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G7 Commitment Charter on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) cooperation with developing countries: empowering individuals and ensuring sustainable economic growth

Quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is fundamental to empowering young people through the knowledge and skills they need for the labour market and society at large, building on primary and secondary education, in a lifelong learning approach that maximizes productive capacities. Market-relevant TVET involves working closely with a range of stakeholders including both public and private sector employers, including through in-company work based training.

As countries face challenges for the future, including new economic and work organization models, demographic changes, climate change, environmental degradation, poor governance and institutional capacities, lack of energy access, and increasing inequalities, effective TVET represents an important driver for change, especially in developing countries, as it supports empowerment and employability of individuals, particularly for women, provided it is closely connected to the needs of labour markets and learners. By fostering availability of qualified workers, it stimulates businesses' and countries' ability to innovate, increases employability and drives progress for greater social and economic inclusion and environmental sustainability. Achieving such transformations will require broader adoption of digital innovations, including through ongoing enhancement of workers' skills (both technical and managerial).

However, more needs to be done to ensure that education at all levels increases employability and prepares all learners of all genders and all backgrounds adequately and efficiently for a fulfilling adult life. We intend to support this effort, by reinforcing quality TVET within our cooperation with developing countries, to make it attractive, relevant, accessible and empowering for all. A special focus will be put on women, as they are underrepresented globally in formal employment.

TVET is often underfinanced in national budgets in most developing countries. The international community has started to address this issue in different contexts, by reaffirming the importance of TVET as a way to build and foster the skills of the future inclusively and gender-responsively. In line with its previous work and declarations, the G7 further acknowledges the importance of inclusive, market-relevant skills development as part of countries' development, and calls for more dedicated actions to strengthen donor countries' activities and alignment within the sector as well as coordination among governments, the private sector and international stakeholders. Where they are in line with the aspirations and priorities of our developing country partners, we support the following four TVET guiding principles in our cooperation with developing countries for efficient and inclusive TVET policies:

1. Promote a demand-driven system focused on employability:

- Aim to increase the effectiveness and alignment of TVET cooperation by systematically involving the private sector in designing, implementing and financing TVET systems and enabling the mobilization of domestic resources in the TVET sector
- Strengthen both the collection and the analysis of reliable sex-disaggregated data to support monitoring of the effectiveness of TVET systems and programmes, formal and non-formal, and promote the development of effective labour market information systems;

- Promote the building of pathways for an effective transition between education and work, notably by supporting a strong foundation of literacy and numeracy and by nurturing a culture of continuous work-based learning, entrepreneurship and innovation for all, as well as running dialogue with employers to adjust to their needs, increase youth employability and upskill individuals.

2. Improve TVET governance, by supporting multi-stakeholder partnerships and better coordination:

- When asked, support the capacity building of developing country government authorities to develop stronger, better-coordinated, demand-driven and inclusive TVET systems including skills certification and licencing systems;

- Strengthen social and policy dialogue, coordination, TVET strategies and concrete national and international multi-stakeholder instruments, involving relevant government ministries and bodies together with training institutes and colleges, formal and informal private sectors, trade unions and professional bodies, local authorities and communities, all employees and trainees equally, and civil society catering to the specificities of each economic sector to allow all stakeholders to share responsibility for improving TVET;

- Promote cooperation between and capacity building of TVET teachers, where and when appropriate, through exchange with peers and sharing of knowledge, experience and best practices on an interregional basis.

3. Improve quality and efficiency:

- Consider new, innovative, sustainable investments and financial mechanisms building on national and international partnerships to provide, where appropriate: (i) quality infrastructure in-school and in-company, (ii) demand-driven programmes based on transformative and adaptable skills in line with the needs of learners, teachers and trainers, and the labour market; (iii) competent and qualified teachers and trainers at school and in companies through a modernized policy of training, providing continuous professional learning and development and enabling practitioners to build and maintain their work-floor knowledge through interaction with employers; and iv) learning pathways between academic education and TVET;

- Promote the development of flexible and diversified TVET models, reflecting the needs of employers, learners, and communities: long and short courses, initial and lifelong learning opportunities, various modes of learning including work-based apprenticeships, qualifications and validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning;

- Promote TVET in the informal economy, including through reinforcing traditional apprenticeships in small, micro and household enterprises by involving employers, developing capacities and the shared responsiveness of trainers, and enhancing the recognition of skills and qualification;

- Support the strengthening of prior learning assessment recognition systems, through the development of education and qualifications frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms, such as the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF), supported by formal dialogue between schools and employers with the purpose of encouraging harmonized, enhanced and valued professional certification.

4. Promote a gender-responsive and inclusive system, “leaving no one behind”:

- Promote TVET programmes implementing effective measures that contribute to achieving gender equality, empowering women and tackling all forms of discrimination. TVET should specifically consider women as agents of change, by equipping them with the skills they need to enter “male-dominated sectors” such as

science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related professions. Initiatives need to identify approaches that support career guidance for girls and boost women's economic success, addressing both education quality deficits and other barriers for women seeking training and employment opportunities, while raising awareness among communities, employers, mentorship programmes, training centres and authorities on the need to deconstruct stereotypes and allow everyone to choose one's career;

- Make TVET more accessible to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities or special needs, and marginalized rural, remote and displaced populations, by providing them customized support and a safe learning environment;

- Promote access to TVET for young people, especially those who have not completed a full cycle of primary and secondary education, and for workers in all age groups whose livelihood has been destroyed by environmental factors or changing economic realities.

To better coordinate on TVET strategic issues and enhance TVET's impact, we aspire to:

- Encourage the improvement of coordination mechanisms in developing countries, working towards the full participation of developing country government authorities, the private sector, training institutions and international organizations, including the African Union as a lead organization for TVET on the continent, using and promoting local coordination where there is sufficient demand;

- Reinforce regular discussions, the sharing of best practices and the principles of this charter between G7 members and TVET stakeholders by fostering expert seminars on TVET, open to any willing country and partners (sponsors, national and international agencies, global aid organizations, teachers' unions and private businesses). This could be done at the country level through local coordination groups,

- Consider supporting at the regional and international levels existing organizations and platforms including the Inter-Agency Working Group on TVET Indicators, coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), including through possible voluntary contributions; the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education in Bonn; and the UNESCO Platform of Expertise for Vocational Training (PEFOP) in Dakar, with a view to promoting knowledge-sharing and building TVET leaders', practitioners' and social partners' capacities.