inadequate human resources due to the death or displacement of experienced instructors and other workers who are very often not replaced.

It was in this context that the African Union Commission (AUC), in 2007, developed a continental strategy to revitalize TVET in Africa, through the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa 2006- 2015. At the time of drawing lessons from the mid-point assessment of the 2007 strategy, the need was felt to review it and redefine our vision of TVET in order to improve its visibility so that it can better play the role assigned to it.

Africa certainly has high economic growth rates, but paradoxically this growth does not translate into jobs, and unemployment rates are not falling. The consequence is that African economies are struggling to cope with the difficult task of providing decent jobs for the millions of new entrants to the labour market estimated at about 10 million each year.

The increasing number of poorly educated, unskilled, unemployed and under-employed young people every day becomes a threat to the stability of countries and therefore to their development. It is estimated that almost

100 million young men and women in Africa, out of a total population of about 200 million young people, are illiterate and unemployed or in low-paid jobs (UNESCO, 2012). Consequently, the quality of the workforce remains low and often inadequate.

In the formal industrial sector, declining employment opportunities remains a concern and work in this area is less than 10% of total employment in most African countries (Filmer et al., 2014). The vast majority of the workforce is found in the services and agricultural sectors.

This workforce distribution pattern must be considered when developing national policies, TVET strategies and training programmes.

## 2. General Considerations

Technical and professional skills capacity building systems in Africa are hampered by poor relations with the labour market, lack of trained personnel and inadequate programmes. Very few countries lay emphasis on capacity building in rural communities even though recognize the role of the informal economy which is the largest employer and the main source of technical and vocational education in Africa. First, it should be understood that the acquisition of technical and professional skills can take place in different learning environments. These include:

- i. Formal learning, which is synonymous with school or curriculum-based learning;
- ii. Non-formal learning and finally;
- iii. Training based on informal learning.

In some parts of Africa, the informal sector accounts for over 80% of all training skills (ILO, 2007). Training in the informal sector is more flexible than TVET in schools that imposes rigid admission criteria and age limits for learners. Teaching in the informal sector very often takes place in the local language, in a culturally friendly environment for illiterate or poorly educated learners. It is therefore important to strengthen the provision of TVET in the informal economy, especially the traditional apprenticeship system where master craftsmen transmit their skills and knowledge to the younger generation. However, it must be stressed that a good founda-

tional education at primary and secondary level significantly enhances the outcome value of any TVET training. There is therefore need to enhance the 'education' content in TVET across the board.

### 2.1. Conceptualisation

To be able to address issues at the triple national, regional and continental levels requires a simple and effective policy to harmonize the different concepts which involves finding commonly accepted terminology.

It is useful to clarify the meaning of words used in order to ensure a common understanding of the strategy, especially around the issue of jobs.

#### 2.1.1. TVET

There is an on-going conceptual debate on the definition and meaning of different terms used to describe the acquisition of employable skills. Terms such as "education and vocational training" (EVT), "technical and vocational education" (TVE), and "the development of technical and professional skills" (DTPS), Technical and Vocational Skills development (TVSD) are used in different countries and different contexts to mean "Technical and Vocational Education and Training" or TVET in all its dimensions.

In this Strategy, the term TVET is used in its broadest sense to cover all aspects of training and skills development of all cadres, whether formal, non-formal or informal. It also includes the issues of

demand and supply of skills, employability, improving skills, ability for self-employment, and retraining, versatility and continuing apprenticeship.

Concerning the scope of TVET from primary school to higher education, it is a mistake to consider TVET as a separate sector rather than an integral and final purpose of any education system that leads to the acquisition of knowledge and expertise relevant to society and the development of the individual.

TVET must be seen in a cross-cutting manner and understood as extending from primary education to higher education.

Therefore, from primary school, students should understand first the importance of exercising a professional activity within society and secondly that the education system in general is a place for acquiring basic or otherwise generic skills. The difference is that certain professions, such as engineering, medicine, law, and so on, require more wide theoretical knowledge and intellectual cognition. But the fact of learning the trade and acquiring more and more experience with daily practice and over time is common to all professions, from the mason with his trowel to the civil engineer.

It is quite remarkable that in many African countries, training is already attached to the Ministry of Higher Education. This is a positive signal that cannot be ignored.

## **2.1.2. Types of Training**

It is important to make a distinction between the three types of training that are the Formal, Informal and the Non-Formal.

### **2.1.2.1. Formal**

The formal framework is understood here to refer to the whole system governed by precise rules laid down. This is essentially training in public or private schools with fixed-term cycles and crowned with a state diploma or certificate. Here, the route of innovation, when it exists, is an organised process of identification and promotion of recognisable skill or product, with support for its development and marketing.

TVET systems in Africa vary from one country to another and are taught at different levels in different types of schools and colleges, including private and public technical and vocational schools, polytechnics, businesses and apprentice training centres.

In almost all African countries, formal TVET programmes are found in schools and colleges. The formal TVET at the second cycle of secondary education as well as tertiary level normally lasts for a fixed term, is often supply-driven and has a high unit cost.

### **2.1.2.2. Informal**

In the informal case, training is given in structures organized or not with their own rules of trade that often exist without necessarily being written or formalized.

The following can be grouped here:

Corporate training according to objectives and terms of reference that may vary depending on demand and including retraining, apprenticeship and continuing training;

Training by mentoring, observation and participation in workshops, often structured around a master craftsman with skilled workers and apprentices;

Training in the crafts, whether traditional or modern;

The end of training certificate is conferred by the recognition of master craftsmen who may have been grouped together for this purpose.

### **2.1.2.3. Non-formal**

The framework is considered to be non-formal when:

Training obeys no rules and may be spontaneous.

On-the-job training for the benefit of daily practice on the ground falls into this group.

This sector is still the most open, and is subject to creativity and innovation.

### **2.1.3. Productive Sector**

Beyond the importance of the private sector where it is advantageous to promote initiatives, the fact cannot be ignored that most often in Africa, it is the public productive sector that is predominant.

Within this strategy, the productive sector includes the public productive sector, the private sector, handicrafts and the traditional sector: all producers of goods necessary for social-economic development.

The productive sector includes all the producers of material goods or not such as services. These services include. The services include transportation, communication, transmission and distribution of goods produced elsewhere or within the same setting; finance, insurance, and real estate as well as hospitality.

But generally, we cannot get mistaken if we think that the final intervention that is awaited from the productive sector means more effort in relation to the size of companies and particularly those of the private sector.

## **2.2. TVET landscape : the current situation**

### **2.2.1. Fragmented structuring of TVET**

TVET delivery in Africa can be divided into three broad categories :

- i. public technical and vocational institutions belonging to the State;
- ii. private vocational training institutions; and
- iii. traditional apprenticeship.

Generally, there are no common standards that cover the different delivery structures of TVET listed above. Some private providers issue their own certificates and diplomas that are not calibrated with national standards. Such fragmented delivery structures of TVET in Africa pose important implications for the quality of training, standards and comparability of qualifications (certificates) issued. The multiplicity of qualifications and professional certificates, many of which are of dubious quality, undermines the image of TVET.

### **2.2.2. Unregulated traditional apprenticeship**

In many countries, traditional apprenticeship remains the dominant pathway for skills acquisition among youth leaving school or dropping out. However, because the learners and their trainers are often poorly educated, skills development in the informal learning sector is rather slow to embrace modern technological practices, hence perpetuating the use of traditional and sometimes outdated learning methods. The traditional system with low levels of literacy has not been amenable to structured reforms in the education and training sector, which are necessary for enhanced performance.

### **2.2.3. Growing importance of private TVET centres**

In almost all countries, TVET delivery outside the government is high and increasing in terms of the number of both institutions and of learners. This trend is related to the fact that private providers give training for the informal sector, which is the more rapidly expanding labour market throughout Africa, while public institutions train mainly for the formal industrial sector, which is growing at a much slower rate. It is therefore imperative that this delivery structure is fully accounted for in the national labour and human resource development policy and programming, with a view to optimizing returns, and ensuring quality. Where-as self-regulation is important, it is necessary to establish mutually beneficial links with public systems for quality assurance, human resource planning and innovation.

### **2.2.4. TVET systems are still supply driven**

Although considerable awareness has been created on the need to make TVET demand-driven, the reality in many countries shows a TVET system often inherited from the colonial era which is predominantly focused on supply. The development of non-target skills is a major weakness of the TVET system in many African countries. Training institutions do not follow the employment destination of their graduates. Consequently, the valuable input of former trainees on the quality of training they received and the opportunity to take into account the contributions based on their experience when revising programmes and training modules are lost.

### **2.2.5. Mismatch between supply and demand for skills**

The phenomenon of “unemployed graduates” is widespread in Africa. In many countries, a large number of graduates from the formal school system, including university graduates, are unemployed, although the economy still has opportunities for skilled workers. This situation has highlighted the mismatch between training and labour market demand for skills.

### **2.2.6. Low prestige and attractiveness of TVET**

In many countries, technical and vocational education is still considered by parents, the public at large and even some politicians as a domain for less academically gifted students. This perception was fuelled by low academic

requirements for admission into TVET programmes and the limited prospects for continuing education and professional development for TVET graduates. Furthermore, the presentation of TVET as a secondary level or lower post-secondary level skills training has limited the full appreciation of TVET across all levels of education.

### **2.2.7. Gender-based inequality of opportunity**

Continuing stereotyping and feminisation of certain professions and vocations has meant that women and girls are still not adequately represented in key professional sectors which are traditionally considered as reserved for males.

### **2.2.8. Geographic and economic disparities**

Economic inequality is a great barrier to participation in education and technical and vocational training. In many African countries, the children of poor parents are unable to pay the fees charged by training institutions. Invariably, good technical and vocational schools are located in cities, especially the larger ones, thus limiting access to quality education and skills for people in rural areas.

### **2.2.9. Low quality and ineffective training**

The quality of training is related to the issue of skills mismatch. In general, the provision of TVET places too much emphasis on theory and certification rather than on skills acquisition and aptitude tests. Inadequate training of instructors, obsolete training equipment

and lack of training materials are some of the common factors that combine to reduce the effectiveness of the training to meet the objectives of knowledge and skills required by labour market standards.

The poor quality and inefficiency of training has led to a situation where the labour market looks outside the country for skills. As a result, external expertise is imported into the continent whereas they could be produced locally. The consequence is an increasingly frustrating net loss of new jobs for local Africans.

### **2.2.10. Insufficient funding**

Only a few African governments currently finance TVET at a level that can sustain quality training. TVET is generally expensive in terms of cost per student. However, this is not reflected in the budget allocation of the TVET sector.

### **2.2.11. Weak policy implementation structures**

The proliferation of TVET management and policy implementation structures and the spreading of supervisory responsibilities' across government ministries and agencies account for some of inefficiencies in the system, such as the duplication and segmentation of training, and the absence of a common platform for developing coherent policies and joint initiatives.

### **2.2.12. Policy and legislation**

One of the main weaknesses of the TVET system in Africa is the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of the delivery service. TVET in many countries is organized under various ministries and



government departments and is governed by different legislative instruments managed by different structures; instead of a unified policy and legal framework.

Addressing these institutional challenges should be at the heart of current policy and governance reforms underway in many countries.

### **2.2.13. Promising initiatives at national level**

The TVET landscape has been changing with some promising TVET policy reforms underway in a growing number of countries. This is demonstrated by the active participation of the private sector in the National TVET system, the current resilience and renovation of the traditional apprenticeship system, the creation of national bodies with oversight function of training, and the enactment of laws to strengthen the education and training systems. Other specific actions include the following:

- i. Working closely with training schools and trainers for the formulation of the current needs for skills in relation to market expectations;
- ii. Offering industrial location and workplace options as well as experiential apprenticeship for learners.





## **2.3. Summary Assessment of Past Strategy**

### **2.3.1. The Second Decade of Education for Africa**

In its Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education (2006-2015), the AU recognizes the importance of TVET as a support mechanism for economic growth and as a means of empowering people to establish sustainable livelihoods.

The Second Decade of Education (2006-2015) stipulated that its goal was to rethink the educational systems of Member States of the African Union so that young people will receive compulsory basic education aimed at equipping them with essential general skills, qualifications and attitudes leading to a continuing education culture and an entrepreneurship spirit so that they can adapt to a constantly evolving world of work.

The Plan stated that to meet labour market demands, quality TVET should be designed and delivered by institutions and other providers in close collaboration with potential employers.

The aim was not only to change the behaviour of parents, teachers and the public vis-à-vis TVET but also to promote the sector as an essential component of the education system focused on preparing learners for all labour levels through specialized technical training.

In this respect, a reliable TVET programme should be based on:

- i. Solid general education;
- ii. Reliable basic general/technical education, notably including communication programmes, entrepreneurship and learning practical life skills;
- iii. Specialized technical training.

Given that many young people are not in the formal school system, non-integrated institutional learning consisting of literacy and TVET programmes, especially for girls and women should promote the well-being of communities across Africa. TVET is also considered as offering a framework for the preservation, promotion and development of knowledge as well as cultural and artistic expressions.

TVET was therefore intended to be a high priority investment sector during the Second Decade of Education in Africa. The following priority areas were to be addressed accordingly:

- i. Equitable access to TVET for all;
- ii. Quality and relevance of TVET systems and programmes, increased private sector involvement and funding;
- iii. Increased resources for TVET to acquire modern equipment and facilities;
- iv. Integration of TVET in literacy and non-formal education for vulnerable groups and reconstruction in post-conflict situations;
- v. Capacity building, especially the mobilization of TVET teachers.

Unfortunately TVET has not been adequately applied in many African countries. In cases where such programmes exist, they do not take sufficient advantage of modern technological facilities.

A strategy was developed in 2007 to stimulate this process and make it more efficient. However, although the 2007 strategy was generally accepted by policy makers and key stakeholders, there has been little progress in its implementation.

This lack of concrete actions at national level was attributed mainly to financial and human resource constraints as well as to limited or insufficient political commitment for action based on a clearly defined national or regional plan that can become law. However, a number of partners and AU Member States were inspired by the 2007 Strategy to introduce national and regional TVET activities. The African Union Commission too, implemented TVET programmes in countries in post-conflict situation such as Liberia, Congo Brazzaville and Burundi, with mixed results.

### **2.3.2. Need for a New TVET Strategy**

Since the formulation of the 2007 strategy, new developments, perspectives and approaches to TVET as a means of addressing the critical issue of youth unemployment have emerged.

The review of the 2007 Strategy identified the need to align it with current global trends and define a set of indicators for monitoring progress.

The revised strategy takes account of concrete recommendations to address

policy issues, challenges and gaps that often interfere with the implementation of many initiatives and programmes for skills development on the continent.

This new continental strategy therefore examines more thoroughly the possibilities of TVET as a response to facilitate the promotion of national development, social cohesion, political stability, poverty reduction and regional integration. It draws on recent regional and international initiatives aimed at promoting TVET to foster youth employment.

# 3. Vision and Mission of the Strategy

The strategy will be guided ultimately by the vision of the African Union, and framed to respond to the proposed normative mission of TVET that involves a paradigm shift.

## 3.1. Vision of the African Union

The vision of the African Union (AU) is that of “an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa, driven by its own people to take its rightful place in the global community and the knowledge economy”. It is a major advantage that this vision is therefore based on the development of the human resources of the continent

## 3.2. TVET Mission

In recent years, given the rapid technological advances taking place in the labour market, it has become necessary to integrate flexibility, adaptability and continuous apprenticeship in training supply.

One of the most important developments in the TVET sector in recent years has been a paradigm shift that results in a more holistic policy in favour of the sector making it possible to adopt and recognize the acquisition of skills in all areas of training and learning, be they formal, informal or non-formal as noted above.

TVET should be a coherent system whose purpose is to meet the continent's economic development demands in terms of skilled human capacity both in sufficient quantity and quality for collective social welfare.

TVET should not be considered as a simple combination of service provider structures comprising :

- i. Public and private Technical and vocational institutions from primary school to the higher education level that abide by certain prescribed rules;
- ii. Private vocational training institutions with their own organizational and operating rules and their own certification systems that are not calibrated to standards recognized at both the national and international level. Often these institutions respond spontaneously to some labour market demand;
- iii. Various traditional learning structures.

The main objective of Technical and Vocational Education and Training is not only to provide skills to gain paid employment but also to encourage and support creativity, innovativeness and entrepreneurship in order to develop the ability to create jobs and employment opportunities.

TVET in Africa has to be linked to paid or self-employment as this is at the heart of all the best practices and strategies observed worldwide in TVET.

## 3.3. Strategy Mission

The first mission of this strategy is to build a unified general framework that can serve as a continental platform around which AU Member States will cluster or be invited to build coherent and in-

egrated TVET systems at national, regional and continental levels through the development and implementation of national and regional plans.

This will be done to ensure a network enabling:

- i. Establishment of common quality standards
- ii. Genuine standardization in TVET;
- iii. Mutual recognition and harmonization of training among countries and across formal and informal systems;
- iv. Mobility of players, especially teachers.

The second mission of the current continental TVET strategy is to position TVET within the education system as a tool for the empowerment of African people, especially youth as a culmination of all the training needed for the social-economic development of the continent.

The main objective of the strategy is to promote skills acquisition through training focused on the response to the demand of the social economic milieu through employability tests, sustainable livelihoods and responsible citizenship; and also building capacity to create and innovate, anchored on a spirit of entrepreneurship and inventiveness.

- i. The major objectives of the strategy can be summarized as follows:
- ii. Promoting an efficient and cost-effective system of quality TVET;
- iii. Ensuring the relevance of training

and employability of trainees;

- iv. Developing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship;
- v. Improving the legal and political environment as well as coherence and management of training provision;
- vi. Promoting continuing apprenticeship; and
- vii. Strengthening the status and attractiveness of TVET.

## 4. Paradigm Shift



Making the paradigm shift in TVET means developing the idea that TVET prepares young people to become job creators rather than job seekers. This will put an end to the idea that, it is the under-performers and drop-outs of general education that will be found in TVET.

Put an end to the idea that, in the absence of any recourse, it is the dunces of general education who end up in TVET trainings by showing that all the qualifications including the most sophisticated require preliminary training and are part of the extended framework of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, as mentioned in the framework of this continental strategy.

This can be illustrated with the various liberal professions which emerge with

qualifying training such as lawyers, architects, etc.

That is already visible with the many liberal professions being opened ? with skills training.

### **4.1. State Responsibility**

The primary role of the State will be to demonstrate the understanding that an education system with no trade and therefore no assurance of professional qualification is simply unfinished. The second is to have the political will to act accordingly by improving the environment around TVET.

As much as it is necessary to stop the brain drain to developed countries, it is equally important to avoid the phenomenon where those who find that many of the most attractive jobs creat-

ed in Africa are occupied by imported and more qualified human resources with expertise and corporate behaviour sought especially by private entrepreneurs. Frustration increases when we realize that trainings could be conducted locally.

#### **4.2. Responsibility of Parents and the General Public**

The need for change of mentality and view of TVET relates largely to parents, benefactors and the general public.

It is up to parents and the African family as a whole to build around them all the confidence young people need in the perception of TVET. They must be on hand to support their children when making the decision to enroll in the TVET system to learn a trade, regardless of the type of training chosen. All must therefore be provided with the relevant information that validates the high value and prospects in TVET, through well targeted public education.

#### **4.3. Responsibility of the Productive Sector**

The productive sector has to understand that its own development depends largely on local TVET quality and should to that end set an example by partnering fully in TVET development.

By giving a strong signal that consists, among other things, in opening its doors to students during and after their training, the productive sector will contribute to enhancing TVET and improving the quality of the labour they eventually employ.

#### **4.4. Responsibility of Learners Themselves**

Whatever the level, TVET is a guarantee for the future. The workshop training image could be remodelled to galvanize learners. Indeed the dream of the young apprentice who enters the expert practitioner's workshop is to become expert the day master/ trainer will give him the qualification rank regardless of the ritual.

This gives the pupil entering TVET the idea if not the dream of becoming his own boss after training. The idea itself is new, and helps to inculcate in all the TVET paradigm shift: "Enter the school with the idea that when leaving, you will become Your Own Boss".

The TVET learner actually changes his identity and gains confidence in himself.

#### **4.5. The place of young girls and women**

Special attention should be paid on the issue of school attendance rate and TVET content for girls and women. In fact, beyond sexual discrimination, there still exists a certain depreciation of the relevance of many jobs done in majority by women such as domestic jobs (cleaners, housekeepers, cooks or often baby-sitters, etc) that the majority of people still consider to be spontaneously done and therefore which do not require any particular training. This is totally wrong.

The responsibilities involved above are once again called upon to create initiatives at this level.

# 5. Approach Based on a Paradigm Shift



## 5.1. General scheme

It aims at questioning the demand and not to limit to the training offer. It is clear that where the starting point is the supply of training, such TVET approaches have proved inadequate and have produced unemployed graduates. Rather, the starting point ought to be the expressed or latent demand of the economic system in general. The approach adopted here therefore starts with simple questioning about the skills needs of sectors of activity, especially those that are engines of a country's economy.

The intention here is therefore to present a strategic framework and a set of practical recommendations to inform policies, strategies and action plans

aimed at appropriately promoting the quality and utility value of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

The diagram below shows the basis for the development of a coherent national or regional TVET plan.

One of the most important developments in the TVET sector in recent years has been a paradigm shift making TVET a more holistic policy to adopt and recognize the acquisition of skills in all learning frameworks - formal, informal and non-formal.

This example of a vegetable that can and should be multiplied was chosen because among other recent developments in the TVET sector, there is training for agricultural skills throughout the entire agricultural value chain, from input supply to food production, through treatment and processing, marketing and consumption. This TVET strategy opens up the possibility to explore more new opportunities including those offered by globalization, technology and advances in new production systems.

Agriculture including food production is the largest employer in Africa. The path chosen here also captures the opportunity of primary care in the garden, needed water supply, picking, packing, processing, transportation, marketing, energy supply and cooking and many others

To illustrate the path taken by the vegetable, the image of the pyramid from



From the fragile vegetable in the  
garden of the small African farmer

**What has been the road covered?**

*So many jobs to create*

*Here is HOW TO DO IT!*

- \* Trades
- \* Curricula
- \* Training of trainers
- \* Training of job creators rather than  
job seekers at all levels (from  
primary to higher education  
including the informal sector)
- \* Required infrastructure and  
equipment
- \* Financing

**To the table**

of the Head of State or Government  
or of Mr. and/or Mrs Everybody

Multiply this image for all sectors of activity in a country based on

- High value added sectors;
- The effective industrialization of the continent;
- The green economy and the blue economy
- Innovation

Not only in the development of its local natural resources but also taking  
into account the state of technology worldwide with special attention on  
emerging technologies

=

**National TVET Plan  
(Technical and Vocational Education and Training)**

Based on

A paradigm shift in TVET

A clear implementation mechanism

Indicators enabling dynamic and ongoing assessment

In close collaboration with

a National Employment Plan for Young People in particular  
expressing the demand of the productive sector (Plan to be developed if it  
does not exist)

the wide base to the peak summit is not used, to avoid giving the impression that the one who, at the end of the chain receives vegetable on the plate, is the most important part of the dynamic. Similarly the end of the vegetable's journey at the dining table might feature activities of setting the dining table and cutlery, providing cooked meals, clearing the table and washing the dishes.

So many varied jobs created on this single course!

This same routine can be demonstrated in all areas of production of all kinds, including plantations, diamond and gold mines, workshops and industries). This structure demands the necessity to revisit the training objectives and programmes for young people and re-define the role of the training institutes and centres and all actors involved, from near or far, from the design to the implementation of TVET, through its funding and institutional management. As the end user of the TVET graduate, the productive sector should be involved in the training process at the stage of defining the demand in terms of skills, competences and knowledge; and in developing the programmes and delivery methods.

## **5.2. Trades**

### **5.2.1. Trade Determination**

It is appropriate to remember and to keep in mind that there are no stupid trades, but stupid perspectives concerning work, and that every human activity that allows one to practice a legitimate profession gives meaning to life.

Even beyond the observation of the unfortunately increasing phenomenon of unemployed graduates, we often hear the claim that this is due to the fact that "ONE LEAVES THE UNIVERSITY WITHOUT A JOB".

In terms of social activities, the trade is defined by its purpose and refers to the techniques and tools whose expertise and control require a learning experience, while the profession, which is characterized by a specificity that may fall within a legal framework, refers to paid work exercised regularly for a living, thus one speaks of "livelihood". Thus, does the job help one, through the profession, to get integrated in active life and ensure one's autonomy?

Although one may have several trades but for lack of opportunity one may not carry out the one in which one would have liked to excel. The trade determines the profession in terms of technical skill acquired through practice and the experience from a professional activity. Hence the notion of having a trade in a profession.

Similarly, because of its reference to payment, it is the profession that confers a more or less prestigious social position.

There are also chambers of trades or professions to qualify all persons exercising the same trade. These persons sometimes set the rules to exercise, promote and defend the profession according to a certain ethic. This suggests associations of trades or professions: association of lawyers, engineers, interpreters, doctors, and so on

The concept of trade in TVET should,

as in other areas, include developing the trade, through which one may derive both individual gain and collective profit. Indeed, in the description of the social utility of trade, important dimensions such as the shared social value and the collective and individual responsibility make it possible to ennoble the contribution of each and every one thus engaged for the achievement of common development goals. This easily gives rise to the construction of the solidarity chain of human activities and between humans.

### **5.2.2. The Quest for Socio-economic Development and the TVET Response**

Social-economic development raises the challenge of matching training and employment. The expression or articulation of the quest for socio-economic development concerning human resources should be in both qualitative and quantitative terms through planning even if it should be flexible and indicative. Such planning will help promote the trades of the future and facilitate the assessment training needs. It takes into account the frequency and duration of the need to avoid unnecessary job market saturation.

In terms of TVET response, the definition and description of trades remain essential to the identification of training needs, the expression and development of the content of courses and relevant curricula required. Such work also requires establishing the difference between trades and careers or professions that compose them.

To enhance the attractiveness of TVET and the trades for which people are

trained, the work of defining and describing such trades must involve personnel of the school and university career guidance services, with the support on people from the productive sectors. This information should then be relayed through all communication networks, indicating the following elements:

- i. The importance and necessity of each trade through its place in the production chain and how it can be acquired;
- ii. Careers and opportunities for career advancement within companies through continuing training;

Qualifications required for specific training opportunities, in terms of years of education/ training as well as the possibilities of advancing from one level to the next as listed below, for example;

- i. Labourer
- ii. (Highly) skilled worker
- iii. Foreman
- iv. Executive and/or design engineer
- v. Manager

Profiles and the related programmes should easily ensue.

### **5.3. Programmes and Curricula**

Once trades are defined and clearly described, the objective of programmes and curricula is to organize training for a duly recognized qualification. Training therefore becomes an intentional and educational intervention with a set of knowledge and skill in a given field. The training content is consciously developed based on an identified need, taught by professionals to an audience of beneficiaries who wish to improve their knowledge and skills in

that area.

At the end of the training, qualification is determined by evaluation based on set standards.

Clear links must be established between the different levels and types of training.

### **5.3.1. General Considerations**

#### **5.3.1.1. Description and Methods of Acquiring Skills**

As is the case with all learning processes, the path will go from the most simple to the most complex, taking into account, of course, all the basic and/or related knowledge necessary for the proper command of the subject.

#### **5.3.1.2. Definition of Training Programmes and Courses**

The main objective of TVET programmes is to enable the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes in the trade or a professional field in order to draw a dignified and justified remuneration. These programmes take on board the generic skills, specific skills and related skills. It is this body of knowledge that allows not only clever and appropriate handling of more or less complex tools, but also practice ensured by proven experience. This is known as technical skill.

Training programmes should, at all levels, give an important place to the teaching of mathematical skills. Similarly, a special emphasis will be placed on the teaching and development of science and technology as related to the particular field.

The language of learning also deserves special attention in order to facilitate

communication and especially the mastery of lessons.

#### **5.3.1.3. Training Programme Management Mechanism**

It is essential for programmes to be regularly adjusted in order to adapt training to technological changes. Management information systems and mechanisms for monitoring the state of technology must be put in place to track such changes.

Extracurricular activities organized or not shall take into consideration all the things that are not necessarily thought in school.

### **5.3.2. Innovation, Creativity and Risk Management**

Invention and innovation are technical or organizational responses to problems arising explicitly or latently. Invention capacity also contains a large proportion of anticipation and predictive reasoning.

It is necessary for TVET students to be trained in intellectual property rights and related issues. They must have knowledge of invention and innovation, and be aware of what it is, its scope, usefulness and importance in technological development and the world of production. They must realize that inventing or innovating are within their reach and they are capable of doing it. Students should be trained in the use of patent information to know the state of the art and technology and seize opportunities to improve or adapt them to their situation. Being assured of the possibility of exclusive ownership and use of one's invention for decades is in itself a major source of motivation.

National authorities must take appropriate measures to make intellectual property information more accessible to all. The media in turn must be called upon to ensure the development of such a culture of innovation through a wide dissemination of information on the issue.

Understanding innovation, creativity and the necessary risk entailed means being able to:

- i. Understand and take ownership of existing techniques
- ii. Understand that the best is not always found elsewhere and that we ourselves are the best.
- iii. Design, analyse and synthesize;
- iv. Translate knowledge acquired into everyday practice;
- v. Use innovative and appropriate technology;
- vi. Express creative and innovative thinking;
- vii. Develop, plan and conduct research;
- viii. Use patent information, particularly with regard to technical advances and patents in the public domain;
- ix. Adapt to become an agent for the acquisition of new technology;
- x. Create new technology;
- xi. Accept a little craziness and the courage of pursuing one's ideas.
- xii. Introduce new technology into common usage

The sense of innovation and the spirit of creativity should become part of the learning outcomes to be maintained throughout life: during and after train-

ing in daily activities. Invention or simply innovation sometimes uses what is called a touch of madness that helps overcome the fear of risks. TVET students need to be prepared.

Training institutions should be able to submit entrepreneurial and profit goals, thus providing learners with opportunities for innovation and creativity.

### **5.3.3. Knowledge of Corporate Life**

#### **5.3.3.1. Corporate Culture**

Internships in the productive world are the essence of TVET. They are the basis of a true corporate culture.

Very often, this type of training is called Work-Study Alternation. It allows the learner to acquire skills related to his chosen trade, within a real life context.

Within the context of the work-study alternation, part of the training is done in the workplace and involves more than a training internship. The objectives, the number, timing and duration of the courses are then determined jointly by the school and the company. Trainees are necessarily associated with activities and usual business operations. These courses are generally longer and more frequent than traditional refresher courses and require greater participation of host companies in the college programmes. This type of organization better prepares students to enter the labour market, but also allows the school to better identify the training needs that programmes must meet.

The training courses provide invaluable knowledge of the reality of the production environment. As is commonly found in higher education, there is no such lawyer who has not spent part of

his qualification time in a law firm or no general practitioner or specialist physician who has not been an intern in a hospital to become familiar with the life of the profession. And in this sense, the examples abound.

With their modern facilities, TVET institutions can directly involve their students in business life. Indeed, they may be asked to bid for tenders to provide some paid service to companies, often in the field of maintenance.

#### **5.3.3.2. Establishment and Management of a Business**

In their training course, learners will be informed about the classification of companies and must understand the procedures for their establishment. They will be trained in planning and the development of administrative and financial records required for the creation and management of a company. They will be prepared to deal with, as appropriate, the risks entailed; and be exposed to relevant human and policy environments within which they must operate. In any case, accompanying measures should be implemented to bring them to take the first step.

### **5.4. Research in the TVET Field**

TVET development should be placed at the forefront of technical information to keep abreast with technological developments across the continent and the world. TVET itself then becomes an object of research putting production lines at the centre of development in order to acquire the ability to anticipate that is always needed in the education system.

Through such research, TVET teaching

will be constantly reviewed.

### **5.5. Training of Trainers**

It is important to keep in mind the Teacher-Learner-School triad.

The teacher is an essential element in the knowledge building and transmission process especially when demonstration of daily practice in the profession occurs. The Teacher's example becomes a life lesson for the learner and his/her personal success provides reason to believe for those who want to follow. The teacher's disposition enables learners explore possibilities beyond the immediate teacher-led learning experience

This is why the training of teachers in sufficient quantity to provide the necessary critical mass is as important as the quality. Quality of teachers is necessary for harmonization assurance and mobility of teachers (?).

Further to producing the right quantity of trained teachers, provision of conditions of work and life that inspire their confidence to continue doing work that is not a source of resentment and daily frustration.

Apart from well trained teachers in sufficient quantities, TVET institutions also need managers appropriately trained in TVET, business management and with understanding of the business environment. . In this respect, a new class of school managers having received proper training and the skills of business managers will be trained. This will give them the ability to more easily get in touch with the leaders of the productive sector.

It is important for TVET pedagogy to

promote learner participation and involvement of practitioners from the productive sector in the teaching and learning processes..

## **5.6. Infrastructure, Equipment and consumables**

As previously reported in the review of the current situation mentioned above, in many AU member states, when modern TVET institutions exist, they are in disrepair and without adequate equipment. In this case, one of the visible manifestations of adopting the paradigm shift called for by this strategy, has to be the new TVET infrastructure.

In the current configuration of most AU member states, it is naturally the State to take the initiative and lead the way. Therefore, the standards that will be adopted in the implementation of the new TVET policy will be followed by all, without discrimination, and will be the pride and concrete recognition so much needed by the TVET sector.

If the whole point can be presented schematically by the following three equalities:

TVET = Trade

Trade = Practice

Practice = equipment and adequate teaching materials

The importance of infrastructure with equipment and adequate teaching materials for TVET must be realized.

There is the argument that TVET often requires equipment whose use is not optimal with a very low rate of return. Indeed the profitability may not be clear, however optimization and even immediate profitability to the institution

could be realised through good pooling of such equipment among TVET institutions as well as leasing of usage time to the productive sector. This approach is in use in some TVET institutions around Africa and should be replicated. It strengthens partnerships with the productive sector, and contributes even more to the strengthening of entrepreneurship, the development of the cooperative spirit and its management, especially in cases where learners are directly associated.

Here appears the relevance of cooperation and regional as well as continental integration. A single country does not need to gather in its territory all the infrastructure required for the national response to the need in human capita, especially when we realize that the need though necessary is punctual and time-limited. Groupings are therefore possible to establish in order to reduce the costs and return on investments.

One of the main elements relating to the costs of TVET is consumables. Various machines have stopped working in the absence of consumables. Of course, special attention should be paid on this issue which requires a strong sense of creativity from TVET institutions managers. Economy and recycling reflex should be developed.



# 6. Governance

To ensure that this strategy is assimilated, implemented and the ensuing TVET performance monitored, it is essential to clearly identify the roles of key stakeholders.

## 6.1. Role of the Africa Union Commission (AUC)

The African Union Commission will play the following role vis-à-vis member states:

- i. Raise awareness among governments on the transformational role of TVET for socio-economic development;
- ii. Invite member states to develop national plans where they do not exist;
- iii. Provide technical assistance to Member States in need of such assistance;
- iv. Develop regional policies, particularly regarding training of trainers; accreditation and qualification frameworks by liaising with national plans and technical institutions;
- v. Promote TVET as a vector of regional integration;
- vi. Actively play an advocacy role for TVET within the international donor community;
- vii. Coordinate the development and piloting of appropriate indicators through the AU Education Observatory, and strengthen the position of TVET in the continental education management information systems
- viii. Supervise the implementation of the strategy at the continental level

## 6.2. Role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

Regional coordination calls for action by the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which will include:

- i. Creating a platform to help coordinate the activities of institutions active in TVET in States of the Region;
- ii. Sharing the TVET Strategy Paper with Member States in the Region;
- iii. Encouraging intra-African and regional cooperation in the field of education and training;
- iv. Appealing to the African Diaspora to support TVET in Africa;
- v. Identifying, documenting and disseminating best practices in Member States;
- vi. Serving as AUC relay and continuing to raise awareness of governments on the transformational role of TVET for socio-economic development;
- vii. Boosting communication and constant and active advocacy efforts in support of TVET in the international community of donors;
- viii. Providing technical assistance to States as required and in partnership with the AUC;
- ix. Promoting TVET as a vector of regional integration;
- x. Monitoring the implementation of the regional strategy and reporting

to the AUC;

- xi. Conducting a review and peer analysis of national TVET systems.

### **6.3. Role of Member States**

The role of Member States is to strengthen guidance and counseling services for trainees and create a TVET quality supervisory authority.

The first condition for the successful implementation of a national TVET strategy is the development of a national TVET policy that sets out the Government's vision for skills development. Then it is necessary to define synergy between the national and regional plans, continental and beyond, in order to better support the diversity of trades of the future, and take advantage of intra-African shared experiences.

Each country will define and clarify the lines of clear articulation between TVET and other sectors of the national economy. Another condition of the implementation is to ensure that the national TVET strategy is consistent with regional and international frameworks of existing education and training policy protocols.

#### **6.3.1. Institutionalizing the place of TVET**

Meeting the institutional challenge of TVET governance should be at the heart of policy and reforms in favour of TVET. This involves first drawing up a legal framework and a unified TVET policy that also takes into consideration the

following factors:

- i. Organization of the private sector, particularly the TVET informal sector;
- ii. Definition of consultation mechanisms at the three levels: national (country), regional (RECs) and continental (AUC);
- iii. Direct involvement of parliaments of member states;
- iv. Creation of a TVET quality supervisory authority;
- v. Establishment of a clearly empowered strategy implementation body.
- vi. Establishment of youth-friendly entrepreneurship funds

#### **6.3.2. Role of Government**

It is the Government's duty when taking the initiative of a national TVET plan to:

- i. Provide legal support for national TVET policies;
- ii. Increase financial support to the TVET sector and improve investment in TVET;
- iii. Establish TVET management information systems for education and training, including labour market information systems;
- iv. Introduce measures to reduce gender inequalities as well as economic and geographic discrimination in the provision of TVET;
- v. Establish sustainable financing mechanisms for TVET;

- vi. Set up a venture capital structure to support learners at the end of training and enable them to create their own jobs;
- vii. Strengthen leadership and management capacity of the TVET driven system;
- viii. Build a harmonized system of recognition/certification of skills;
- ix. Constantly monitor and track progress in the TVET delivery system and periodically apply appropriate remedies.
- x. Simplify business creation administrative procedures;
- xi. Build technology halls and business incubators.

Appropriate policies and procedures need to be developed and implemented for these goals to be achieved. A number of approaches are recommended and cover the following key policy issues:

- i. Improving the political environment and management of TVET;
- ii. Promoting the paradigm shift in TVET to foster the spirit of enterprise, initiative and innovation;
- iii. Upgrading the informal TVET sector;
- iv. Promoting skills in the areas of agriculture and rural development;
- v. Training for the green economy and emerging job markets;
- vi. Assurance of delivery quality;
- vii. Promotion of ICTs in TVET;
- viii. Enhancing relevance and employability;
- ix. Strengthening partnerships and rela-

- tionships with the private sector;
- x. Engagement with major economic, political and international players;
- xi. Promotion of higher level skills;
- xii. Diversification of funding sources and sustainable financing;
- xiii. Enhancing the image and attractiveness of TVET;
- xiv. Improving access and participation of women and vulnerable groups;
- xv. Monitoring and evaluation of TVET systems;
- xvi. Promoting research in TVET.

### **6.3.3. Role of Parliament**

As an institution in charge of monitoring government action and voting the State's budget. Parliament must be involved at all levels to require the development of national TVET plans and ensure that they receive the necessary financial resources for their implementation.

### **6.3.4. Role of the Productive Sector**

The paradigm shift goes hand in hand with that of the place and role of the productive sector for TVET. It is therefore essential that the productive sector fully play the game. It cannot remain in the role of seeing that the TVET product is unable to meet its needs without ever participating in the standard way of defining its needs.

The provisions of national plans should force the productive sector to be co-operative and become an active partner of TVET as the engine conditioning and driving the movement.

The productive sector as a whole must, through its own organization, especially in terms of chamber of trade or brotherhood, drive the process of defining the skills necessary to the economy and the development of related businesses.

It is helpful that to raise the level of basic education for the exercise of each profession related to any trade whatsoever, this definition of skills should be able to distinguish between generic skills and specific skills. The development of the related curricula will be even more relevant.

In any case, there is the possibility for big companies to determine the specific needs that they can meet for themselves and the job market, including trainings within TVET formal structures.

#### **6.3.5. Link with the National Employment Plan**

The national employment and human resource development plans- which should be developed if they do not exist- are the essential engine of any TVET mainly by institutionalizing the mapping and updating of jobs in terms of demand of the productive sector.

It should be able to determine the responsibility of trade chambers vis-à-vis the TVET system as well as the role and the need for an observatory whose purpose is to assess the demand for employment and the TVET response in order to inform policy in this area.

Consultation in the context of Public Private Partnership (PPP) between the State and the productive sector, at the national, regional and continental levels, is an essential tool in the decision.

Whatever the form, it should be established if it does not exist.

# 7. Financing

Employment, job creation and TVET should be closely linked. TVET sector financing should therefore be considered as part of the responsibility of the whole society, especially the productive sector, both public and private.

In this regard, employers should be required to contribute financially to a national training fund or any other legal mechanism to be defined to support the development of national expertise and professional standards in accordance with labour market needs.

## 7.1. Organization :

The State shall regulate the organization of the funding of the TVET system.

To have a broad support from all the stakeholders, the procedure to define this organization should be based on a large consultation with all the stakeholders.

Each one may understand the economic gain that is derived from an efficient TVET system to be fully aware of the price to pay and to accept the contribution awaited from it in order to have a system as effective as possible.

## 7.2. Stakeholders

### 7.2.1. State:

Considering its role as indicated in subparagraph 6.3.2., the State has the mechanisms which set the rule for all; it shall be the role model with regards to TVET funding mainly in this phase where it should be the major actor to overcome inertia, give impetus and speed

up the process.

### 7.2.2. Productive sector

The whole of this strategy lies on a paradigm shift, which strengthens the notion of training-job adequacy.

Just as much as the productive sector, private in particular, is invited to actively participate in the definition of its demand in terms of human resources, its role in funding the TVET system is also a key lever.

### 7.2.3. Funding bodies

Though to an extent, funding bodies may be linked to the productive sector as beneficiaries of TVET products, the specific position of this sector should be raised and maintained in minds.

It is important that funding bodies at the national, regional and continental levels make themselves available everywhere to support the whole TVET system, including communication campaigns for a paradigm shift for TVET, training of trainers and learners up to the support of learners during and after training.

## 7.3. Financial Support Mechanism

The issue of start-up funding mechanisms is a key enabler to overcome inertia and the fear of unknown risk of the young people who want to create their own jobs.

The mechanism should be built on the following basis:

- i. Establishment of a business and job

- creation support fund (SMEs, crafts, etc.);
- ii. Encouragement and support for research in the field of TVET and innovations relating thereto, including predictive and visioning research into occupations of the future;
  - iii. Financial contribution of employers to the national training fund;
  - iv. Contributions in cash or kind, to post-training support services;
  - v. Support for multiple advocacy initiatives, motivation campaigns and TVET programmes;
  - vi. Fostering of partnerships in TVET-related areas, including tripartite partnerships between TVET institution-bank-student.

# 8. Governance Tools

## 8.1. Communication

### 8.1.1. Support to the TVET policy

While it is true that the government has sovereign means of ensuring its mission to all stakeholders, a policy to attract the adherence of all will be a major asset for success. The paradigm shift of changing the sometimes contemptuous perspective of TVET cannot be imposed by decree. It must become part of the thinking pattern of the whole society through targeted messages.

The necessary valuation of TVET must go through demonstrations of its real social impact on collective and individual life in terms of socio-economic progress.

This will require a consistent communication policy that is well conceived and sustained.

It will therefore be necessary to form a specialized and fully aware press corp to support the policy.

With relevant qualified personnel, the media in turn will be required to devote time for this new TVET promotion policy.

### 8.1.2. Teaching and training tool for TVET

Apart from this role, communication should be perceived as an education and training tool. There are various instances of the use of mass media to ensure popular education and training that do not always need certificates to be granted.

For instance, we can list these missions

relating to cooking that enable those engaged in these trainings to improve their knowledge and know-how.

The AUC and its partners as well as national media are about to launch an initiative dubbed Education+ Afrique to promote this tool.

## 8.2. Implementation and monitoring Mechanism

### 8.2.1. Necessity

A monitoring tool is essential in order to have an effective approach to monitor progress and assess the challenges within a national TVET system. It will help explore relevant, empirical data, statistics and data gaps and identify the progress made in each country in relation to:

- i. the political environment and governance;
- ii. quality assurance;
- iii. relevance and employability;
- iv. assessment and validation of skills;
- v. innovation and entrepreneurship;
- vi. perception and attractiveness of TVET; and
- vii. registration rates and key statistical data on employment.

### 8.2.2. Joint Observatory with the productive sector

The establishment of an employment observatory might seem too ambitious to monitor progress made in relation to the implementation of the new strategy, but this body will contribute to the



appreciation of the efforts of actors involved and especially analysis of observable impacts from the perspective of the new paradigm and the changes caused by the innovative approaches.

### **8.2.3. Statistics – Data Collection and Management**

Statistics is a word of German origin derived from the management of the state. It just states that there is no place for good governance without this set of methods that are designed for data collection, processing and interpretation.

The establishment of the required databases is a core part of this management.

### **8.2.4. Indicators for harmonized assessment**

To harmonize the statistical data collected and render the processing and interpretation comparable, it will be necessary to determine indicators commonly accepted at the triple national, regional and continental levels.

# 9. Conclusion

This TVET strategy document provides a strategic framework for a paradigm shift in the development and implementation of national policies to address the challenges of technical and vocational education and training. The strategy addresses the cross cutting issues of governance, innovation and creativity, employability and relevance, with the main thrust being development of TVET systems that prepare young people to be job creators rather than job seekers. Implementation of the Strategy will require establishment of dynamic new or renewed TVET ecosystems embedded in the following crucial steps: below

The first step towards revitalisation of TVET will be establishment of the current status of TVET, youth employment and mapping of the elements of a TVET ecosystem, leading to identification of gaps that need to be addressed. A TVET programme will only be as good as the information on which it is based.

The strategy's call for a paradigm shift, with enhanced relevance, responsiveness and quality demands re-training and re-skilling of policy makers and technical teams responsible for TVET programming. It will therefore be necessary as a preliminary step to establish capacity building needs and organise programmes to fill them.

The process of developing relevant competence based training and assessment programmes based on national and regional aspirations requires

new approaches that have to be developed and taught. Identification of good practices will contribute to this process, to enable peer learning.

This strategy also calls for encouragement and support for research in TVET. Very little current information about TVET, including research on policy and systems, the impact of TVET on development and poverty reduction, or the relationship between TVET and national and regional labour markets, is available. There is need to strengthen TVET research within the continent to ensure availability of data and information that would promote a better understanding as well as facilitate evidence-based policy development, monitoring and evaluation. This includes Labour Market Information, as well as information on the education systems in general. TVET research will ultimately lead to identification and addressing of gaps in curriculum implementation and market linkages through capacity building programmes for key players in member states. In addition, National, Regional and Continental centres for excellence, as focal points in sharing of TVET best practices would be promoted.

A central theme within the continental TVET strategy is the strengthening of global partnerships to support skills development in the continent. The participation of key stakeholders is crucial in TVET and this strategy advocates for a structured and continuous collabora-

ration between the productive sectors, social partners, training institutions and professional associations, among other strategic partners. Such partnerships will be useful for promoting the realisation of programmes to spur development and through appropriate, responsive quality TVET ecosystems. Establishing and strengthening such partnerships may include creation of incentive mechanisms for industry and other stakeholders to establish venture funds for innovative ideas in TVET and the development of business incubation and mentoring systems. Ultimately, concrete skills that the youth need to operate successful entrepreneurial ventures will be developed.

The strategy clearly outlines that it is a mistake to consider TVET as a separate sector rather than an integral and final purpose of any education system that leads to the acquisition of knowledge and expertise relevant to society and the development of the individual.

As much as TVET skilling is through the informal sector, it will also be imperative to assess possibilities of creating mechanisms for certifying learning experiences and competences acquired through various systems of apprenticeship and training, as a first step towards raising the status and quality of informal TVET.

It will be necessary for the Member states and RECs to build corporate communication culture around TVET

systems for greater visibility, identity and impact. TVET has to be sold as the magic instrument that converts youth into experts and entrepreneurs.



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