

**Official Opening of the Ministerial Conference on  
“Providing Africa’s Youth with skills and Training for Jobs”  
Abidjan, July 22nd, 2014**

**Speech by Oley Dibba-Wadda,  
Executive Secretary, ADEA**

- Your Excellency, Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan of Côte D’Ivoire,
- Your Excellency, Minister of State, Minister of Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training, Honorable Moussa Dosso
- Your Excellencies, Honorable Ministers
- Distinguished delegates of Ministries of Labor and Vocational Training of Africa
- Distinguished technical and financial partners and experts
- Distinguished representatives of the media
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen
- Colleagues from the ADEA Family
- All Protocols respectfully observed
- Good afternoon

It is an honor and privilege for me to be speaking once again to this august gathering more so now in your presence Honorable Ministers.

Yesterday and today, discussions and consultations focused on sharing findings on the studies conducted and sharing learnings and

experiences from amongst different countries on the approaches being used to address youth unemployment.

As I listened to the discussions over the past day and a half, it became evident that there is a willingness to change the way of doing things, both from the technical experts and at the political level - this is encouraging and reassuring.

However, I observed, as deliberations were taking place, there are a couple of points that did not stand out – the absence of gender disaggregated data. In the summary of the findings, presented yesterday, there was mention of the link between education and poverty and the acknowledgement that poverty “had a female face”. Unfortunately, it did not come out clearly the extent to which a gender analysis was translated in the findings. This is taking into consideration that young women and girls feel the sting of unemployment even more sharply given that it is easier for men to get jobs than it is for women, even if they have equivalent skills and experience. Similarly, we must find ideas to ensure leadership skills are part of the training component for self-employment and motivation.

Your Excellences, we know the facts, we have the figures, the expert groups are no stranger to each other; thus we should ensure that in going forward, we move beyond the dialogue and

engage more with the youths to design and develop their road map – their future – as it will be they that will be continuing these discussions in the next five to ten years or perhaps even earlier. In addition, there must be increased engagement and consultation with the private sector.

What we need now are clear synthesis realistic action plans with milestones set elaborating how we realize the plans; who does what and by when; so that when the next Ministerial conference of this nature is being convened, it will be the youths themselves that will be presenting and sharing their success stories; we need more of the success stories shared by our inspiring youth earlier today.

I would like to take the opportunity to once again thank the government of Côte d'Ivoire for the warm welcome and hospitality. I would equally like to commend the experts for the excellent work they have provided to showcase and analyze the strategies implemented by their governments to train and provide jobs for the youth.

The work plan of the ICQN for the next years will have to be action oriented in order to arrive at concrete solutions – and this requires human and financial resources that we must commit to. Suggestions are ongoing but I feel we have the

financial resources from within our continent – what we need to do is package our ideas if we need to target the Dangotes and Mo Ibrahims – these Million dollar business are private sector oriented and thus would need to showcase returns on investment – that is a fact.

At ADEA we will continue to engage with member countries to implement real time Education and Training Systems to realize the objectives of the ADEA 2012 Triennale recommendations of “Promoting Critical Knowledge, Skills and Qualifications for Africa’s Sustainable Development“

It is only then, your Excellencies, that our youths will be able to have their potentials met complemented by “A Prosperous Africa at peace with itself” ahead of our continuum.

Thank you to you all!