

The 2nd East African Community (EAC) Regional Education Conference, 2026
From Commitments to Impact: Fostering Resilient and Future-Ready Systems for
Sustainable Development
Preliminary Communiqué

Nairobi, Kenya

August 28, 2026

1. Introduction

The East African Community (EAC) and education partners convened for the second East African Community Regional Education Conference from 25th-28th August 2026 at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference brought together Ministers and senior officials responsible for Education, East African Community Affairs, development partners, civil society organizations, academia, and other education stakeholders for peer learning and knowledge exchange on developments and transformations in education in the region, as a basis for regional integration, in line with the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA); and to agree on a collective action, two years after the inaugural conference in Arusha, Tanzania, in August 2024; and .

2. Progress and Challenges Since 2024

Keynote addresses and panel discussions in plenary and breakout sessions, informed by evidence from nearly 200 presentations across nine sub-themes, highlighted the level of responsibility in educating all children in East Africa.

RECOGNISING the significant progress made across the EAC since 2024, including efforts to increase and protect education financing and improve the equity and effectiveness of expenditure; expansion of education infrastructure; strengthened early childhood education and foundational learning; investments in school leadership and teacher recruitment, welfare and professional development; advances in inclusive education, digitalisation, and a culture of quality data use for decisions in education policy and practice; growing efforts to strengthen TVET, higher education and pathways to employment; and strengthened regional cooperation; the aspirations of Partner States to cooperate in harmonizing education and training institutions at all levels towards realization of regional integration agenda;

CONCERNED that significant challenges remain in translating commitments into equitable, measurable improvements in learning with persistent constraints such as inadequate and unpredictable financing, teacher shortages and capacity, large class sizes and infrastructure gaps,

weak transitions from education and training to employment and livelihoods, and barriers faced by children with disabilities, out-of-school children, refugees and other vulnerable children;

RECOGNISING that the potential of technology and innovation remains constrained by unequal access to devices, connectivity and digital skills, and that many promising interventions remain at pilot level without sufficient evidence or mechanisms for sustainable scaling.

The EAC region therefore faces an urgent need to strengthen implementation, accountability, and the use of data and evidence so that resources follow vulnerability and reach those facing the greatest barriers. Education systems must be made resilient to conflict, budget cuts, displacement, climate and other shocks, with progress ultimately judged by what learners actually achieve and demonstrate.

3. Priorities and Commitments

Throughout the conference, participants reaffirmed their commitment to sustainably strengthening learning across all levels of education. Discussions demonstrated a shared understanding that political will and technical evidence are consolidating across the region, and the priority now is to cascade regional and national commitments into implementation, strengthen awareness and ownership of those commitments, and translate them into measurable results.

WE, THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY, THEREFORE, COMMIT TO:

- a) Progressively increase and protect domestic education financing towards the 20% minimum benchmark, ringfencing a reasonable percentage of education budget to foundational learning; improving budget execution, efficiency and value for money; and equity. We will continue investing in collaboration as infrastructure through shared governance, distributed leadership; strengthening regional integration for greater learner and teacher mobility across Partner States.
- b) Undertake actions in the following priorities:
 - i) **Foundational Learning:** Establishing an East African Foundational Learning Initiative to support prioritization of foundational learning within every Partner State; prioritizing quality early childhood education within national education plans; closing the persistent gap between assessment data and classroom practice; integrating social-emotional learning competences into national curricula from early childhood through to TVET and higher education; scaling evidence-based approaches, including appropriate language-of-instruction approaches, particularly for children furthest

- behind, and developing a shared EAC framework for mother-tongue and bilingual transition. We further propose to establish an EAC Basic Education Council to strengthen regional coordination, peer learning and cooperation on basic education; aligning investments behind nationally-owned priorities to reduce duplication; and accelerating regional initiatives.
- ii) **Teacher Workforce and Continuous Professional Development:** Enhancing transformational school leadership and recruiting, retaining and equitably deploying qualified teachers according to need; aligning pre-service teacher education with competency-based curricula, strengthening pre-service preparation, shifting professional development toward sustained, school-based coaching, mentorship and reflective practice, using technology to scale coaching and peer learning for in-service teachers.
 - iii) **Data Systems and digitization:** Establishing an EAC Community of Practice on education data to promote cross-border research, harmonization and evidence sharing; implementing the EAC Guidelines for Harmonized Compilation of Education Statistics and ensuring interoperability between EMIS, national statistics, and learning assessments; building the analytical capacity of policymakers and educators to translate data into classroom action, strengthening the use of disaggregated evidence to identify children being left behind and inform policy, resource allocation and classroom practice; establishing and/or strengthening national AI governance frameworks, with clear ethical, and accountability standards, addressing inequalities.
 - iv) **Inclusive Education and Equity:** Strengthening systems and local capacity to identify vulnerable children and learners early, support their engagement and re-engagement in appropriate learning pathways, and connect them to complementary services needed to sustain their participation and learning;
 - v) **TVET and School-to-Work Transition:** Designing TVET on youth's non-linear pathways between formal employment, informal work and enterprise, treating wage employment and entrepreneurship as equally legitimate pathways; aligning TVET with both formal and informal market needs and expanding structured post-training mentorship; and extending structural and financial support to keep marginalized young people in skilling pipelines.

4. Moving Forward

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF the East African Community Secretariat, with support from development partners, civil society organisations, academia, and educators, we collectively affirm our intent to turn these commitments into scalable actions with impact for regional integration.

In doing so, we commit to strengthening regional cooperation in sharing evidence, experiences, and what works, while recognizing the value of adapting successful reforms to each country's own context, resources, and institutional capacity.

The EAC Secretariat will lead the monitoring of progress against these commitments through an accountability framework comprising a set of measurable regional and country-owned priorities and targets towards 2028, with clear responsibilities and milestones and regional peer review through existing EAC mechanisms.

To strengthen ownership and implementation at all levels, Partner States will disseminate and cascade the Conference commitments from national to subnational and community levels. We affirm our commitment and willingness to collaborate in organising the 3rd Regional Education Conference in 2028 to review progress and identify any new priorities.

Through this united effort, we aim to transform education in East Africa into a resilient, future-ready system in which every child can learn.

We thank the Government of the Republic of Uganda for graciously accepting to host the 3rd East African Community Regional Education Conference in 2028 in Uganda.