

**SMASE AFRICA MOUNTS THE 16<sup>TH</sup> REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION IN AFRICA  
(COMSTEDA 16) HELD IN BOTSWANA**

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The 16<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Mathematics, Science & Technology Education in Africa (COMSTEDA 16) was hosted by SMASE-Africa in partnership with the Ministry of Basic Education, Botswana from November 5-9, 2018 in Maun, Botswana focusing on the theme; *Teacher Professional Development in Africa: Knowledge, Skills and Values in STEM Learning Environments*. (INSET: Prof. Jill Adler (centre), the keynote speaker during a plenary session). COMSTEDA 16 provided a forum for educators to interrogate issues, share ideas, practices and challenges relating to teaching and learning Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in respective countries with a view to improve the quality of education. The conference brought together educators, policy makers, researchers, teachers, NGOs, both public and private sector and learners.



The conference presentations were guided by five thematic strands as follows:

Teacher Professional Development in Africa; Developing Knowledge, skills and values in STEM learning/teaching engagements; STEM Curriculum Development, Implementation and Assessment - From Theory to Innovations; The School Culture and Learning in the STEM areas; The role of professional associations in the STEM Teaching and Learning environments and The use of ICT towards STEM teaching and learning.

A total of 103 abstracts were reviewed and approved for presentation in the conference. The presenters were drawn from different institutions and organizations such as; Human Resources Development Council (HRDC), Botswana Examination Council (BEC), Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN), Mel Pole College of Education (MCE), Serowe College of Education (SCE) and University of Botswana (UB).

Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) demonstrated a lesson with two Primary Schools and Mr. Goitsemodimo Mmusi, a teacher demonstrated a lesson with a school from Maun. More than 160 education practitioners attended the conference as follows: Botswana thirty five, Zambia – thirty one, The Gambia - one, Uganda - two, Kenya – six and

UNESCO-IICBA - one. The conference was a multiple track meeting with parallel plenary sessions. The parallel sessions were organized according to thematic strands. Workshops were also conducted to provide In-depth training and learning experiences.

The conference was officially opened by Hon. Bagalatia Arone, the Minister of Basic Education – Botswana. He encouraged the participants to share experiences to enable them effectively teach STEM related subjects. He reiterated that quality of an education system is dependent on quality of its teachers and the success of Africa will be reflected in its own education system. “Although Africa faces financial challenges to fund STEM related activities in schools, it is vital to devise means of reaching out and not lagging behind through improvisations,” said the Minister. He acknowledged the importance of COMSTEDA as a platform that helps Africa rise up to the growing economic challenges that can be eliminated through STEM Education.



**Minister of Basic Education, Hon. Bagalatia Arone addressing participants during the opening ceremony of the 16<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference on Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (COMSTEDA 16) held in Botswana**

The President of SMASE - Africa; Mr. Benson Banda in his opening remarks emphasized on the importance of promoting STEM education in Africa by strengthening country level interventions and policies that support best practices.



**Mr. Benson Banda, President SMASE-Africa addressing participants during the opening ceremony**

Mr. Stephen Njoroge, the Executive Secretary SMASE-Africa encouraged the teachers to be innovative and pointed out that school leadership should look for ways to prioritize resource mobilization and utilization so that the youth can enjoy learning STEM subjects. “Leadership should create an inviting school climate, attractive extra-curricular activities, reward innovations, facilitate implementation of incubator projects, mentorship programs and also embed contextualized scientific knowledge and culture”.



**Mr. Stephen Njoroge,  
Executive Secretary, SMASE-Africa giving his  
opening remarks**



A number of organizations and schools were able to showcase their innovations during the conference.



*Students showcasing their innovations at COMSTEDA 16*



*Participants displaying their initiatives at the exhibition booth*

SMASE Africa is in the process of publishing research papers presented during COMSTEDA 16. The upcoming **COMSTEDA 17** will be held in **November 2019** in **Maputo, Mozambique** and prospective paper presenters are encouraged to submit their research papers for review and inclusion in COMSTEDA 17 Journal edition once the call for papers is announced.