

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### Launching the End of Learning Poverty for All in Africa (ELPAF) Campaign in Namibia “Read, Write and Count. #FoundationForLife”



The African Union Commission (AUC), in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Namibia and UNICEF, officially launched the “End Learning Poverty for All in Africa (ELPAF)” campaign on July 31, 2025. The campaign launch took place during the third and final day of a high-level continental conference focused on accelerating foundational learning outcomes across Africa.

Held under the framework of the African Union Year of Education 2024, ELPAF aims to eliminate learning poverty in Africa by 2035. The campaign calls for national action plans, high-level policy commitment, increased domestic financing, and adoption of proven, scalable interventions that improve foundational literacy and numeracy, particularly for children under the age of 10.

The launch event in Namibia was graced by H.E. Dr. Elijah Ngurare, Prime Minister; Hon. Sanet Steenkamp, Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture; senior government officials; representatives of UNICEF; development partners; civil society; and education experts.

In a speech delivered by the Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Elijah Ngurare, on behalf of H.E. Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the President of the Republic of Namibia the Minister uttered that

this was not just the beginning of the campaign in Namibia but a reaffirmation of the nation's belief in the dignity and potential of every child. Her Excellency also highlighted Namibia's strong budget commitment with over 23% of the national budget and 9% of GDP allocated to education. She also thanked the African Union for leading in placing foundational learning at the heart of the continental agenda. Her Excellency further emphasized that ending learning poverty is possible if the political will is matched by action across all levels of society.

Hon. Sanet Steenkamp, Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sport, Arts and Culture emphasized the government's strong commitment to transforming education, particularly foundational literacy and numeracy. The minister also called for collective accountability, equitable budgeting, inclusive practices and community engagement. "Today's event is about those children, its about ensuring that ones boundaries are ones future," She said.

In her address, Mrs. Sophia Ashipala, Head of the Education Division at the African Union Commission, lauded Namibia's leadership and swift adoption of the ELPAF initiative. She reaffirmed the African Union's unwavering commitment to supporting Member States in addressing the urgent learning crisis, promoting inclusive and equitable education systems, and advancing the vision of a continent where every child can read, write, and count by the age of ten. Mrs. Ashipala acknowledged the commendable progress made across Africa toward improving foundational learning outcomes. However, she emphasized the urgency of action, noting that recent data indicates 90% of ten-year-olds in Sub-Saharan Africa are still unable to read and understand a simple text or solve basic mathematical problems, underscoring the critical need for targeted national interventions and sustained political will.

The ELPAF launch highlighted the importance of prioritizing foundational learning within education sector planning and national budget frameworks. Stakeholders emphasized the role of cross-sectoral collaboration and community engagement in ensuring that education reforms are not only implemented but sustained over time.

UNICEF reaffirmed its strong collaboration with the AU and national governments in co-implementing the campaign.

As the fourth country to launch the ELPAF, Namibia is setting a precedent for other Member States. The national campaign reflects a unified call to action—to scale up evidence-based teaching methods, strengthen early childhood education, enhance teacher training, and ensure that foundational learning outcomes are tracked and improved.

The launch concluded with a commitment to report on progress through national and regional platforms and to align ELPAF efforts with national development strategies and the broader goals of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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