



Embargoed until 24 August 2018, 20:00

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

African Girls Can Code Initiative Launched.

80 girls from 34 African countries attend the first coding camp in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

24 August 2018: Addis Ababa. The African Union Commission (AUC), UN Women Ethiopia, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) launched the African Girls Can CODE Initiative (AGCCI). The project will run from 2018-2022, and has benefited from the generous financial support from the government of Denmark for its first year of implementation

The project is designed to expose and equip young girls with digital literacy, coding and personal development skills. The four-year programme will train young girls to become programmers, creators and designers, placing them on track to take up educations and careers in ICT and coding.

The initiative uses a “spark interest” approach, which seeks to nurture young girls to develop interest in coding and making at early stages of their career choices.

Upon completion of the program, the participants are equipped with adequate knowledge and essential skills that would make them competent to forge careers in ICT. It will also equip each one with the know-how to be enterprising and gain financial security.

In her remarks, representing the African Union Commission, Commissioner of Social Affairs H.E. Amira El Fadil stated that according to ITU’s estimate, 45% of women across the continent of Africa do not have access to the internet. She continued to say the divide further entrenches gender inequality and denies women and girls full empowerment. Further, she expressed her belief that this initiative will be a gateway for women and girls to advance in the field of ICT and related fields and contribute to the growth of Africa as a continent.

In her video message, UN Women Executive Director, Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, said, *“as girls who code, and I hope will remain in the sector and make a difference, we also would like you to think about how technology and the coding that you will be associated with over time is solving the big problems of the 21st century”*.

“It is very important to increase the number of girls who are participating in the fourth industrial revolution”, the Executive Director added, “If we do not have enough women in that space, we will not get the variety of the solutions that are needed by women and girls. So, we are sending you out to the frontline to conquer. Use the technology to conquer the world and to make it better”.





“ITU is delighted to be part of this Initiative which further adds to our ongoing efforts to help bridge the gender digital divide in Africa and equip young women with digital skills which will connect them to a wide range of education and employment opportunities,” says Houlin Zhao, ITU Secretary-General.

“By teaching coding and other digital skills to young women, this Initiative is not only an opportunity that could help reduce youth unemployment but is also a means towards achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and accelerating the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals,” says Brahim Sanou, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau.

“It shows that our common determination to create better opportunities for girls and young women can deliver very concrete results for more than 1000 enthusiastic girls from across Africa. It is our hope that the determination and creativity shown by these young girls present here today will inspire other young girls to obtain skills within ICT – to the benefit of economic growth in Africa.” Says Sune Krogstrup, Deputy Head of Mission of the Royal Danish Embassy.

Over the four years, the initiative will target young girls across Africa who will be exposed to ICT and coding through the education system where these issues have been integrated in the countries' national curricula. The Coding Camps specifically will target 1,000 young girls aged 17-20 from all African Union Member States and 800 girls from Ethiopia.

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With the Generous support from the Government of Denmark



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