



## **International Youth Day 2019: WANEP stands for inclusive and equitable quality education for all in a peaceful environment**

International Youth Day was designated by the United Nations on the 12 August of each year as a special day to celebrate contributions of young people worldwide to bring about change and sustainable development.



It equally offers avenue to raise awareness and draw attention of stakeholders on the challenges young women and men encounter and suggests recommendations to address them. The 2019 theme **“Transforming Education”**, sits well with WANEP’s Peace education program and the ECOWAS Protocol on Education and Training, as well as the Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.



As we commemorate the 2019 International Youth Day, WANEP seeks to bring attention to the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Over the past two decades, the West African sub region witnessed major violent conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and recent violent extremism attacks in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria. This resulted in massive movements of people into refugee camps or internally displaced settlements. According to the UNHCR, in 2018, the number of IDP population increased from 1.9 million to nearly 2.5 million. In addition to the internally displaced persons, the West Africa sub region hosted about 326,000 refugees.

WANEP notes with concern that the refugees and IDPs have no access to equitable education and other life changing skills. It is worrisome that only 50% of children in refugee population access primary education and only 22% of adolescents access secondary level with very low percentage of girls, according to a recent UNHCR report. In majority of refugee and IDPs camps, there is inadequate infrastructure to respond to special need of learners, including children and young people with disabilities as a consequence of the violent conflicts they experienced, which tends to affect learning outcomes and opportunities for personal development.

While acknowledging efforts being made by states and development agencies in the region on promoting quality education for all, WANEP remains concerned about the level of responsiveness witnessed in seeking to address the urgent needs of refugees and IDPs who are entitled to quality and inclusive education. WANEP recognizes the role of education as a 'development multiplier' for sustainable development and urges all stakeholders to re-think and transform our educational systems taking into consideration the specific needs and voices of youth trapped in refugee and internally displaced persons camps.

WANEP further notes that while the quest for quality and inclusive education has been at the heart of global and regional debates, the main challenge however lies in how to combine knowledge, skills and attitudes and academic study with practical application towards societal transformation. In this regard, WANEP recommends a wholistic approach and strategy in order

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