



## ***Senior African Policy Makers Reaffirm the Critical Role of Human Capital for Development in Africa***

At a Senior Policy Seminar held in Nairobi, Kenya on 29-30 March 2023, and hosted by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) focusing on the theme, “Human Capital Development in Africa,” senior policy makers from around the African continent adopted a declaration as an affirmation of their strong commitment to supporting human capital development for enhanced transformation of African economies.

### **Declaration**

Nairobi, March 30, 2023

We African Senior Policy Makers assembled at the AERC Senior Policy Seminar,

***Affirming*** that human capital—the education, skills, culture, gender and health of a people is crucial for development in African countries and — plays a pivotal role in the transformation of African economies,

***Recognizing*** that sub-Saharan Africa scores the lowest of all the world’s regions on the World Bank’s Human Capital Index, a measurement of how well countries invest in the next generation of workers,

***Further recognizing*** that there is improved households access to health care, school enrolment and amenities and tools to enhance quality of life, however, the goal of human capital and quality of life still lags significantly behind,

***Commending*** that even though access to sources of human capital in Africa is still low, it has increased significantly over the past two decades,

***Noting*** that human capital development is critical for building sustainable, resilient, and inclusive growth in Africa, and that investment in human beings for improved social and economic outcomes in future – through quality education, health care nutrition, jobs and skills – is vital to ending extreme poverty and creating more inclusive societies,

***Further noting*** that developing human capital in Africa requires a massive and coordinated effort to strengthen the quantity, efficiency, and impact of investments

in people. Thus, the need to facilitate regional and country-owned policy reforms, action plans and cross-country learning,

***Mindful*** of the reality of key constraints on human capital accumulation, such as weak public financial management (PFM) and service delivery systems (SDM),

***Also mindful*** of the need to address policy reforms that would enable Africa's young people to grow up with optimal health and equipped with the right skills to compete in the digital global economy,

***Appreciating*** the urgent need for human capital development policy reforms and institutional innovation to overcome these obstacles, with an emphasis on stronger implementation,

***Acknowledging*** the importance of tackling problems related to human capital development and how to improve the capability of the continent and its policy makers to confront human capital development challenges, and leverage the opportunities they present, as it confronts its development challenges,

## **Recommendations**

1. ***Affirm*** that assisting policy makers and other actors to improve generation and management of knowledge on Africa's human capital so as to address key constraints on human capital accumulation, and respond effectively to these challenges,
2. ***Commend*** the critical role of African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and its partner institutions, in capacity building for promoting evidence-based policies as well as generating the knowledge basis for decision making on such key economic policy issues as human capital,
3. ***Take note*** of the multiple overlapping global crises – including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change-induced natural disasters, and regional armed conflicts, which have underscored the need to protect and bolster human capital in the overarching effort to save lives, promote well-being, and safeguard future productivity,
4. ***Confirm*** to the leveraging of technology and innovations in projects to further develop human capital as well as support policy reforms to overcome legal and regulatory constraints,
5. ***Further Confirm*** to undertake consultations within our own Governments, both national and sub-national, to explore the scope for advancing research to strengthen the knowledge base and the demand side of human capital,

6. *Call for* renewed efforts towards the implementation of the Abidjan Declaration of July 15, 2021, that established three priorities for Africa: (i) human capital improvement, (ii) job creation through private sector development policies, and (iii) economic recovery.