Introduction

At the continental level, Agenda 2063 is a vision for an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa. Aspiration 4 of the Agenda 2063 emphasizes that “a culture of peace and tolerance shall be nurtured in Africa’s children and youth through peace education” (p.6). The quest for peace is reflected in sectoral frameworks, including the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), which calls for peace education and safeguarding education in times of emergency, and ensuring safe teaching and learning environments. The education system is one of the most powerful instruments for building sustainable peace. Through education learners can develop peaceful dispositions and mind-sets, while building conflict avoidance and management skills. Teachers must be adequately prepared to facilitate the acquisition of these skills by learners. The importance of education in achieving peace has been reiterated by the AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Education Science and Technology (EST) 2.

UNESCO-IICBA has been working with the African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with Member States and education agencies in the areas of ‘Teacher Development’ and ‘Education and Peace’.

The Sahel region has been faced with instability and issues of peace and security. In 2017, the region witnessed environmental deterioration as a result of unpredictable weather patterns, including increased drought and floods. Consequently, the region suffers from economic and social instability, which becomes the fertile breeding ground for violent extremism. If the situation
is left unattended, the resilience of these countries will further decline, leading to an increase in their vulnerability; therefore, the situation must be urgently tackled.

It is with this concern that the Government of Japan and the UNESCO-IICBA signed the “Youth Empowerment for Peace and Resilience Building and Prevention of Violent Extremism in Sahel Countries through Teacher Development” project agreement on March 6, 2018. The objectives of the project are to build peace and resilience for youth through teacher development and to create an opportunity for youth to embrace peace values and prevent violent extremisms through education and teacher development. The project targets Sahel countries, including Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, and cross border areas.

Recent conflicts, unrests and natural disasters in the target countries are severely impeding global and regional efforts to improve access to quality education while exacerbating violence and radicalizing youth. A timely and effective response to the situation is indispensable for mitigating the situation and avoiding further escalation.

UNESCO has been conducting notable work in the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) and peace-building through education field in Africa. These efforts are guided by Agenda 2063, CESA 2016-2025 as well as the Education 2030 Agenda and Framework for Action, notably Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 on Education), which calls on countries “By 2030, to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, human rights, gender equality, promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.

This project builds off of lessons learned from the “Teacher Training and Development for Peace-Building in the Horn of Africa and Surrounding Countries” project, which reached six countries, namely Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda. This project, implemented in 2017, was also supported by the Government of Japan. More than 2000 teachers were trained on transformative pedagogy for peace-building in 2017, and the goal is to reach 6000 pre- and in-service teachers by the end of May 2018.
Success and effectiveness in peace-building and conflict prevention requires strategic partnership among relevant sectors and agencies, and collaboration with the AUC. Therefore, this project involves Ministries of Education, departments of the AUC, including the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST), Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Department of Peace and Security (DPS), and Department of Social Affairs (DSA), faculties of education in universities and teacher education institutions in Sahel countries, Regional Coordination Mechanism Cluster 6 co-chaired by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), international development agencies, and Embassies of Japan in Sahel countries.

**Objectives of the workshop**

This is the first workshop that will introduce the project to key stakeholders. It will facilitate discussions that will contribute to strengthening the effective role of education and teachers in achieving global and continental aspirations of peace and security in the Sahel region, with the following objectives:

i. To sensitize the target countries on the project. The aim and focus of the project will be presented and discussed. Participants will discuss the strategies and priorities of their countries in relation to PVE and Resilience.

ii. To share experience of the peace-building project in the Horn of Africa, including challenges and lessons learned, and to provide recommendations for future projects.

iii. To develop project action for peace and resilience building and PVE in Sahel countries through teacher development. Participants will share possible areas of interventions and joint activities in relation to this project. In addition, countries will develop coordination mechanisms for resource mobilization and advocacy strategies. The coordination and advocacy will support in mobilizing stakeholders in the area of education, including national ministries, the African Union, UN agencies, development partners, and bilateral and multilateral agencies for better inter-institutional cooperation.

iv. To identify specific potential risks that might undermine implementation at country level and to devise appropriate strategies in view of its mitigation.
Participants

Total of 55 participants consist of:

- Co-organizers: AUC-HRST and UNESCO-IICBA
- Two representatives from each Ministry of Education from the following countries: Algeria, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan and Sudan
- Three participants from each of the following countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Somalia. Participants are either Ministry of Education representatives, focal persons of the project, teacher educators from teacher education colleges where the project was implemented or pre- or in-service teachers
- Focal persons from AUC HRST, DPS, DPA, and DSA
- Focal persons from UNESCO offices in Dakar, Abuja, Mali, Nairobi, Yaoundé and Rabat, and from UNESCO National Commissions of Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan
- Ambassadors of the 15 countries
- International development partners, such as UNICEF and Save the Children International
- The Embassy of Japan