



# CAFOR Concept Note

## Supporting the African Union's Agenda 2063 for a United, Peaceful, and Prosperous Africa

### Introduction

The Coalition on Media and Education for Development Africa Forum (CAFOR) is committed to advancing the African Union's Agenda 2063 – Africa's blueprint and master plan for inclusive and sustainable development. This concept note outlines how CAFOR's mission and activities align fully with **Agenda 2063's vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens,"** while maintaining a strictly non-political stance.

In partnership with the African Union (AU) and its member states, CAFOR supports the collective **Pan-African vision of unity, peace, and prosperity** – commonly referred to as *"The Africa We Want"*. We emphasize education, innovation, cultural identity, and good governance as key pillars of development, in line with Agenda 2063, without advocating any partisan political agenda. Notably, our focus is on practical contributions to Africa's development within the framework agreed upon by AU Member States.

As the only Pan-African civil society coalition that has had a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Union, CAFOR is uniquely positioned to support Agenda 2063's implementation in a collaborative and apolitical manner.

## Aligning with Agenda 2063: *The Africa We Want*

**Agenda 2063** is the African Union's long-term development framework that envisions transformative outcomes for the continent by the year 2063. It encapsulates aspirations for a **united, peaceful, and prosperous Africa** grounded in inclusive growth and sustainable development. CAFOR fully embraces these aspirations and works to advance them through its programs and advocacy. In particular, CAFOR's objectives resonate with several key **Agenda 2063 Aspirations**:

- **An Integrated and United Africa:** Agenda 2063 calls for an *"integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism"* (Aspiration 2). While political integration is an AU-led process, CAFOR contributes by fostering unity among African stakeholders in education and development. Our cross-border initiatives bring together experts, youth, and educators from across the continent, reinforcing a sense of pan-African solidarity and cooperation. **Importantly, CAFOR's approach to unity is non-political** – we support cooperation and policy harmonization in education and communication, without venturing into debates on political federation or currency union. This ensures our stance remains aligned with the AU consensus and focused on development outcomes rather than political structures.
- **A Peaceful and Secure Africa:** Peace is a prerequisite for educational and socio-economic development. In line with Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 (which envisions a continent free of conflict), CAFOR's work indirectly contributes to peace by promoting education and youth empowerment – powerful tools for addressing the root causes of conflict, such as inequality, unemployment, and lack of opportunity. By advocating for inclusive, quality education and media that foster understanding among communities, we help nurture a culture of peace and tolerance. We echo the AU's belief that a **peaceful Africa** goes hand-in-hand with an educated and enlightened citizenry. Our programs stress values of dialogue, mutual respect, and conflict prevention at community levels, complementing broader AU peace initiatives
- **A Prosperous Africa Based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development:** Agenda 2063 prioritizes human capital development as fundamental to Africa's prosperity (Aspiration 1). CAFOR contributes to this by focusing on **education and skills development**, ensuring that Africa's large youth population gains the knowledge and competencies needed for the jobs of the future. By 2030, young Africans are expected to make up 42% of the world's youth, and Africa today has over **400 million young people aged 15–35**. Harnessing this demographic dividend is critical for inclusive growth. CAFOR's projects – implemented in collaboration with governments and partners – aim to **"catalyze an education and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation"**, as called for in Agenda 2063. Through advocacy and capacity-building, we support educational reforms that equip youth (especially girls and other marginalized groups) with employable skills, digital literacy, and entrepreneurial know-how. A well-educated, innovative workforce will drive **sustainable economic growth** across African economies, reducing poverty and creating a more prosperous society in line with Agenda 2063 goals.
- **An Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, and Respect for Human Rights:** CAFOR firmly upholds Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063, which envisions *"an Africa of good governance,*

*democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law*". We believe that good governance is not only a political ideal but also a practical necessity for effective development programs. Accordingly, CAFOR promotes **transparent, accountable governance** both in the education sector and within our own institution. We work with educational authorities to encourage policies that uphold accountability – such as transparent budgeting for education, anti-corruption measures in school management, and inclusive decision-making that involves youth and civil society. Internally, CAFOR strives to model good governance by adhering to high standards of ethics, financial transparency, and democratic processes in our leadership (as detailed in the *Institutional Reorganization* section below). This dual commitment reinforces the rule of law and strong institutions, echoing Agenda 2063's call for "*capable institutions and transformative leadership at all levels*". By integrating good governance principles into development work, we help build trust with stakeholders and ensure sustainable impact of our initiatives.

- **An Africa with a Strong Cultural Identity, Common Heritage, and Shared Values:** CAFOR recognizes the power of culture and information in development. In alignment with Aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063 – "*An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics*" – we incorporate Africa's rich cultural heritage into our educational and communication programs. CAFOR supports content creation and curricula that celebrate African history, languages, and values, thereby strengthening learners' sense of identity and pride. For example, we encourage the use of local African languages in education and media, and promote arts, music, and storytelling as channels for youth expression. By leveraging traditional and modern media, we amplify African voices and success stories, contributing to a continental narrative of renaissance and unity. This cultural approach reinforces Agenda 2063's emphasis on an African Renaissance where development is accompanied by the preservation of our heritage and the promotion of pan-African values. It also helps **foster social cohesion and mutual understanding**, which are crucial for unity and peace.

In all these areas, **CAFOR's alignment with Agenda 2063 is deliberate and by design**. Our strategies are informed by key AU frameworks such as the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016–2025) and the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024), which operationalize Agenda 2063 in the fields of education and innovation. By ensuring our objectives reinforce these continental strategies, we maximize our contribution to the "*Africa We Want*" while avoiding duplication and working synergistically with the African Union and other stakeholders. CAFOR's close collaboration with the African Union – under our MoU, the AU Commission has hosted and facilitated our work – ensures that our programs complement AU initiatives like the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** (which will benefit from an educated workforce) and the **African Youth Charter** (which aligns with our youth empowerment focus). Our non-political, development-centered stance means that **we operate as an extension of Africa's collective development agenda**, rallying media, education experts, and civil society to accelerate progress on Agenda 2063's targets without venturing into political controversies. This approach has garnered CAFOR recognition as a valuable partner in continental development efforts.

## Non-Political and Pan-African Approach

CAFOR's work is inherently pan-African, but we maintain a neutral, non-political stance in all activities. This means that while we passionately support African unity and integration, we **do so through the lens of development and education**. Our coalition's mandate is to improve education systems, empower youth, and enhance communications for development endeavors that require broad support across political lines.

We acknowledge that **Agenda 2063 itself respects national sovereignty while seeking greater unity** – for instance, it speaks of accelerating integration through mechanisms like the AfCFTA and free movement of people. CAFOR aligns with this ethos: we support policies that enhance cooperation (such as mutual recognition of qualifications or collaborative educational standards) without venturing into sovereign matters best left to the AU and its Member States. Our focus on education financing involves advocating increased investment and better management of resources for schools.

By **deliberately excluding politically charged issues** from our agenda, CAFOR creates a platform where all stakeholders – governments, civil society, educators, youth, and international partners – can come together without apprehension. This non-partisan stance bolsters our credibility. African governments see us as collaborators in achieving agreed development goals, not as critics of political arrangements. Civil society and media actors trust that we champion the people's interests (quality education, youth opportunities, cultural dignity) without hidden political motives. International organizations and donors appreciate that CAFOR's work complements the AU Agenda 2063, which all African countries have adopted, ensuring that their support to CAFOR reinforces a **continentally endorsed plan**.

In summary, **CAFOR's Pan-Africanism is one of cooperation and shared goals**. We believe this approach is the most constructive way to contribute to Agenda 2063. It allows us to focus on the substantive issues that matter to everyday Africans – schools, jobs, innovation, culture, governance – while aligning with the African Union's development vision. Our communications carefully reflect this neutral tone: for example, in our publications and outreach, we emphasize “the Africa we want” in terms of socio-economic outcomes, not governmental structures. We celebrate Africa's diversity and unity of purpose. By staying in our lane as a development-focused coalition, CAFOR is able to work **hand-in-hand with the African Union and national authorities** to achieve tangible results, free of political controversy. This non-political, inclusive ethos is at the core of CAFOR's identity and success. It ensures that all African stakeholders can see themselves in our mission and join us in the journey towards Agenda 2063's fulfilment.

## Advancing Education, Innovation, Cultural Identity, and Good Governance

CAFOR's programs and initiatives are structured around four key pillars – **Education, Innovation, Cultural Identity, and Good Governance** – which directly support the aspirations of Agenda 2063. Below we outline our focus in each area and how it contributes to Africa's development:

- **Education and Skills Development:** Education is at the heart of CAFOR’s mission. We work to **improve access, relevance, and quality of education** across Africa, with special attention to youth skills development. In partnership with ministries of education and international agencies, CAFOR supports curriculum reforms, teacher training, and community-based education programs that equip young people with the competencies needed in the modern labor market. Our emphasis is on **technical and vocational education, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), and digital literacy**, aligning with Agenda 2063’s call for a skills revolution. We also champion educational inclusion – advocating for girls’ education, education in conflict-affected areas, and lifelong learning opportunities for out-of-school youth. By fostering “*well-educated citizens*” and promoting 21st-century skills, CAFOR contributes to building the human capital required for Africa’s industrialization and knowledge economy. Ultimately, better education underpins progress in all other areas: it reduces poverty, spurs innovation, improves health outcomes, and enables informed civic participation. Our educational initiatives thus serve as a foundation for achieving many Agenda 2063 goals, from eradicating poverty to creating jobs and improving governance.
- **Innovation and Youth Empowerment:** With Africa’s youth population booming, CAFOR places strong emphasis on **innovation and entrepreneurship among young people**. We nurture innovation through support for ICT in education, digital platforms, and media that provide learning and entrepreneurial resources to youth. CAFOR’s flagship programs include hackathons for social innovation, youth mentorship networks, and collaborations with universities to encourage research and development relevant to African communities. This focus reflects the Agenda 2063 priority of leveraging *science, technology and innovation (STI)* to drive development. We understand that Africa’s youth are brimming with creativity and enterprise; given the right skills and opportunities, they can create homegrown solutions in fields like agriculture, renewable energy, healthcare, and finance. CAFOR thus works to connect youth with training in emerging technologies (such as coding, AI, and robotics), and with startup incubation programs in partnership with the private sector and other development partners. Additionally, we use **media and communication campaigns to amplify youth voices** and success stories, inspiring peers and informing policymakers. Empowering youth is not only about jobs – it also means involving young people in governance and decision-making. Through workshops and forums, CAFOR helps youth engage with leaders to shape policies (especially in education and ICT) that affect their future. By investing in youth and innovation, we answer Agenda 2063’s call for “*an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth*”. We are helping to unlock the demographic dividend by turning Africa’s youth bulge into a generation of innovators, leaders, and entrepreneurs who will secure the continent’s prosperity and global competitiveness.
- **Cultural Identity and African Heritage:** CAFOR recognizes culture as a powerful driver of unity and development. Our coalition includes media professionals, artists, and educators who work to **strengthen African cultural identity and pride** through content and curricula. We support the production of educational media (TV, radio, online content) that celebrates African history, indigenous knowledge, and languages. For instance, CAFOR has

backed radio programs that teach literacy in local languages and highlight local role models, and we would collaborate with initiatives like the AU's **African Languages Week** and cultural festivals. By embedding culture in education, we ensure that development does not come at the cost of eroding our rich heritage. This approach is in direct support of *Agenda 2063's Aspiration 5*, which envisions African people who are **confident in their identity, culture, and values**. We also promote **pan-African solidarity** by showcasing the shared heritage and common values across different African communities – for example, through exchange programs that allow students and teachers to learn from other countries' cultural practices and through pan-African debates and essay competitions on topics of African unity. Another aspect of our cultural focus is ethics and values education. CAFOR works with educators to integrate lessons on **African values such as ubuntu (unity and mutual caring)**, integrity, and respect for elders and nature, into school programs. These values align with Agenda 2063's emphasis on ethics and are crucial for fostering responsible citizenship. Moreover, by valuing our own culture, Africa can present a more unified and positive image to the world. CAFOR's cultural initiatives thus contribute to both societal cohesion at home and the projection of a **strong African identity globally** – reinforcing the idea of Africa as the **cradle of humanity and a vibrant center of civilization**. In preserving culture while embracing modernity, Africa can truly achieve the renaissance that Agenda 2063 envisions.

- **Good Governance and Accountability:** Good governance is not only a political goal but also a practical necessity for development programs to succeed. CAFOR advances good governance in two main ways: **advocating governance reforms in the education and media sectors**, and **practicing exemplary governance internally**. Externally, we work with governments to improve policy **coordination, transparency, and accountability** in education. For example, CAFOR has advocated for better data systems to track education outcomes (so policies are evidence-based), greater community involvement in school management (to increase accountability), and robust monitoring of education budgets (to ensure funds reach schools and are used effectively). We also encourage **freedom of expression and press freedom** in alignment with good governance, since a free media is essential for holding institutions accountable and educating the public. Our support for community radio and journalism training on development issues helps strengthen the media's capacity to report on governance issues in education, such as misuse of funds or inequalities in service delivery. All these efforts support the broader Agenda 2063 objective of **entrenching a culture of good governance, rule of law, and human rights**. Internally, CAFOR has taken significant steps to ensure our own governance structures are sound (as detailed in the next section on reorganization). We have clear accountability mechanisms, with regular and envisaged planned audits once we become fully operational in financial terms, and transparent decision-making processes that involve our members. By doing so, we build trust with our stakeholders and demonstrate the same *"transformed leadership"* and *"capable institutions"* that Agenda 2063 calls for at national and continental levels. We view our internal governance not just as management best practice, but as part of our mission – to set an example of the change we wish to see in Africa. In sum, through both outward advocacy and inward practice, CAFOR contributes to the strengthening of governance and institutions, which is foundational for all of Agenda 2063's aspirations (because without good governance, investments in education or innovation cannot reach their full impact).

These four focus areas are **interconnected and mutually reinforcing**. For instance, culturally relevant education improves learning outcomes; educated youth drive innovation; innovative solutions (like tech platforms) can improve governance transparency; and good governance in turn allocates more resources to education and culture. CAFOR's holistic approach ensures that progress in one domain supports progress in the others, creating a virtuous cycle. By advancing education, innovation, cultural identity, and governance together, we help build the *integral development* that Agenda 2063 envisages – development that is not just economic, but also social, cultural, and institutional. Our concept of success is an Africa where **young people are well-educated innovators who cherish their heritage and participate in accountable governance**. Every CAFOR initiative is designed to bring Africa closer to that reality. We measure our impact not only in numbers (such as training sessions held or policies influenced) but in how attitudes and systems change: Are more girls finishing secondary school? Are youth-led startups emerging? Do Africans see their cultures positively in the media? Are education officials more responsive to the needs of their communities? These are the kinds of questions we ask, in line with Agenda 2063's people-centered approach. As we move forward, CAFOR will continue to refine and expand its programs under these four pillars, guided by the evolving needs of African societies and the periodic evaluations of Agenda 2063's goals.

## Leadership and Institutional Reorganization

Under the leadership of **Dr. Lawalley Cole**, CAFOR has recently undertaken major governance reforms to strengthen the organization and better serve its mission. This section highlights Dr. Cole's profile as a visionary leader and details the institutional changes – including the dissolution of the Executive Board and the invitation to new global leaders to join – that are positioning CAFOR for greater impact and alignment with good governance principles.

### Executive Leadership: Dr. Lawalley Cole

**Dr. Lawalley Cole** is the Executive Director of CAFOR, bringing decades of experience and expertise to the helm of the coalition. Dr. Cole is an education and development specialist with **over 30 years of progressively responsible experience in teaching, policy formulation, program design and evaluation, and communication for development**. His career spans multiple African countries and international organizations. Notably, Dr. Cole served for 15 years as Chief of Education for UNICEF in various African countries, where he led educational initiatives in The Gambia, Mali, Zambia, and Burundi. He also spent a decade with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) at the African Development Bank, coordinating communication strategies for education across the continent, working first from Benin Republic, then Tunisia and later Ethiopia. Through these roles, he has acquired deep insight into Africa's educational challenges and successes, as well as a vast network of policymakers, educators, and development partners.

Dr. Cole is currently based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the African Union Commission headquarters, which underscores his close engagement with continental policy frameworks. He regularly contributes to high-level debates on African development and is a passionate advocate for quality education, youth empowerment, and the use of media for social change. As a thought leader, he has written and spoken extensively on how to leverage

communication to improve education outcomes, reflecting CAFOR's core mandate. His leadership style emphasizes partnership, innovation, and results – values that permeate CAFOR's culture. Within the organization, Dr. Cole is known for fostering a spirit of **collaboration and shared ownership**, empowering team members and member organizations to take initiative (consistent with CAFOR's philosophy that "leadership becomes a shared activity" and "accountability shifts to both individual and collective," as stated in our founding principles. Under his guidance, CAFOR has expanded its partnerships, including strengthening ties with the AU and UNESCO, and has launched impactful projects on digital learning, youth entrepreneurship, and girls' education.

Dr. Lawalley Cole's leadership is instrumental in ensuring that CAFOR remains **vision-driven yet pragmatic**. He has been a steady champion of aligning CAFOR's work with Agenda 2063 and other global agendas (such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals), thereby keeping the coalition relevant and responsive to Africa's policy environment. His credibility and relationships with key stakeholders (governments, international agencies, academia, and civil society) have opened doors for CAFOR to influence policy and mobilize resources. Furthermore, Dr. Cole's commitment to good governance and transparency set the tone for the recent institutional reforms. It is under his recommendation and stewardship that CAFOR undertook a critical review of its governance structure to ensure it meets the highest standards and is fit for purpose in the coming years. In summary, **Dr. Lawalley Cole's profile as an educator, communicator, and leader of Pan-African development initiatives brings invaluable leadership to CAFOR**. His vision of a well-educated, empowered African youth driving the continent's development is directly in line with Agenda 2063, and he has been pivotal in steering CAFOR to be a key player in realizing that vision.

### **Governance Renewal: Dissolution of Executive Board and New Leadership Invitations**

In early 2025, CAFOR initiated a significant institutional reorganization aimed at rejuvenating its governance and expanding its reach. The most notable step in this process was the **dissolution of CAFOR's Executive Board** in accordance with our constitution and governance policies. As of April 1, 2025, the Executive Board of CAFOR has been formally dissolved, following the expiration of its mandate, *"in line with the stipulations outlined in our Constitution"*. According to Article 14.5 and 14.6 of the CAFOR Constitution, board members serve a three-year term, renewable once. The previous Board was constituted in January 2018 and saw its term end in January 2021. However, no formal re-election took place at that time, and the Board had continued to function on an interim basis. To uphold principles of **organizational transparency, good governance, and legal compliance**, the decision was made (in consultation with CAFOR's general membership and legal advisors) to consider the Board's term lapsed and formally dissolve the body. This move, while procedurally necessary, was also strategic: it allows CAFOR to refresh its leadership structure and bring in new energy and expertise at the governance level.

The dissolution of the Executive Board was handled with the utmost respect for the contributions of the outgoing board members. A public announcement from Dr. Lawalley Cole **expressed deep gratitude to all former Board members** for their invaluable service and guidance, which helped shape CAFOR during its formative years. Their pioneering work laid



the foundation for CAFOR's current successes. Building on that foundation, CAFOR is now entering "a period of transition and renewal" with an eye to the future. We view this transition as an opportunity to strengthen our governance in line with best practices and the evolving needs of the organization. As Dr. Cole noted in his message, *"this decision reflects the need to rejuvenate the leadership of our organization, ensure accountability, and set CAFOR firmly on the path to becoming a leading Pan-African platform for youth empowerment, education, media, and development communication"*. In other words, refreshing the Board is not just a formality – it is a catalyst for CAFOR's evolution into a more dynamic and impactful entity, fully equipped to champion the causes of education and development communication across Africa.

Following the Board dissolution, CAFOR has outlined a clear path forward for **constituting a new Executive Board** and broadening its leadership circle. We are currently in the process of **renegotiating and renewing our Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union** to reaffirm our partnership and align on new priorities. Once this renewed agreement with the AU is finalized (anticipated in the coming weeks), CAFOR will initiate **"a transparent and inclusive process to constitute a new Executive Board that reflects the diversity, energy, and expertise required to move CAFOR into the next phase of its development"**. This means the new Board will be carefully selected to include a wide range of stakeholders and skill sets: education experts, media professionals, youth representatives, development partners, private sector innovators, and respected community leaders, both from within Africa and among the diaspora and global supporters of Africa's development. By ensuring diversity in terms of regional representation, gender, age, and professional background, we aim to create a governance body that truly mirrors the multifaceted nature of Africa and the interdisciplinary scope of CAFOR's work. The process for Board selection will involve consultations with our members and partners, an open call for nominations, and a vetting committee to recommend candidates, thereby guaranteeing transparency and meritocracy.

As part of this governance renewal, **CAFOR is extending an invitation to new global leaders to join the organization in advisory and leadership roles**. We recognize that to tackle Africa's education and development communication challenges, we can benefit from the wisdom and support of leaders from around the world who share our vision. These may include distinguished African statespersons and educators, leaders of international development agencies, philanthropists investing in African education, tech industry visionaries with a passion for youth empowerment, and advocates from the African diaspora. By inviting such figures to be part of CAFOR's next chapter – whether as members of the new Executive Board, honorary patrons, or strategic advisors – we seek to infuse the organization with fresh perspectives and open doors to new partnerships. Several globally renowned figures have already been informally approached to gauge their interest in supporting CAFOR's mission, and the response has been very encouraging. This *"invitation to global leaders"* aligns with CAFOR's philosophy of coalition-building: just as we unite grassroots organizations to have a bigger impact, we also unite thought leaders and influencers to amplify our voice and resource base.

The institutional reorganization also involves updates to our internal policies to solidify good governance. For example, CAFOR is revising its bylaws to clarify roles and responsibilities in the absence of a sitting Board (during this interim period, an **Interim Management Team**

under Dr. Cole is overseeing operations, accountable to the general assembly of members). We are also strengthening mechanisms for member participation so that the coalition remains member-driven even as we bring in external leaders. Once the new Executive Board is in place, we will institute regular board rotations and performance reviews to avoid lapses in leadership continuity as happened with the previous board's extended tenure. In addition, CAFOR is enhancing its **accountability and transparency** through measures such as publishing annual impact reports, financial statements, and independent audit summaries for public review. These steps ensure that as we grow in stature and attract high-profile partners, we also maintain the trust of our stakeholders and the public by operating with integrity.

In summary, **CAFOR's institutional reorganization is a proactive measure to reinforce our commitment to good governance and to inject new dynamism into the organization.** The dissolution of the outdated Executive Board, though a bold step, exemplifies our willingness to self-correct and align our governance with our values. By welcoming new global and African leaders into our fold, we are preparing CAFOR for a more prominent role on the international stage – as a thought leader, convener, and implementer in the fields of education and development communication. These changes come at a pivotal time: Africa's Agenda 2063 is entering a decisive implementation phase, and the world is looking to support Africa's youth and educational transformation (as seen in global initiatives around digital learning and skills for employment). **CAFOR's renewed leadership structure will ensure we can seize these opportunities, build expansive partnerships, and effectively champion the cause of empowering Africa's next generation.** Dr. Cole and the interim leadership are confident that this transition, once completed, will mark the beginning of a new era for CAFOR – one characterized by enhanced collaboration, innovation, and impact across Africa.

## Conclusion and Way Forward

As Africa collectively marches towards the achievement of **Agenda 2063's goals**, CAFOR stands resolutely as a dedicated partner in this journey. This concept note has delineated how CAFOR's vision, programs, and recent organizational reforms are all oriented towards supporting *"The Africa We Want"* – an Africa that is **united, peaceful, and prosperous, enriched by educated youth, vibrant innovations, proud cultural identity, and accountable governance.** Maintaining a non-political stance and aligning closely with the African Union's frameworks ensures that our efforts reinforce continental unity and development, without division or controversy. Our commitment is to serve as a catalyst and facilitator: we bring together stakeholders from the media, education sector, civil society, and government to accelerate the changes our continent needs, whether it's improving a rural school, amplifying a youth entrepreneur's idea, or sharing best practices across borders.

Going forward, **CAFOR's strategy is to operationalize the ideals presented in this concept note into tangible actions and partnerships.** In the immediate term, this means finalizing the formation of a new, high-caliber Executive Board and leadership team, drawn from Africa's finest minds and supportive global champions. With this renewed leadership, we will develop a *CAFOR Strategic Plan (2025–2030)* that sets specific targets for how our four focus pillars (Education, Innovation, Culture, Governance) can contribute to the second Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 (which runs until 2033). We will align our programs with key milestones – for example, the **AU's Year of Education 2024** initiative and the **second**

**decade of CESA (2026-2035)** – to ensure our work amplifies continental campaigns and adds value where gaps exist. Our MoU with the African Union will remain a cornerstone, facilitating joint initiatives and co-hosting events that rally even more support for education and youth development in Africa.

**Partnerships** will be crucial in moving forward. We will strengthen collaborations with regional bodies (such as ECOWAS, SADC, etc. in their education and youth programs) and with international partners (UN agencies, bilateral donors, international NGOs) to pool resources and expertise. In particular, CAFOR seeks to act as a bridge between the African Union and grassroots civil society across member states – translating high-level agendas like 2063 into community-level action and feedback, and vice versa. To do this effectively, we will embark on a membership drive across all 55 African Union member states, aiming to establish active CAFOR chapters or focal points that can localize our mission. The concept of **“Education for Development”** needs to permeate from continental policy rooms to the classrooms and radio stations in each village; CAFOR is the vehicle to drive that, through our communication networks and member organizations. By expanding our presence, we also strengthen Africa’s voice in telling its own development story, which aligns with Agenda 2063’s narrative of Africa taking charge of its destiny.

Another forward-looking element is **monitoring and evaluation**. In alignment with Agenda 2063’s results-oriented approach, CAFOR will enhance its M&E systems to track our contribution to specific targets (for instance, increases in youth vocational training enrollment, or number of education reforms influenced by our advocacy). We will periodically publish **progress reports with data and success stories**, contributing to the overall monitoring of Agenda 2063. This transparency will help us learn and adapt, and also demonstrate to our donors and partners the impact of their investments. We see ourselves playing a role in knowledge-sharing as well – documenting best practices in using media for education, or in engaging youth in policy, and disseminating these findings across Africa for replication.

Importantly, **CAFOR’s renewed commitment to good governance internally will be sustained**. The principles of accountability, inclusivity, and rule of law that we champion externally will guide our internal management at every step. The new Executive Board, once convened, will operate under strict conflict-of-interest policies and performance benchmarks. Our finances will continue to be managed prudently, and we will seek diverse funding sources to ensure sustainability and independence (including AU support, grants, and innovative financing like social impact bonds for education projects). By modelling the governance we wish to see, we enhance our legitimacy to advise others.

In conclusion, CAFOR envisions itself as **a driving force in Africa’s pursuit of the Agenda 2063 aspirations**, working hand in hand with the African Union, member states, and communities. We will continue to focus on what we do best – *leveraging communication and partnership to bolster education and development* – and avoid politicization or mission drift. The Africa of 2063 that we dream of is one where **every child is in school and learning skills for the future, where young innovators are solving local problems with global technology, where our rich cultures are celebrated worldwide, and where institutions are responsive and accountable to the people**. This concept note reaffirms that CAFOR’s purpose is to support that dream, turning it step by step into reality. We invite all stakeholders – from government ministers to

village teachers, from business leaders to youth activists, from African elders to international friends – to join us in this noble endeavor. With a clear vision, renewed leadership, and unwavering dedication, **CAFOR is poised to significantly contribute to “*The Africa We Want*”**. Together, let us advance towards 2063 with hope, determination, and collective action, ensuring that Africa’s future generations inherit a continent that is united, peaceful, and thriving.