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Sustainable Development
in LDCs
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> Introduction

The objective of this paper is to present education for all (EFA) in the context of the internationally agreed strategy aimed at achieving the international development goal of reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by at least one half by 2015. This is in line with the Draft Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. More specifically, it represents UNESCO's, UNICEF's and other partners' contribution to the objective of poverty reduction and sustainable development by highlighting the role of EFA in this regard, with particular attention to least developed countries (LDCs).

The paper mainly relies on the diverse declarations and recommendations made during conferences organized by UNESCO and other United Nation's bodies during the 1990s, which can be regarded as the decade of educational reflections, reforms and strategies, starting with the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990), which put basic education for all on educational and political agendas, the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg, 1997), the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 1998), the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education (Seoul, 1999) and the World Conference on Science (Budapest, 1999), and culminating in 2000 with the World Education Forum (Dakar), which requested all Member States to develop or strengthen existing national plans of action by 2002 at the latest with a view to achieving basic education for all by the year 2015. The EFA 2000 Assessment, the most in-depth evaluation of basic education during the past decade, constitutes an additional input to this paper.

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> Chapter I

THE STATUS OF EFA IN LDCs

Within the framework of the Draft Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, Commitment 3, “*Building Human and Institutional Capacities*”, has fixed three goals and targets that directly concern education. These goals and targets are in line with the Dakar Framework for Action.

- 1) Ensuring free, compulsory and universal primary education for both girls and boys by 2015; ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children living in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- 2) Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- 3) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Goal 1: Ensuring universal primary education by 2015

At the end of the 1990s, in the least developed countries as a whole, the number of out-of-school children was estimated at some 44 million.

The great disparities between all these countries are immediately apparent. The difficulties inherent in achieving the objective are, therefore, not identical for each of them. The LDCs can be classified into four groups.

Thirteen countries had net school enrolment rates below 40 per cent in 1998: Afghanistan, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Somalia and Sudan (**Group 1**). This group of countries alone accounts for more than half of the out-of-school children and includes only one-fifth of children in school.

Eleven countries had net enrolment rates between 40 and 60 per cent: Bhutan, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen (**Group 2**). This group accounts for about one-quarter of out-of-school children and one-fifth of those in school.

Thirteen countries had net school enrolment rates between 60 and 80 per cent: Benin, Cambodia, the Comoros, Haiti, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Rwanda and Togo (**Group 3**). This is the most heterogeneous group from a geographical standpoint as it includes one Caribbean country, one country from the Pacific, four from Asia and seven from Africa, including one Arab State. This group accounts for close to one-eighth of out-of-school children and one-quarter of children who attend school.

Finally, ten countries had net school enrolment rates higher than 80 per cent: Bangladesh, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Maldives, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zambia (**Group 4**). This group accounts for around one-eighth of out-of-school children and one-third of children in school.

In order for these countries to provide schooling for all the primary school-age population, the number of children enrolled in primary school must more than double (be multiplied by 2.2) and rise from 64 million to approximately 140 million. It is clear that the efforts **Group 1** countries must accomplish are in no way comparable to those of countries in **Group 4**, some of which are in fact on the brink of attaining the desired goal.

These efforts have to be situated in their specific demographic contexts in order to increase school enrolment. Until 2015, all the least developed countries will experience an increase in the numbers of their school-age population. Globally, however, the annual growth rate of the school-age population between 2000 and 2010 will be the same as in the period 1990-2010 (2.1 per cent). Demographic growth will slow down slightly between 2010 and 2015 (1.7 per cent annual growth rate). This will lead to a one-third increase in numbers of the school-age population between 2000 and 2015. The increase in school enrolment should, therefore, be more rapid than demographic growth, at least until 2015.

Countries in **Group 1** need to increase their net enrolment rates by more than 65 percentage points (median value for this group), i.e. 4 percentage points per year. This is quite considerable given that in this group, the greatest increase between 1990 and 1998 was 18 percentage points (i.e. slightly more than 2 percentage points per year) and that rates have decreased in three countries. The number of children attending primary school would have to be increased fourfold and, in some countries, more than fivefold. In the eight years between 1990 and 1998, the total enrolment for this group increased by only an average 250,000 pupils per year and it would have to rise by more than 2 million each year to attain the goal. This gives some measure of the magnitude of this endeavour for these countries.

Countries in **Group 2** would have to increase their net enrolment rates by nearly 47 percentage points (approximately 3 percentage points per year), whereas the maximum increase between 1990 and 1998 was 17 percentage points (around 2 percentage points per year) and three countries have experienced large decreases. Enrolment would have to be multiplied by around 2.6 and increase yearly by 2.3 times more than during the the period 1990-1998.

For countries in **Group 3**, the median value of the necessary increase in school net enrolment rates will be 30 percentage points (i.e. approximately 1.8 percentage points per year). Four countries succeeded in doing better than that between 1990 and 1998. Total enrolments would need to increase by around 46 per cent by 2015. These countries will have to maintain a sustained pace of growth to achieve the target.

Group 4 requires an increase of around 11 percentage points in net enrolment rates. Six countries have done much better in the period 1990-1998. Total enrolments will need to increase by approximately 40 per cent, except in one country where a very high demographic growth will call for an increase of 90 per cent in enrolments to achieve the target. Provided that an adequate pace in growth in school enrolment is maintained, these countries should be able to meet the target.

In the light of evolution of school enrolment in recent years, the magnitude of the effort demanded of these countries to attain the goal of universal primary education, particularly those in Groups 1 and 2, will surpass anything they have experienced in the past.

Considerable additional resources will be needed to attain these objectives. Needs go far beyond current public sector capacities. There was almost no observed increase in these countries in public current expenditure on primary education as a percentage of gross national product (GNP) during the period 1990-1998 (see World Education Forum, *Education for All 2000 Assessment, Statistical Document*, p. 38). In addition, most of them are very heavily indebted. One possible solution would be to propose financing these activities by securing resources coming from operations linked to debt reduction. This is an enormous challenge, and one that requires extensive mobilization and effective action of all those intervening in the development of education systems.

Goal 2: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015

Data on literacy are less readily available than on school enrolment. However, estimates for thirty-four countries (Annex 1) show great diversities from one country to another: literacy rates vary between 15.9 and 96.3 per cent with a median of 49 per cent. An increase of 50 per cent between 2000 and 2015 would therefore correspond to about 25 percentage points in fifteen years.

Similarly, to attain gender equality for literacy is an ambitious goal. In all developing countries, illiterate women tend to outnumber illiterate men. There were ten literate men for every eight literate women in 1998. This proportion did not change between 1990 and 1998. If the women-men gap has narrowed in countries where literacy rates have increased significantly, very little advance has been made in regions where the majority of the LDCs are to be found: South Asia and Africa.

Globally, illiteracy projections foresee only a very slow decrease in the number of illiterates (880 million in 2000 and 830 million in 2010). Consequently, this objective will require considerable means for its achievement.

Goal 3: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015

Of the thirty-four countries for which statistics by gender were available in 1998, 20.6 per cent had a gender parity index (calculated on respective net enrolment ratios) below 0.7 per cent. This means that for every ten boys in school, there are also at least seven girls. All such countries were in Africa (see the table in Annex 2). A parity index equal to 1 indicates that there are as many girls in school as boys (1 to 1 ratio).

Some 15 per cent had a parity index between 0.7 and 0.8 (for every ten boys in school, there were fewer than eight girls); 20.6 per cent had a parity index of 0.8 to 0.9 or 0.9 to 1; and 23.5 per cent had an index higher than 1. In these latter countries, there were often more girls attending school than boys.

The EFA 2000 Assessment brought to light the fact that between 1990 and 1998 there was a quite rapid evolution of the parity index in South and West Asia and in the Arab States (growth of 0.07 and of 0.1 points respectively). However, in sub-Saharan Africa, this index had decreased by 0.02 point (*Education for All 2000 Assessment, Statistical Document*, p. 33).

Countries with an index below 0.8 will face a major challenge to reach parity by 2005. Countries whose index is between 0.8 and 0.9 will also have to make a considerable effort. Other countries should be in a better position to attain or maintain parity. In some of these, where more girls attend school than boys, boys' enrolment will have to be closely monitored to maintain this parity.

> Chapter II

PROSPECTS AND STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING EFA IN LDCs

The present chapter reviews briefly some key challenges and opportunities of globalization in relation to EFA, followed by an assessment of the role of EFA in building human and productive capacities and empowering people in LDCs.

Opportunities and challenges of globalization

Social and economic impact

The process of globalization continues to pose difficulties and raise challenges at economic, technological, socio-cultural and political levels, while at the same time – although less acknowledged – providing new opportunities for development. So far, the economic and technological aspects of globalization have been negative for LDCs, which at the onset of this new decade are still finding themselves excluded from the benefits of economic growth, and of technological production and knowledge. Various structural constraints impede access to and participation in the world economy. However, LDCs also lack the human resources with the necessary and updated knowledge and skills to cope with economic transformation, and to engage effectively in the areas of world trade, finance and investment. The changing, unstable, intangible and informal nature of work is requiring education systems to train a work force to be flexible, innovative and capable of adapting to change. In a parallel way, the ability of many LDCs to pursue EFA has been severely hampered by heavy debt burdens, which have had the effect of reducing the proportion of GNP spent on education and other sectors of social development. Although aid for education is on the agenda of the international donor community, it is mainly directed to formal primary schooling and managerial reform, and there is not yet sufficient recognition of the benefits of non-formal basic education in addressing the needs of the poor in LDCs, and supporting them in facing new production and entrepreneurial challenges.

While the growth of science and technology networks, and specifically information and communication technologies (ICTs), has also increased the vulnerability of LDCs, it has at the same time opened up new and important avenues for rethinking education systems, specifically non-formal methods of delivery. The major challenge that ICTs are bringing to education is the gaps they are creating between those who have access to them and those who do not. In addition, education systems are faced with the challenge of addressing the content of the information received and, more importantly, of furthering critical thought to filter it. ICTs present education systems with the challenge of laying the

foundations for democracy within an information society. Furthermore, the cost-related and infrastructure-related problems encountered by LDCs in introducing new technologies are tending to disappear. The development of ICTs is offering new prospects for development by breaking down isolation and furthering communication between people across the globe. ICTs are also opening up opportunities to rethink the role of education as a process that extends throughout life and that contributes to personal fulfilment and human development.

The globalization of economic and technological activity is gaining ground in other fields, touching on political and socio-cultural dimensions. One of the most visible phenomena of the past decade, is the shrinking of the centralizing powers of the state and its role as welfare provider. The need for the state to find a new role for itself between the strong and contradictory ties of decentralization/privatization and internationalization, is creating heavy burdens for LDCs in view of their economic and technological vulnerability. The retreat of the state from the provision of social services, not matched by adequate policy and legal frameworks to guarantee access and quality to the poor and marginalized populations, has enormous repercussions for socio-economic development. The field of education is characterized by a weakened regulatory system, lack of know-how in policy formulation and implementation in this regard, frail institutional capacity, and ineffective and fragmented use of resources.

The need to rethink a new role for the state to meet the challenges of globalization is accompanied by a need to rethink new forms of democracy and humanism in a world where tensions are not only growing between nations, but also within nations. The universalization of human rights issues represents a step forward towards democratization. But the poor capacity of LDCs to deal with the erosion of cultural distinctiveness and identity as a result of the propagation of a “world culture” and the manipulation of knowledge through ICTs, creates tensions between “the local and the global”, and encourages withdrawals into closed communities and rejections of “the other”. This represents a major challenge for education in LDCs, which will have to address the need to empower people to override inward-looking tendencies and to engage in dialogue with others, while asserting their difference and identity; to keep up with scientific progress, without turning their backs on the past; to understand their situation, to adopt critical approaches and to engage in positive action. In short, they must participate in reinventing or revitalizing the forms of democratic citizenship and humanism needed to redress the negative effects of globalization.

On the other hand, decentralization and innovation are providing LDCs with opportunities to address the bottlenecks in educational and social reforms. A significant effect of economic and technological globalization is the growing drive and capacity of citizens to become “agents of change”, to be more autonomous, reflective and critical, to act and to create, and to make better decisions relevant to themselves and to their everyday life. This phenomenon is not only observed in the countries of the North; but also increasingly so in the South. Indeed, the need to rely now on the human potential and creativity of LDCs is now widely and internationally acknowledged.

The past decade has indeed witnessed a concrete, though slow and difficult, shift in development orientations, from models based on economic productivity and growth, to initiatives pushing for human development – enhancing the quality of human lives – and for social and cultural production. Education for economic purposes is now gradually furthered within frameworks of education for human development. There is a growing recognition that human development is a key to addressing poverty and social exclusion. One of the basic orientations in the Draft Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries in the Decade 2001-2010 is the balance between economic and non-economic, or social, objectives of development. However this remains a major challenge for the present decade and the role of EFA in this regard will be crucial.

Content and values in education

In order to face the challenges created by globalization it is necessary to reflect on the kind of education needed to allow people in LDCs to participate in today's global society and utilize the opportunities of globalization, rather than being marginalized or left out entirely.

It is now widely recognized that education contributes significantly to development and the quality of people's lives. It provides people with the skills necessary to realize their potential and ensure their participation in the life of their community. But what kind of education gives the proper tools to empower individuals? Basic education is often limited to technical skills such as literacy and numeracy skills. These are very important skills, but are they sufficient?

The Dakar Framework for Action emphasized that the quality of education should be improved, and that a more holistic approach is needed in education for all. This entails improvements not simply in literacy and numeracy, but more importantly in relation to essential life skills. Furthermore, it states that everyone has the “human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be”. It is to be an “education geared to tapping each individual's talent and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.” The Dakar Framework for Action has placed the importance on teaching basic skills or life skills that go beyond those of a purely technical nature.

This set of skills needs to be defined, clarified and tailored to each culture or environment. “The learning to know, to do, to live together and to be” implies the teaching of fundamental values at the foundation of human conduct and interaction. Respect, mutual trust, justice, equality, and faith in the community and in others, the understanding of the importance of ethical conduct – these basic values form the building blocks of a well-functioning society in which individuals can develop their full potential and contribute to their society. This is education in its fullest sense – instilling principles

and values that can guide the judgment, conduct and interaction of human beings. This is what builds social capital, allowing people to interact effectively, creating effective institutions and organizations, promoting participation and empowerment.

The aim of education is to teach individuals to think – independently and critically. The teaching of values, which must integrate cultural diversity, should not simply be an exercise in repetition and memorizing of formulae. Rather, it must foster independent reflection on concepts and values, such as equality, justice and respect. One of the most important values, that of responsibility towards oneself and others, must be inspired by and integrated into the life and conduct of the learned. Such teaching requires a philosophical approach. Philosophy can be seen here as a method rather than a subject; it should permeate every aspect of education, spurring the individual to ask questions and search for their own answers. These are “life skills”, building the capacity for each human being to live in the most meaningful way. Education in LDCs should not be treated merely as a means to an end, but equally as an end in itself. It is not a tool for prosperity, but constitutes a value in and of itself, through its ability to open horizons in the minds of people. This type of education requires a focus on the substance and content of what is being taught, through curriculum revision and development. Hence one of the tasks must be to define “life skills” in basic education, in response to the Dakar Framework for Action, and putting it into concrete terms for a plan of action.

The issue of content in education is not sufficiently addressed. The biggest challenge for education in LDCs is to find solutions to the ambiguities in the substance of what is being taught, taking into account the complex dialectic of cultural diversity and universality. How is it possible, for example, to balance the respect for cultural identity, while at the same time instilling universal values of human rights and gender equality? How can we find ways to integrate the learning of local language while at the same time emphasizing the necessity to learn other languages useful in the global community? How do we overcome the difficulty in designing effective policies for the prevention of diseases if the prevention methods clash with local and regional values? These questions cannot be overlooked.

Perhaps the first step is to reconcile the conception of cultural diversity with that of universality. The question is not whether one should teach either cultural values or universal values, teach either the local language or the global language: it should not be whether to teach preventive education against disease or to respect regional values and traditions. The world community must go beyond the either/or binary conceptualization of the ontology and the methodology of education and become capable of envisaging a holistic approach that can englobe both regional values and universal values. But this takes time and effort, and is a far more difficult task than constructing a technical skills education strategy. What is necessary is an ethical approach to education, an ethics of education, if need be, that integrates respect for otherness and the resolution to look for solutions. In this endeavour it is crucial for all stakeholders, especially donor countries, to constantly be aware that, as the philosopher Thomas Nagel says, there is no such thing as a “view from nowhere”; there is no such thing as a “neutral” or “objective” perspective or point of view. This engagement or subjectivity is what creates the richness of the human

condition. Perhaps this is the starting point in the effort to search for ways to define life skills in respect to the content and values in education for LDCs.

The role of EFA in promoting human, social and political development and in sustaining economic growth

Educators around the world are now recognizing that a broader and more qualitative vision of education needs to be strongly promoted in order to enhance human development, to further social and economic progress, and to enable people to play a more active social and economic role in LDCs. The crucial role of EFA in building human and productive capacities and empowering people in LDCs, particularly the poor among them, has been highlighted in the exposition of the four pillars of education: “learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be”.¹ These four pillars break down the traditional distinction between initial and continuing education and between the diverse fields and sectors of education. They underline lifelong learning as necessary in the contemporary globalizing and knowledge-rich world where individuals, throughout their lives and in different places, must learn to accumulate knowledge and aptitudes, to adapt to the requirements of the world of work, to understand and tolerate others, and to develop their personality and potential, their critical faculty and their ability to act.

Although the following two sections are divided between the role of non-formal basic education in building human capacities, and that of technical and vocational education (TVE) and higher education in building productive capacities, these fields should be viewed within an integrated lifelong learning approach that should guide future educational strategies and policies in LDCs. It should also be underlined that the formal basic education system naturally remains crucial to the overall provision of education for all in LDCs. Key issues in this respect are presented in the document entitled *Deliverables* and in the *Dakar Framework for Action*. This paper argues however, that LDCs may consider paying considerably more attention to non-formal education as one way of improving the overall effectiveness, relevance and, ultimately, the efficiency of the basic education system.

Building human capacities: non-formal basic education

Part of the broadened vision of education is the recognition that non-formal and out-of-school basic education² is a necessary and integral component of EFA and complement to formal education systems, and that it should be continuously upgraded and accredited for equal certification with the formal education system, in relation to both content and method. Non-formal basic education has an important role to play in providing learning opportunities for all and in building human capacities in LDCs. Its strength is embedded in the specific socio-economic, cultural, linguistic and environmental

¹ *Learning the Treasure Within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century.* J. Delors et al., Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 1996.

² Basic education involves three elements: basic knowledge (literacy); fundamental, technical and life skills; and social skills (pertaining to the social and political responsibilities of citizens).

context in which learning occurs. It has the flexibility of responding to immediate needs and realities, tapping into the potential of individuals and furthering a better utilization of available resources. It creates opportunities to equip learners for a pro-active lifestyle, for critical reflection, for the articulation of new ideas and forms of action, for dealing with obstacles and inequalities and for actively producing change (“learning to know”). The potential of ICTs as a tool for the delivery of non-formal basic education is strong.

Non-formal basic education has thus a specific importance for LDCs in that it reaches out to the excluded, disadvantaged and vulnerable population groups which are denied learning opportunities, and in that it builds human capacities among them. It is often the only possible learning opportunity for them and as such should be integrated within a development framework that addresses poverty eradication and social development.

According to *Learning: The Treasure Within*, non-formal basic education is “the passport to life”, a value by itself, a means to human empowerment. It should be differentiated from traditional non-formal education, such as literacy, which is often presented exclusively as a technical skill and linked to occupational tasks, to productivity and to income-generation. This type of education recognizes human beings as assets in and for themselves, and not in their capacity to perform economic functions. In this regard, educational policies in LDCs need to be rethought beyond economic functionality, and integrate, as indicated earlier, issues related to the content and quality of education and values lying at the core of human conduct.

In this sense, non-formal basic education touches on two issues of particular importance in building human capacities in LDCs: women’s empowerment, and democratic citizenship. It is by now widely recognized that removing gender discrimination in basic education constitutes a non-negligible and enabling factor for socio-economic and political development, and for genuine participation in social, economic and political life. During the past decade, various international conferences organized by UNESCO and other bodies have led to a deeper reflection on the interconnections between women’s education and empowerment. Basic education for women’s empowerment entails a range of socio-cultural competencies and tools beyond the narrow concepts of reading and writing skills. It involves the furthering of women’s awareness and understanding of their conditions and causes of subordination, the building of their self-confidence and self-esteem, the development of their capacities to access resources, to set their own agenda, to communicate and negotiate, to lead and organize for challenging oppression and changing conditions. Basic education for women’s empowerment (“learning to be”) goes to the root of addressing poverty in LDCs.

Although the number of literate men and women in the world is increasing, most illiterates are found in LDCs and in their poor areas. Literacy projects continue to be very limited in number and often fail to recognize the specificity of the conditions of the poor. The relevance of literacy for other sectors besides education, such as health, agriculture and community development, is neglected. The fact that non-formal education is usually

under the jurisdiction of ministries other than ministries of education reinforces parallel systems with little interaction and resource sharing. Instructors or facilitators in the non-formal sector have no institutional linkages with the teachers of the formal sector, they are not exposed to formal training and they are not recognized by official authorities. On the other hand, the rich experiences they have accumulated do not reach the formal sector. Although policy-makers at large have adopted the concept of gender equality in basic education, this support has not moved women's education from the satisfaction of basic needs and training for employment to the development of critical awareness and empowerment.

Nevertheless the past decade saw remarkable endeavours in LDCs in the field of non-formal basic education which, though modest, can be regarded as significant models for further planning. Early childhood and adolescent education have gradually opened up to programmes directed to the family and the community, and to more qualified and innovative training and teaching. Community schools have provided out-of-school children with access to safe and gender-sensitive learning environments, involving parents and village members, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in planning and management. Alternative "learning centres" have reached out to the entire community (children, adolescents and illiterate adults) through holistic, participatory and learner-centred educational approaches, promoting inter-generational literacy and training activities. They have combined livelihood programmes and income generation activities with educational contents to increase autonomy and self-esteem, to develop individual and organizational skills, to overcome social and cultural barriers, and to facilitate participation in the design, development and evaluation of educational programmes. These "learning and earning" educational projects, for the most part targeting illiterate adolescent girls and women living in highly traditional, marginalised and impoverished communities, have demonstrated successes in addressing the difficult social context in which learners live and in which work constitutes a fundamental part of cultural and social development.

Although NGOs are facing enormous challenges in improving their institutional and technical capabilities, in increasing their understanding of national and global dynamics, and in strengthening their networking mechanisms; they have particularly distinguished themselves by their efforts in non-formal basic education. They have increasingly gained the attention and consideration of decision-makers, especially with regard to questions of quality. They are demonstrating capacities in assessing and articulating people's needs and in tailoring projects to these needs, in involving and enabling local communities, and in fostering creativity and self-help, in mobilizing resources, in improving the relevance of education through innovative and flexible approaches, in creating learner-friendly contexts, and in instigating an appreciation of gender equality and a commitment to its support and enhancement. In addition, NGOs are demonstrating increasing potential in formulating policy issues and influencing policy reforms.

Building productive capacities: technical and vocational education and higher education

Technical and vocational education (TVE) and higher education represent major entry points for training and for preparation for the world of work, essentially “learning to do”. While economic growth can no longer be viewed as the only way of achieving socio-economic and human development, this should not lead the LDCs to disregard the forces driving competitiveness, specifically because they need to enter the world of science and technology, with all that this implies in terms of modernization. Production and productivity must be dissociated from the drive of productivism, which is a one-dimensional approach to economic competitiveness. “Learning to do”, specifically for LDCs, is intrinsically linked to the three other pillars of education, within a continuum of personal, social and occupational skills, combining knowledge, values and attitudes, generic competencies, technical and entrepreneurial skills, work ethics and responsible citizenship – giving meaning to production and linking it to societal goals, while effectively appropriating it. In view of the complex process of poverty eradication and the composite problems the poor face in LDCs in terms of the lack of access to education, health, and other services, “learning to do” should be driven by social, developmental and human-centered, as well as economic, needs, to empower people to cope with uncertainty and risk.

TVE, which targets middle-level technicians and craftspeople, is of particular importance in LDCs and faces the specific challenges of responding to the predominantly informal (and uncertain) nature of their economies. The informal sector in LDCs accounts for more than 60 per cent of urban employment and this trend is set to continue. Production in most LDCs, particularly in the private sector, is dominated by smallholder farmers and small, mostly informal-sector, industrial and service enterprises that supply most basic goods and services and generate the greater part of employment and incomes. The poor who do not have access to productive land or paid employment support themselves through a vast number of self-employed activities in agriculture, trade, crafts, and manufacturing, and they have few opportunities to improve their efficiency, their productivity or their participation in economic life; there is no formal definition of work skills. This is their position within an ever-changing technological scenario, especially with regard to ICTs, and rapid social changes. In this regard, micro and small enterprise development is fundamental to the pursuit of sustained growth in the LDCs, because of its potential to enhance technological capacities and contribute to the diversification of production and exports. TVE faces major challenges in LDCs: to prepare for jobs that exist at the present time, to build capacities to adjust, compete and change jobs more than once in a lifetime, and most crucial, to enhance abilities to create jobs and employment for oneself and for others. In this regard, TVE in LDCs has to address two specific challenges, one linked to secondary education and the other to the world of work.

Secondary education in LDCs is characterized by rapid growth in enrolments, overcrowded curricula, financial and organizational problems, as well as increasing drop-out

and high repeating rates, leaving a large number of youth and adults unprepared for life and work, and leading to substantial waste in human and financial resources. School-leavers consider TVE as the inferior option for learning because of its low, informal status and little official recognition, and because they view it as a way of closing the door to further study. In addition, TVE in LDCs is not well articulated with the employment sector. Problems pertaining to the relevance of knowledge and skills, to the introduction and adaptation of new technologies and entrepreneurial expertise, and to resources and good quality training, persist. On the other hand, TVE is increasingly seen, nationally and internationally as a fundamental tool towards poverty eradication in LDCs. It is now widely recognized that TVE should be viewed and organized as an integral part of lifelong learning and that is important to further the broad diversification of the paths and types of learning, alternating these with professional or social work, and keeping the doors continuously open for study. This principle should set out wider possibilities for self-fulfilment and training, allowing adults to alternate between work and education in the formal system, offering educational opportunities for people who interrupted school, and capitalizing on human resources. Ensuring the diversity of providers, delivery mechanisms and funding is also crucial. Concrete endeavours are undertaken to link TVE effectively to the job market. Secondary education is gradually regarded, beyond the preparation of qualified candidates for access to higher education, as a channel to active life by providing training on a wide range of jobs. An important basis for the interface of TVE with the job market is to develop partnerships with employers and the private sector, as well as various economic sectors, for on-the-job-training arrangements.

Questions of relevant content, specifically related to the needs and requirements of the world of work, and questions of quality centring on flexibility, innovation, adaptation to the application of technologies and productivity, are now on the agenda. For LDCs, entrepreneurial training is of prime importance and its potential for economic independence in the informal economy is high. TVE should be integrated within micro and small enterprise development, where it can play a vital role in optimizing output, improving the quality of life of the poor and enhancing efficiency, productivity and economic opportunities. The Grameen Bank model has been a pioneer in this field. Last but not least, the challenge for TVE is to address the traditional perceptions of appropriate roles and training for men and women in the workplace, develop the entrepreneurial capacity of girls and women, and enhance women's access to TVE by ensuring vocational guidance and counselling and providing information on new areas of employment.

Finally, the role of higher education in LDCs should be underlined, not only in terms of learning and knowledge production, but also as a focal point for social and economic development. Universities in LDCs have the responsibility of proposing development models. Research carried out in higher education institutions plays a pivotal role in providing the basis for development programmes, policy formulation and the training of human resources. The socio-cultural role of higher education, is key in LDCs – providing critical perspectives, enhancing abilities to articulate ethical, cultural and

social issues, and preparing learners for democratic citizenship and active participation in society. In addition to highly specialized training adapted to economic life, universities should enhance the capacity of students in LDCs to live with uncertainty, to change and bring about change, to address social needs and to promote solidarity and equity.

Considerable inequalities exist between the LDCs and the North in terms of access, quality, conditions of teaching and research, and resources. In much of the developing world, higher education has been in crisis for the past decade. Structural adjustment policies and political instability have led to major reductions in budgets; confidence in higher education has been eroded by graduate unemployment, weak skill-based training and quality teaching, and limited relevance of programmes.

Within this context, and similarly to TVE, higher education in LDCs needs to address the issue of linkages with other levels and forms of education and with the world of work, as well as questions of relevance, specifically in the technological field. University reform requires higher education to reinforce and reorder its links with all other levels of education, particularly secondary education, so as to be part of a seamless system. In this sense, and with the necessity to cater for lifelong learning in LDCs, universities need to diversify and broaden their offers to become opportunities for learning throughout life, and to provide flexible and creative adult learning.

Promoting scientific and technological knowledge for sustainable development

To promote education for all and sustainable development in LDCs, education should be geared toward sustainability in terms of the interaction with the environment. Humans interact with the environment through the knowledge and tools – science and technology – they possess. Education in science and technology is therefore of crucial importance in the promotion of sustainable development around the world, including in LDCs. The application of science and technology are also of crucial importance in poverty eradication and the development process. Education in science and technology should start at the basic education level and be continued in subsequent formal and non-formal education and training. Limited knowledge, at all levels, is a serious constraint to development and the eradication of poverty.

The importance of education, information and cooperation in science and technology toward achieving in the international development goal of reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by at least one half by 2015, was underlined at the World Conference on Science (Budapest, July 1999). As noted in Article 35 of the Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge adopted at the Conference, “The building of scientific capacity should be supported by regional and international cooperation, to ensure both equitable development and the spread and utilization of human creativity without discrimination of any kind against countries, groups or individuals. Cooperation between developed and developing countries should be carried out in

conformity with the principles of full and open access to information, equity and mutual benefit. . . . The developed world has a responsibility to enhance partnership activities in science with developing countries and countries in transition. Helping to create a critical mass of national research in the sciences through regional and international cooperation is especially important for small States and least developed countries.”

Education and the application of technology appropriate to context is of crucial importance in the provision of basic needs, the reduction of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development. Poor people have particular basic needs in such areas as water supply and sanitation, housing, energy and renewable energy, agriculture, food production, processing and preservation, transportation, income-generation, employment creation, disaster preparedness, mitigation and response. The use of appropriate technology, building upon local knowledge, skills and materials, formal and non-formal education and training, will provide the means to address such needs. Basic education should be pursued with a view to developing a response to these basic needs. There is also a clear link, for example, between basic-skills training and income-generating skills with scientific and technological knowledge. The promotion of scientific and technological knowledge is a basic requirement for more relevant and improved skills training programmes.

> Chapter III

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following strategic recommendations focus on qualitative investments in basic education to build and sustain human and productive capacities and on the creation of enabling environments, nationally and internationally. These recommendations are to be considered in relation to the *Dakar Framework for Action* and the *Deliverables* document.

Building human and productive capacities

Basic education

- Strengthen and improve the provision of basic education including relevant research and monitoring in LDCs.
- Promote non-formal basic education as a valuable and legitimate path to learning, to reaching EFA and to building human and productive capacities.
- Invest in quality non-formal basic education for all age groups and within different social and economic sectors.
- Develop integrated programmes with other social development sectors and support effective co-ordination between the diverse ministries involved in non-formal basic education.
- Strengthen the linkages between non-formal basic education and the formal education system, while maintaining the flexibility of non-formal basic education in its conceptual and organizational aspects and in its capacity to reach diverse and excluded groups.
- Accredite TVE as a legitimate path to learning and promote its close co-operation with non-formal basic education within micro and small enterprise development programmes.
- Strengthen the linkages between TVE and higher education to the other sectors of education within a continuum of lifelong learning, including entrepreneurial training.
- Use debt relief for the development of science and technology for sustainable development.

Gender parity and social cohesion

- Promote the centrality of gender equality in education for attaining the EFA goals and for poverty reduction and social development.
- Mainstream women's empowerment approaches in non-formal basic education.
- Promote the integration of gender-sensitive approaches in diverse education projects and at diverse educational levels.
- Promote education for democratic citizenship.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs)

- Increase efforts to bridge the gap with LDCs, to further access and increase equality of opportunity.
- Harness the full potential of ICTs to serve quality education and training throughout life and promote innovative ways to introduce ICTs in education systems in order to reduce disparities in educational access and quality.
- Invest in capacity-building programmes on new and emerging technologies, while promoting appropriateness and sustainability.

Sustaining human and productive capacities

Participatory community development approaches

- Encourage and support civil society organizations to build up social capital and social networks around non-formal basic education, and particularly for the poor and marginalized, while at the same time ensuring the devolving of resources to these networks.
- Enhance the decentralization of educational management and the delegation of responsibility to local official units that are accountable to the local population in order to secure local innovation, identify problems and needs, and facilitate going to scale with successful innovative projects, while at the same time assuring access to government resources.

Partnerships

- Encourage the active and co-ordinated involvement of all stakeholders in basic education, TVE and higher education.
- Build on existing national co-operation mechanisms between local communities and civil society organizations, research centres, the private sector, the media, various ministries, donors, the United Nations and other regional/international agencies.
- Promote partnerships in an integrated system that links education, training and employment.
- Enhance communication, dialogue and trust-building between governmental bodies and NGOs and integrate NGOs into national planning on education.

- Engage the private sector and build partnerships with the business community with a view to committing financial resources.

Creating enabling national environments

National capacity-building and human resources development policies

- Promote the role of the state in ensuring overall regulation of the education system and in inviting and guiding debates on educational visions.
- Enhance the role of the state in leading and co-ordinating basic education activities in partnership with diverse stakeholders at local, regional and international levels.
- Strengthen the capacity of governments to design and manage education programmes.
- Integrate successful experiences into policy reforms.
- Push for a constant revision of normative policies and legislative actions to bring them into line with international conventions and agreements on EFA.
- Encourage co-operative policy dialogue.
- Encourage the enunciation of clear policy and policy statements as valuable tools in the hands of advocacy groups and organizations.
- Build the capacities of NGOs to engage in advocacy work and policy dialogue.
- Support sound management of the education sector and improve of linkages between educational activities.

Equitable distribution of the benefits of growth

- Assign high priority to basic education in development budgets and increase budgetary allocations for this sector, and specifically its non-formal component.
- Use resources released by debt relief as well as other sources of development finance for investment in basic education and in a manner that fully takes into account the interests of the poor.

Creating enabling external environments

Domestic resource mobilization, aid and debt relief

- Provide increased ODA resources for EFA with particular emphasis on basic education, identify new financial sources and mechanisms, and rethink the modalities of aid in this regard.
- Work with donors for mobilizing domestic and private resources.
- Develop debt-for-education swaps to offset the adverse effects of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and in this sense revisit the terms of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.

Development partner collaboration

- Work with all appropriate and concerned inter-agency mechanisms and focal points to achieve policy coherence, efficient targeting and focused integrated action.
- Support South-South co-operation, exchange and knowledge transfer regarding human and productive capacity-building.

> **Annexes**



ANNEX 1

Projections and explanations of key indicators and goals presented in Chapter I

Sources of data

For these indicators, we have used the data collected for the Education for All 2000 Assessment and presented at the different regional conferences (Johannesburg, Bangkok, Cairo, Recife, Santo Domingo and Warsaw), as well as at the World Education Forum in Dakar. Whenever possible these statistics have been complemented with data regularly collected by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Estimates used for this study have been made on bases identical to those used for the EFA Assessment.

Net school enrolment rates at the end of the 1990s are available for most of the forty-eight LDCs. (NB: Senegal joined the list in 2001, bringing the total to forty-nine, but it is not included in the statistics presented here.) Sao Tome and Principe is also not covered. Several countries are experiencing very difficult conditions which have repercussions on many areas, including the quality of their education systems and of their enrolment statistics.

	Education indicators at the end of the 1990s										External debt indicators			
	Estimated net enrolment rate (NER)			Survival rate to Grade 5	Percentage of repeaters	Adult literacy rate, 2000 (percentage)			Present value of the debt as percentage of GNP	Debt servicing as a percentage of exports of goods and services	Classification according to the debt ¹	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)		
	M	F	M			M	F							
Afghanistan	27.2	...	...	48.8	...	37.3	51.9	21.9	...	...		
Angola	34.7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	280	34.4	S	✓
Bangladesh	81.4	82.9	80.0	70.3	...	41.4	52.3	29.9	23	9.1	M			
Benin	62.6	49.7	74.9	64.3	25.0	40.3	56.9	24.7	46	10.6	M	✓		
Bhutan	52.9	47.2	58.4	86.2	19.0	...	...	...	...	...
Burkina Faso	33.8	27.7	39.7	68.4	16.0	23.9	33.9	14.1	32	10.7	M	✓		
Burundi	37.0	37.0	38.0	...	...	48.3	56.6	40.7	72	40.0	S	✓
Cambodia	78.3	74.1	82.4	45.2	26.0	...	...	...	62	1.5	M	
Cape Verde	98.5	96.7	100.3	90.5	...	74.2	84.8	66.2	...	...		
Central African Republic	42.3	27.0	50.6	...	...	46.7	59.8	34.9	55	20.9	S	
Chad	52.1	38.8	65.0	59.0	32.0	50.3	64.0	37.1	38	10.6	M	✓		
Comoros	60.2	55.4	64.9	48.4	...	59.6	66.5	52.8	...	...		
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	58.7	51.1	66.4	...	...	...	...	...	196	1.2	S	✓
Djibouti	33.2	27.9	38.6	82.5	16.0	48.1	62.2	35.0	...	...		
Equatorial Guinea	89.1	88.9	89.3	...	...	83.2	92.5	74.4	...	...		✓
Eritrea	37.4	35.1	39.7	70.0	20.0	...	...	...	12	1.5	L	
Ethiopia	36.0	28.0	43.0	51.0	8.0	38.4	43.6	33.2	135	11.3	S	✓		
Gambia	59.8	55.4	64.2	73.9	13.0	36.6	44.0	29.4	66	9.7	M			
Guinea	39.2	29.9	48.9	77.6	28.0	37.7	52.0	23.9	72	19.5	S	✓		
Guinea-Bissau	54.6	...	...	...	...	38.8	59.7	19.0	363	25.6	S	✓
Haiti	66.3	66.4	66.2	40.8	...	49.8	52.0	47.9	16	8.2	M			
Kiribati	70.7	...	...	95.0	0.0	...	...	...	...	...
Lao People's Dem. Rep.	76.2	72.4	79.8	56.6	...	...	...	...	92	6.3	S	✓
Lesotho	59.7	64.6	54.9	63.0	20.0	83.3	72.4	93.6	46	8.4	L			
Liberia	33.6	31.3	43.0	...	...	54.0	70.1	37.7	...	...		✓
Madagascar	68.0	69.2	67.2	40.0	34.0	...	...	...	89	14.7	S	✓

	Education indicators at the end of the 1990s										External debt indicators			
	Estimated net enrolment rate (NER)			Survival rate to Grade 5	Percentage of repeaters	Adult literacy rate, 2000 (percentage)			Present value of the debt as a percentage of GNP	Debt servicing as a percentage of exports of goods and services	Classification according to the debt ¹	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)		
	M	F	M			M	F							
Malawi	75.0			34.0	15.0	60.1	74.5	46.5	77	14.7	M	✓		
Maldives	92.7	92.1	93.2	98.3	...	96.4	96.3	96.4	...	...		
Mali	39.9	32.6	47.3	84.0	18.0	41.4	48.9	34.4	82	12.6	S	✓		
Mauritania	63.0	...	...	65.8	16.0	42.3	52.8	32.1	150	27.7	S	✓
Mozambique	43.6	39.8	47.4	46.0	26.0	44.0	60.1	28.7	74	18.0	S	✓		
Myanmar	79.8	...	...	...	...	84.7	89.0	80.6	...	5.3	S	✓
Nepal	69.6	59.9	78.9	...	...	41.5	59.2	23.9	31	7.0	L	
Niger	27.2	...	...	65.5	13.0	15.9	23.8	8.4	55	18.4	S	✓
Rwanda	67.4	68.2	66.7	...	...	66.8	73.6	60.2	34	16.9	S	
Samoa	92.5	90.9	94.0	86.0	2.0	...	...	...	...	...
Sao Tome and Principe	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		✓
Sierra Leone	46.3	...	...	...	...	33.3	47.5	20.0	131	18.2	S	✓
Solomon Islands	85.9	...	...	...	9.0	...	...	...	...	...
Somalia	7.9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		✓
Sudan	39.9	36.9	42.8	76.1	-	58.0	69.8	46.3	172	9.8	S	✓		
Togo	72.9	61.0	85.1	60.0	24.0	57.3	74.5	40.8	68	5.7	M	✓		
Tuvalu	100.0	100.0	100.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Uganda	87.3	83.0	91.7	...	...	67.1	77.6	56.9	35	23.6	S	✓
United Rep. of Tanzania	56.7	57.4	56.1	81.0	2.0	75.8	84.7	67.1	70	20.8	S	✓		
Vanuatu	90.1	...	...	64.6	...	...	...	...	...	...
Yemen	52.7	...	...	74.4	...	46.3	67.5	25.2	79	4.2	M	✓
Zambia	85.4	86.0	84.8	...	3.0	78.1	85.2	71.4	175	17.7	S	✓		

1 S: Heavily indebted;

M: Moderately indebted;

L: Slightly indebted.

... data not available

ANNEX 2

List of countries according to the gender parity index (girls' school enrolment ratio divided by boys' school enrolment ratio)

1. Countries with fewer than 7 girls in school for every 10 boys

Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali

2. Countries with more than 7 and fewer than 8 girls in school for every 10 boys

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Liberia, Nepal, Togo

3. Countries with more than 8 and fewer than 9 girls in school for every 10 boys

Bhutan, Cambodia, Comoros, Eritrea, Gambia, Mozambique, Sudan

4. Countries with more than 9 and fewer than 10 girls in school for every 10 boys

Burundi, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Samoa, Uganda

5. Countries where there are often more girls in school than boys

Bangladesh, Haiti, Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tuvalu, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia

Number of countries per region/continent according to the range of the gender parity index in primary school enrolment, 1998

Gender parity index	Africa	Asia	Pacific	Caribbean	Total
Less than 0.7	7				7
Between 0.7 and 0.8	4	1			5
Between 0.8 and 0.9	5	2			7
Between 0.9 and 1	4	2	1		7
Equal to or greater than 1	5	1	1	1	8
Total	25	6	2	1	34

ANNEX 3

Country clusters according to school enrolment ratios

(Classifying the LDCs into four groups according to net primary school enrolment ratios in 1998)

Group 1

Afghanistan, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Somalia and Sudan

Group 2

Bhutan, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen

Group 3

Benin, Cambodia, Comoros, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Rwanda and Togo

Group 4

Bangladesh, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Maldives, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zambia

Unclassified: Sao Tome and Principe

ANNEX 4

The Dakar Framework for Action: goals and strategies

Para. 7: We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:

- (i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- (ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- (iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
- (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- (v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;

- (vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Para. 8: To achieve these goals, we the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to:

- (i) mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education;
- (ii) promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies;
- (iii) ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development;
- (iv) develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management;
- (v) meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict;
- (vi) implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;
- (vii) implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- (viii) create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all;
- (ix) enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers;
- (x) harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals;
- (xi) systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels; and
- (xii) build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards education for all.

Para. 10: . . . We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.

