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NOTE

Subject: Progress Report on EU-SA Education and Training Dialogue
- South Africa-EU Joint Cooperation Council, 26 November 2014

Whereby the European Union and the Republic of South Africa recall the long-standing context of their cooperation in education and training and the 17 May 2012 Joint Declaration between the European Union and the Republic of South Africa on enhanced cooperation in the fields of education and training.

The European Union and the Republic of South Africa acknowledge the crucial contribution of education and training to the development of knowledge-based societies and economies and the key role they play in boosting growth and jobs. They also recognise the importance of education and training for the personal development of their citizens and social cohesion in their societies.

Both sides consider that enhancing co-operation and dialogue on education and training is instrumental to improve mutual understanding and to strengthen their respective position with regard to the challenges they face in an ever-globalising knowledge-based society and economy.

In this context, the first Senior Officials Meeting between the European Commission and the South African Department for Higher Education and Training was held on 4 November 2013 in Brussels, alongside a workshop on the internationalisation of higher education on 5-6 November 2013. A second Senior Officials Meeting was held on 30 July 2014 in Cape Town and a third one is scheduled for 23 September 2015 in Brussels, alongside a seminar on teacher and lecturer professionalism.

Over the above period, officials have shared information on the Rethinking Education Strategy of the European Commission, South Africa's White Paper on Post-School Education and Training, which aims to create a responsive system that addresses broader societal and developmental objectives by expanding access, improving quality, increasing diversity and creating opportunities for workplace-based learning, discussed how to address youth that are not in employment or education in South Africa and how the EU is addressing youth employment, learning and skills.

Officials have reflected on a range of additional issues including the EU's U-Multirank, the joint Study on TVET College Lecturer Education, the two current Employment dialogues: New Skills for New Jobs and Skills Planning, the South African proposal on the development of an Internationalisation strategy for Higher Education and the Next Generation of Academics Programme, the priorities for capacity building under Erasmus+ and developments in Open and Distance Learning in both the EU and South Africa.

Officials also agreed on the importance of assessing the potential impact of higher education, and in particular of scholarships, beyond the individual to his/her wider household and community and to see how efforts can be mobilized to increase the positive returns of such opportunities on the more socio-economically disadvantaged population. This aspect will be looked in to when assessing the results of the South African Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Tracer Study and will also be considered during the Evaluation of the EU Development Cooperation Support to Higher Education in Partner Countries 2007-2014 currently due to begin.

All activities agreed upon in the rolling workplan for 2013, 2014 and 2015 are progressing to plan:

- demand driven dialogue on the Internationalisation of South African Higher Education currently being contracted by the Dialogue Facility;
- annual reviews of South African participation in EU instruments for higher education (Erasmus+, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, EIT and U-Multirank) carried out;
- joint study on college lecturer training in the EU and in South Africa starting in December;
- workshop on VET due to take place on 23-24 March 2015 in Pretoria;

- seminar on teacher and lecturer professionalism scheduled for 24-25 September 2015 in Brussels;
- joint study on the articulation and dynamics between higher education, VET, research and industry in the EU and in South Africa included in 2015 studies planning and to be contracted in January 2015.

A joint study and seminar for 2016 will be identified at the 3rd Senior Officials Meeting and the following possible topics for dialogue in 2015 and 2016 have already been identified:

1. Practice and provisioning of equity and social inclusion, including disability;
2. Internationalisation of higher education, including credit accumulation and transfer between systems;
3. Cost sharing and performance-based funding for higher education
4. Ranking of higher education institutions
5. European experiences in the training of academics

The complementarity of this policy dialogue is pursued with actions falling under the 'Education, Training and Innovation' sector from the 2014-2020 Multi-Annual Indicative Programme, as illustrated by the Teaching and Learning Development programme (Annual Action Plan 2014) and the Erasmus+ programme.

Senior officials recognise that this sectoral policy dialogue is very fruitful and look forward to continuing this partnership.