

2003

REPORT



Third High-Level Group Meeting on Education for All

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Foreword

Maintaining the momentum of Education for All is crucial – the third meeting of the High-Level Group of EFA in New Delhi, India (10-12 November 2003), played a significant part in ensuring that the main stakeholders remain fully engaged in this process and together move the EFA agenda forward. Once again, representatives of governments, civil society, aid agencies and international organizations gathered to deliberate on the key issues and central challenges of the EFA movement. The report on the New Delhi meeting, which I am pleased to present, captures the growing spirit of collective commitment and common concern.

The thematic focus of the meeting was the fifth Dakar goal, namely, the elimination of gender disparity and the realization of gender equality. The first of the target dates – 2005 – is almost upon us, a point rightly emphasized by many participants. The discussions of the meeting were closely related to the findings and analysis contained in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*, which was devoted to the subject of gender and education for all. The *Monitoring Report* provided focus to our exchanges and raised the level of informed debate. The participants acknowledged the need for urgent action to redress the continuing injustice that two-thirds of adult non-literates and over half of out-of-school children are female. The disadvantages suffered by boys in certain parts of the world were also recognized. The deliberations of the meeting led to the adoption of an Action Agenda addressed to all the stakeholders. The impact of the Agenda will become visible as stakeholders adjust their policies and strategies in due course.

As the targets of the Dakar Framework for Action draw closer, each EFA meeting must make a specific and solid contribution towards the overall effort. While we must continue to seek the highest possible levels of participation, the New Delhi meeting succeeded in bringing together leading representatives of the key EFA constituencies. This meeting was, in my judgement, the most successful we have had so far. I believe there is still room for improvement in certain areas but I am broadly satisfied with how this key gathering of EFA partners is developing and maturing. I am convinced that EFA has risen higher on national agendas in recent years in many countries and that this can be attributed to the impact not only of Dakar but also of the follow-up processes that Dakar set in motion. The profile of this particular meeting of the High-Level Group was further enhanced due to the media attention attracted by the global launch of the Monitoring Report in New Delhi and by two events associated with the meeting: the Children's Parliament on the Right to Education and the International Seminar on Child Labour and EFA.

The meeting generated considerable discussion on the timeliness and accuracy of the data and statistics contained in the Monitoring Report. This concern, reflected in the Communiqué of the meeting, should encourage both the UNESCO Institute of Statistics and Member States to further strengthen and improve their data collection systems.

Sincere and heartfelt thanks are due to the Government of India which welcomed the High-Level Group so warmly and supported it with such excellent logistical arrangements. The meeting of the High-Level Group in New Delhi was an important milestone in the Dakar follow-up process. Above all, it showed that the international commitment to achieving the Dakar goals remains strong, notwithstanding the challenges and obstacles that continue to impede universal access to and enjoyment of basic education of high quality.



Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General, UNESCO

Key concerns from the Third EFA High-Level Group Meeting

On the framework for EFA

- Basic education is a human right, and legislation at the national level should guarantee it to every person. Just as the host country, India, has enshrined this right in its constitution, so free and compulsory education must become the inalienable right of girls and boys, men and women everywhere.
- Education takes place in the broader context of national socio-economic and cultural development. Its values and aims, its quality and content, its outcomes and benefits must give opportunity for each learner – female and male, child, adolescent and adult – to unfold their full potential and live a life of dignity and worth.

On gender parity and equality

- Gender parity is merely a step – albeit an important one – on the road to gender equality.
- Gender equality in education depends on and feeds into equality in the wider society. Promotion of equality means attention to equality of opportunities, jobs, incomes, status and access to wider social roles.
- Inequalities of gender have different faces in different parts of the world. While girls and women remain at a serious disadvantage in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Arab States, boys suffer disadvantage, for very different reasons, in the Caribbean and Western European countries.
- Teachers provide role models – there are not enough well-trained teachers in general, and there are too few female teachers for girls in particular, in regions where gender disparities are greatest.

On stakeholder relationships

- There is no substitute for good dialogue between partners in the aid process – listening and respect are essential prerequisites.
- EFA monitoring must include the performance of funding agencies, and the quantity and quality of their aid.
- Coordination of initiatives and processes must increase so that there is no unnecessary overlap, and in order to reduce the demands on recipient countries to accommodate different planning, disbursement, monitoring and evaluation procedures. Non-governmental and civil society organizations should become fully recognized and accepted partners in the effort to achieve the EFA goals.

2005 is just around the corner – all partners must accelerate progress to meet the gender parity target.

Children's voices count – EFA stakeholders should heed the Declaration of the first Children's Parliament on the Right to Education.

1 Introduction

The Third Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA) built on the experience of the two previous occasions. In order to fulfil its Dakar mandate of serving 'as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization', the meeting maintained the same format as in Abuja in 2002, namely a relatively small group bringing together key EFA stakeholder groups: governments, civil society and bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. Once again the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* provided data and analysis as input into the deliberations. The 2003/2004 edition of the Report was launched in New Delhi just prior to the meeting, on 6 November.

For the second time, the meeting took place in one of the E-9 countries – India, which faces the challenge of a population of over a billion people, as well as rapid socio-economic change. It is also a country characterized by a high degree of cultural and linguistic diversity. Thus it is a crucible of ideas and experimentation in many domains of development, including much in the way of alternative and progressive approaches to education. At the macro level, progress in the educational sphere is evidenced by the increasing role which India plays in the global knowledge economy, and, at the micro level, by the dynamism and vibrancy of its civil society. India thus provided a stimulating and multifaceted backdrop for the High-Level Group deliberations.

The opening ceremony of the conference included speeches by the President of Kyrgyzstan and the Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Prime Minister of India formally opened the proceedings. In addition to these dignitaries, who lent their full support to the EFA movement and to this meeting of the High-Level Group, participants included Ministers of Education from ten developing countries (and ministerial representatives from a further two), two Ministers responsible for development aid from industrialised countries, six representatives of civil society, seven from multilateral aid agencies and three from bilateral agencies. The meeting attracted a good deal of interest and sizeable delegations added to number in the meeting room, swelling it to around a hundred. Nevertheless, only official participants had voice in the proceedings.

The meeting took its theme from the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 Gender and Education for*

All: The Leap to Equality, focusing on the 2005 goal of gender parity. The data and analysis provided by the report served to assess progress, to chart the distance travelled by individual countries, to indicate what must yet be accomplished and to map out the way ahead. The Report thus acted both as a mirror and a goad – to which participants reacted in a variety of ways in the course of the deliberations.

In order to address the multiple dimensions of the theme coherently, discussions were organized in five substantive sessions:

- ▷ Education for All: on the path to gender equality?
- ▷ The urgency of action: achieving gender parity by 2005.
- ▷ National planning and policy reform – what makes a difference?
- ▷ Meeting our international commitments: at a critical juncture?
- ▷ Accelerating the momentum: challenges of coordination and cooperation.

These sessions consisted of an introduction by the chair of the session sketching out their perceptions of the key issues, a prepared reaction to the theme by two or three respondents, followed by contributions from participants around the table. A summary of the principal comments and ideas, presented by a designated participant, brought each session to a close. During the course of the two-and-a-half days, a 'sherpa group', and other interested participants, worked on the draft of the final communiqué. The meeting discussed the resulting document in its final session and then adopted it as part of a public session preceding the closing press conference. The text of the final communiqué, adopted unanimously, can be found in Appendix I.

This report follows the pattern of the programme – the remainder of this section summarizes the six statements made at the opening ceremony. There then follow five sections according to the five substantive themes – each of these sections presents the introduction and the respondents' comments, and then seeks to capture the main lines of debate under the heading of 'Exchanging Ideas'. The conclusion asks how far the meeting achieved the goals it set for itself and adds observations on the process.

The discussion of the Dakar goals on gender parity and gender equality focused at times on the broad social agenda of gender equality and at times on the more specific issue of girls' education in societies where girls and women remain particularly disadvantaged. It is clear that the roles and status of men and women in society at large, and the social relations between them, determine the context in which girls' education is addressed and the nature of the benefits which education offers to girls and to boys. It is also clear that girls' education must receive more attention, greater resources and be the subject of specific facilitating measures. The debates in this report move back and forth between the larger social questions of gender equality and the concrete measures required in certain parts of the world to bring education to girls and women.

1.1 Commitment – local and global: Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister of Human Resource Development, India

In his address, the Indian Minister of Human Resource Development, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, warmly welcomed participants to New Delhi. He called for a collective commitment to the challenging goals of EFA as articulated in Dakar in 2000. Enumerating some of the significant progress which India has made in education over the more than fifty years of independence, Dr Joshi drew attention to the data of the 2001 Census, in particular:

- ▷ a decrease of 32 million in the absolute number of illiterates;
- ▷ a narrowing of the

gender gap in elementary education from 24.8 per cent in 1991 to 21.7 per cent in 2001;

- ▷ an increase in the percentage of girls' enrolment from 28 per cent in 1950–51 to 44 per cent in 2001, and a rise in the gender parity index at primary level from 0.41 to 0.83 over the same period.

However, India continues to face a daunting task and has launched a number of initiatives to tackle the situation:

- ▷ amendment of the Indian Constitution in 2002 to include free and compulsory education as a fundamental right for all children in the age group 6 to 14 years;
- ▷ the campaign for Education for All – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – aims to provide eight years of quality schooling for all children by 2010 and addresses the needs of an estimated 190 million children, 850,000 schools and 3.3 million teachers;

- ▷ this campaign, building on the Mahila Samakhya programme dating from 1989, includes special measures to link literacy instruction with self-help groups for older women;
- ▷ specific steps are also in place to address the needs of minorities.

The Indian situation illustrates, therefore, the broader need for the collective resolve which the meeting of the High-Level Group must generate for EFA in order 'to ensure that each and every child is able to enjoy the right to education fruitfully and productively.'

1.2 EFA gathers pace: Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

In his address, **Mr Koïchiro Matsuura**, Director-General of UNESCO, expressed his thanks to India for hosting the meeting and noted the significance of this event in the South Asia region where 'the challenges of achieving EFA sometimes seem as high as the Himalayan mountains.' He commended India's constitutional amendment which makes elementary education a fundamental right, along with other recent measures to strengthen educational access. Mr Matsuura set the meeting in the context of key developments in EFA since the last meeting in Abuja. He pointed to six areas:

- ▷ a widening of the debate in the United Nations system, as part of the processes surrounding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- ▷ a strengthening of collaboration with civil society, evidenced for example in the 2003 EFA Action Week;
- ▷ a series of regional and subregional meetings, in all parts of the world.
- ▷ the pursuit and further development of the Fast-Track Initiative – a key meeting in Oslo was to follow the High-Level Group;
- ▷ a greater sense of partnership and shared engagement in the 2003 meeting of the EFA Working Group;
- ▷ alignment of UNESCO's programme for the coming two years more closely with the Dakar agenda, with 80 per cent of Education Sector's sector's budget going to Education for All.

The Director-General noted that the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* raised concerns about the pace of EFA progress, in particular towards meeting the 2005 gender parity goal. The Report is helpful in clarifying the distinction between parity and equality, and in presenting examples of strategies that work on the ground. Noting in conclusion that international EFA coordination is developing in a positive direction, he called for 'a robust, practical approach' by the High-Level Group in order to move rapidly towards meeting the EFA challenge.

"It is highly symbolic that you are meeting in India, in this country where a great civilization developed over thousands of years. [...] It tackles modern challenges from an original perspective of which the world must take full note. It has always given a very high value to education and things of the mind."

Jacques Chirac
President of France

1.3 Education – a political, economic and social mechanism: Jacques Chirac, President of France

The President of France, **Mr Jacques Chirac**, sent a message to the High-Level Group, which was read by **Mr Pierre-André Wiltzer**, Ministre délégué à la coopération et à la francophonie. In the

context of the High-Level Group's mandate to work for a quality education for every child, the President drew particular attention to Africa whose youth offers the promise of renewal, but whose anger we may fear if education is not on offer to them. EFA has political, economic and social ramifications. Politically, it is only when each citizen can exercise his or her rights on the basis of knowledge that good governance and democracy can flourish. Economically, knowledge is the basis of growth, with the need for the ability to access and use information technologies. Socially, education must work towards non-discrimination on the basis of gender or social origin; how will an unschooled mother prepare her child to face the challenges of life today? Girls **MUST** have access to school. Underlining France's support for the Fast-Track Initiative, the President called on the High-Level Group to send a vigorous message to the World Bank and Member States to speed up its implementation. The message concluded with a plea to build on the Monterrey commitments, notably to work together, no longer in a spirit of assistance but rather one of partnership.

1.4 The will to reconstruct: Arthur Zahidi N'Goma, Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Focusing on issues raised by situations of post-conflict and reconstruction, **Mr Arthur Zahidi N'Goma**, Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, observed that setting priorities in addressing poverty is a complex undertaking. His government faces the consequences of war and of poor governance. In the educational sphere, there has been massive deterioration and degradation of the system:

- ▷ from an enrolment rate of 94.3 per cent in 1978-79, it dropped to 50 per cent in 2001;
- ▷ more than 4.6 million children are not in school;
- ▷ over 51 per cent of girls are not in school;
- ▷ currently only 1 per cent of the national budget is devoted to education.

To tackle these challenges a concerted effort of construction, training, surveys and programme re-design will be necessary, including, for example, the training of over 44,000 new teachers, and the upgrading of 50,000 existing teachers. Nevertheless, education is a key element in the reconstruction of the country which must be based on investment in its people. A recently established national EFA network brings together the government, non-governmental organizations and educational associations in order to build cooperation and momentum. Infrastructure, professional capacity, curriculum design – all will receive attention, as the government works towards an allocation to education of 10 to 15 per cent of the national budget. Conscious of the need for assistance in this enterprise, **Mr N'Goma** concluded by recognising the contributions already made by bilateral and multilateral partners.

1.5 Facing up to transition: Askar Akaev, President of Kyrgyzstan

Mr Askar Akaev, President of Kyrgyzstan, brought to the meeting the perspective of countries in transition. Observing that Kyrgyzstan is in its 2200th year of statehood, the President spoke of the central importance of education in addressing the challenges of the current period of rapid transition. The country faces growth in the school-age population and is

concerned to offer opportunities to all. These start with pre-primary programmes where authoritarian pedagogy is being cast off in favour of a child-centred approach. Expanding infrastructure to give access to large and poor families is a particular challenge. At pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, Kyrgyzstan faces the need to produce curriculum and materials in four languages, in view of the multilingual and multicultural make-up of the population. Kyrgyzstan has one of the highest enrolment rates in the Commonwealth of Independent States, but recognizes the problem of accessibility to schooling in rural areas, as well as for orphans and children with disabilities.

Higher education has expanded rapidly since independence and now 47 per cent of such institutions are located outside the capital, enabling broader access for poor and rural families. Mr A Akaev noted that 53.6 per cent of students at the tertiary level are female. In education as a whole, the introduction of information technology will be strategic, and so will be an improvement in quality resulting from close attention to the assessment and testing systems. International support from UNESCO and the collaboration of non-governmental organizations assist in developing indicators and standards. Other regional and international agencies also offer assistance to Kyrgyzstan's education sector. The President concluded by expressing his government's clear political will to put education centre-stage in the country's development.

1.6 Education – key to poverty alleviation: Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India

In the formal Opening Speech of the meeting, the Prime Minister of India, **Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, gave a warm welcome to participants. He set his remarks in the context of the need to address poverty – education is known to be a key factor in tackling the multiple dimensions of poverty and powerlessness. As the international agenda has moved its focus on to poverty alleviation – as exemplified in the Millennium Development Goals – so education has also received greater attention, becoming one of the 'paramount goals of the global community'. Noting India's responses to its own educational challenges (also referred to in the speech of the Minister of Human Resources), he detailed a number of specific challenges that remain to be addressed:

- ▷ even where elementary education is free of charge, other measures may be necessary to ensure retention in school, such as a feeding programme;
- ▷ affirmative action is necessary to reach those sections of society which are left behind, such as minorities, tribal groups or children with disabilities;
- ▷ the gender gap is often a result of a nexus of socio-cultural and economic problems, chief among which is the opportunity cost of sending girls to school – their contribution to household work is often seen as indispensable;
- ▷ school environments, particularly in rural areas and urban slums, may be less than conducive to learning – lack of sanitation and boundary walls may have a big impact on girls' attendance.

Strong and committed partnerships between governments and the international community will enable the necessary extra resources to be found. Criticizing the Fast-Track Initiative for being 'neither fast nor adequate', the Prime Minister called for an acceleration in the provision of resources 'if we wish to ensure that we do not slip on the deadlines set at Dakar in 2000.'

Mr Vajpayee observed that 'the difference between the poor man's school and the rich man's school is becoming starker with each passing year.' This, he elaborated, is a threat to the quality of education – neither rich nor poor are satisfied with an education which leads nowhere. In order to ensure the right of equal access to quality education, governments must protect the poor from the adverse effects of the working of market forces. To conclude, the Prime Minister called on the High-Level Group to 'review the progress we have made so far, analyse the problems and obstacles, and chart a reliable path for faster progress in the future' noting that in this process the meeting takes place at a critical juncture.

“True education is that unique key which can open many doors simultaneously – individual's all-round development, economic progress of the family and the nation, harmony and kinship among diverse groups in a society, and peace and cooperation among members of the international community.”

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Prime Minister of India

2 On the path to gender equality?

- **Gender equality in education can only be achieved in the context of gender equality in the wider society.**
- **Education is a right for all – this must be enshrined in national legislation.**
- **Children’s voices: the first-ever ‘Children’s Parliament on the Right to Education’ addressed the meeting.**

2.1 What does the *Monitoring Report* say?

The first working session of the meeting focused on the data and analysis presented in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* with regard to worldwide progress towards the Dakar goals of gender parity – by 2005 – and gender equality – by 2015.

In presenting the Report, its Director, Professor Christopher Colclough, reaffirmed its role as a monitoring tool by which EFA stakeholders can be held accountable for progress and the international community can be alerted to major challenges. This year’s theme – gender – figures not only in the Dakar goals, but also in the Millennium Development Goals, and is a human rights imperative. Both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child underline the right of all – female and male – to education and non-discrimination. Professor Colclough noted some key conclusions from the report:

- ▷ gender parity (2005 goal) and gender equality (2015 goal) must be clearly distinguished (see box). In no country has gender equality yet been achieved;
- ▷ 52 out of 128 countries for which data are available will have achieved parity in primary and secondary education by 2005;
- ▷ Almost half of the countries (54) are at risk of not achieving gender parity in primary, secondary, or at both levels by 2015, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa (16), East Asia and the Pacific (11) and the Arab States (7). By 2015, most remaining inequalities will be at secondary level. Boys’ poor performance in secondary puts some industrialized nations at risk of not achieving the 2015 goal.

The Report analyses gender disparities using three dimensions of the right to education. Disadvantage particularly experienced by girls relates to the infringement of:

- ▷ the right to education factors including social norms and traditions, fees and the need for children to work restrict access to education. The global HIV/AIDS scourge, conflict and disability all play a part in curtailing girls right to education;
- ▷ rights within education issues of school facilities, safety, teachers attitudes, curriculum;
- ▷ rights through education job opportunities and income levels are skewed in favour of boys.

In addition to analysing the problem the Report also catalogues good practice which will make a difference in pursuing gender parity. Particular emphasis is put on reducing the cost of schooling, both through abolishing school fees and through incentives such as scholarships, income-support schemes for poor families and

The EFA Development Index (EDI) – an innovation in 2003

Tracking progress towards fulfilling the Dakar agenda took a step forward with the new EFA Development Index. It combines indicators for four goals to give a more rounded picture of progress:

- ▷ net enrolment ratio in primary schooling;
- ▷ gender, measured by the average value of the Gender Parity Index in primary and secondary education, and in adult literacy;
- ▷ adult literacy rate; quality, measured by the survival rate to Grade 5.

Gender Parity requires

- ▷ equal proportions of girls and boys being enrolled in school

Gender Equality requires

- ▷ equal opportunities to attend school
- ▷ equality in the learning process
- ▷ equality of learning outcomes
- ▷ equality of job opportunities and earnings.

school feeding programmes. These targeted measures have proved effective in a variety of contexts. Professor Colclough concluded by introducing the Report's assessment of aid to education, noting its decline in the 1990s and its patchy performance since then. The current \$200m committed to the Fast-Track Initiative, for example, falls \$118m short of meeting the financial gaps even of the first seven countries taking part.

2.2 Three perspectives

The three respondents provided quite distinct perspectives on the issues raised by the report. Mr **Luis Gomez Gutierrez**, Cuba's Minister of Education, set gender equality in the broader context of social justice and the reduction of the gap between rich and poor. He illustrated this by citing Cuba's progress towards EFA; Cuba educates girls and boys equally and has met adult literacy and early childhood goals. Nevertheless, the endless struggle for improving the quality of education continues. Cuba now collaborates with nineteen countries, offering expertise especially in innovative literacy programmes, using radio and audio-visual methods. In the wider Latin American context, Ministers of Education in the region have proposed a more vigorous programme of swapping debt for education.

Mr **Zéphirin Diabré**, Associate Administrator of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), emphasized the essential nature of education as 'a centrepiece in human development – enlarging people's choices.' He recognized gender parity as an essential first step – but we must go beyond that, working for gender equality which 'implies a fundamental transformation in the socially constructed relationship between women and men so that women get equal opportunities in every dimension.'

He spelled out three particular dimensions:

- ▷ equal competing space in employment.
- ▷ equal capacity-building opportunities for women.
- ▷ equal income benefits.

It is therefore crucial to link educational gender targets with the broader goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as set forth in the Millennium Development Goals.

From the European Commission, Mr **Friedrich Hamburger**, Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner

for Development and Humanitarian Aid, brought the perspective of international commitment and coordination. Seeing the conclusions of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 as a challenge to be taken up, he emphasized the importance of building on the Monterrey Consensus in structuring international initiatives in the support of EFA. Three common elements must underpin such efforts:

- ▷ ownership by recipient governments;
- ▷ harmonization of funding procedures;
- ▷ partnership between donors and governments.

Noting that the European Union (EU) supports the Fast-Track Initiative (discussed later in the meeting), Mr Hamburger called for sustainability through the long-term commitments which EFA goals and the MDGs requires. He also underlined the importance of monitoring not only recipient performance but also progress in donor harmonization through indicators and highlighted the Commission's recent initiatives to promote this approach in managing development cooperation.

Mr Hamburger concluded that donor capacity exists to support the educational strategies of developing countries, the High-Level Group must generate the political will to turn the EFA goals into reality.

2.3 Exchanging ideas

Participants expressed appreciation for the quality of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, remarking that it serves the purposes intended for it, namely to monitor progress and to alert EFA stakeholders to the challenges involved in fulfilling the Dakar goals and meeting the targets. The EFA Development Index was hailed as a useful instrument which should be developed further. Several speakers raised questions about the timeliness of the data – would it not be possible to include more up-to-date statistics in order to reflect policy changes and the current state of affairs? It was clarified by the Directors of the Monitoring Report Team and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) that a time lag of two years is common in the production of international reports, dependent as they are on submission of data by national governments. Policies which are already speeding up progress towards the Dakar goals will be reflected in future reports, as data become available.

The meeting was unanimous in its commitment to achieving gender parity and to pursuing gender equality. India's example of enshrining the right to education in its constitution was cited as a positive step which merits emulation. Legislation on the right to education and gender non-discrimination is necessary as a basis for social change.

Comments were made on a range of factors which impede progress on girls' education, such as:

- ▷ cultural practices, particularly child labour and early marriage
- ▷ lack of female teachers as role models for girls
- ▷ HIV/AIDS, disability, conflict and other circumstances which restrict girls' access to education
- ▷ remote schools in rural areas and inadequate learning environments (school facilities, curriculum, numbers of teachers)
- ▷ social image of women and the need for awareness-raising campaigns on gender issues.

Participants expressed the opinion that donors' behaviour should also be monitored – the quantity, quality and predictability of aid, as well as the processes and procedures surrounding the planning and disbursement of aid. Regular monitoring, as part of the annual Report, should lead to better coordination of initiatives and harmonization of processes.

2.4 Children's voices

“Let it be clear that the Declaration reflects so little of the raw emotion shared at the parliament, there were tears and laughter and learning from all present. One thing was apparent; these children understood the value of education in their lives, and what they want more than anything is the chance to receive a quality education.”

— from the preamble to the Declaration

Beauty, a girl, and Mac, a boy, addressed the meeting, representing the 'Children's Parliament on the Right to Education' held 8 – 10 November in Delhi, just before the High-Level Group. Seventy children from eleven states across India participated in the Parliament as those who had first-hand experience of barriers to education – child labour, natural disaster, conflict, poverty, hunger and the need to do agricultural work. Their

debates resulted in a Declaration, which is appended to this report (see Appendix III), calling on governments and the High-Level Group to work to remove barriers to education, to ensure that all children can enjoy their right to education and to promote education which is of relevance and of a consistently high quality for every child.

3 Achieving the 2005 gender parity goal: the urgency of action

- **Beyond the rhetoric of political commitment, what are the measures that make a real difference to gender parity?**
- **The needs of adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, require specific attention.**
- **Quality matters. Improving the quality of education enhances learning outcomes and stimulates demand.**

3.1 Strategizing for action

Opening the session, Ms **Zobaida Jalal Khan**, Pakistan's Minister of Education, underlined the 'absolute sense of urgency and commitment' required if the world is to meet the 2005 Dakar goal of gender parity in primary and secondary education. Calling on all stakeholders to translate this urgency into a set of specific measures, she recalled the progress still to be made in some parts of the world, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab States. Most of the 36 countries with net enrolment ratios of below 80 per cent are found in these areas, as are the countries with a gender parity index for adult literacy of 0.81 and below.

Ms Jalal recognized the complex web of factors that contribute to this situation – social, political, cultural and economic issues combine and demand a holistic approach to gender parity and the EFA agenda. While policy may be moving in the right direction, implementation lags behind, and she concluded by calling for a 'synergistic response to all national initiatives on gender', including: implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), asset creation in favour of women in the context of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), an increased role for elected women representatives, and civil society initiatives on women's rights.

3.2 Responding from the front line

Picking up the theme of action, three women involved in coordinating the implementation of non-formal and formal education drew on their experience to illustrate or propose specific measures to accelerate progress towards the 2005 target.

Ms **Jahan Ara Begum**, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh for Primary and Mass Education, used the situation of that country to demonstrate the importance of government measures designed to

offer women an effective way out of marginalization and discrimination, both in education and in society at large. Admitting that women in Bangladesh are still not adequately aware of their rights and that they lag behind men in most aspects, she catalogued the steps that the government is taking to remedy the situation:

- ▷ four national committees working to end gender discrimination;
- ▷ reserving 60 per cent of primary school teaching posts for women (currently 40 per cent women);
- ▷ including 50 per cent female learners in all non-formal education centres;
- ▷ policy to appoint more women as officials;
- ▷ maternal stipend to poor families to enable them to send children to school (6 million children currently benefiting);
- ▷ stipend to girls at higher secondary level, resulting in 53:47 ratio in favour of girls;
- ▷ awareness-building programmes among parents and guardians on importance of education;
- ▷ building toilet facilities in most schools;
- ▷ revising curricula to eliminate discriminatory concepts.

With almost 100 per cent primary school enrolment, the focus in Bangladesh is shifting to improving the quality of education, in the context of the National EFA Plan of Action.

Mr **Erwin Judd**, Director of the Programme Division of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), emphasized UNICEF's central commitment to the education of girls and listed specific issues which must be addressed to increase access and quality (See box p. 16).

Policies to eliminate gender disparity must evolve along three lines: improving social demand, improving educational supply, and enhancing the quality and relevance of education. These remarks prefaced the response of the Congo's Minister of Education to the

theme of the session. Ms **Rosalie Kama-Niamayoua**, Congo's Minister of Education, emphasized that political will must result in concrete actions, such as:

- ▷ legislation to guarantee access to schooling for all;
- ▷ mobilization of partnerships among social actors;
- ▷ a redefinition of the purposes of education in the national context;
- ▷ ensuring that education can be applied to life;
- ▷ school mapping to match educational demand and supply;
- ▷ special support for disadvantaged households; and
- ▷ women's literacy as a direct support to girls' learning.

Recognizing the urgency of the 2005 target, Ms Kama-Niamayoua called for five specific measures:

1. keep girls in school – development depends on them as mothers of future generations;
2. tackle the barriers of tradition, domestic work, representation of women in school books and of HIV/AIDS so that girls who have not been to school have access to education;
3. expand early childhood programmes beyond the circles of urbanised elites;
4. increase the number of qualified teachers in order to reduce class sizes; and
5. send a clear message from this meeting that all stakeholders should respect their commitments to EFA and girls' education in particular.

Ms **Maria Khan**, of the Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), acknowledged that 'it is a foregone conclusion for many countries that the 2005 targets would not be reached', but felt nevertheless that certain measures would accelerate progress. These relate to policy or content, and to process.

Issues of policy and content:

- ▷ give serious and immediate attention to gender parity in secondary education – meaningful employment for primary school leavers is as good as non-existent, so real chances come with secondary education;
- ▷ redress the relative neglect of adolescents in the 11 – 14 age group, build the confidence and self-esteem of girls, and enable them to consider life choices including marriage, financial independence and employment;

- ▷ put emphasis on women's literacy programmes – for girls who are not now in school, such programmes may be the only chance of an education. Developing a literate home environment is a key factor in children's education – literate women have a great impact on their children's learning.

Issues of process:

- ▷ the monitoring process could do more to inform implementation by tracking measures designed to promote access and retention; various civil society organizations have attempted, for instance, to track the abolition of charges, provision of incentives such as feeding programmes and stipends, and support for female teachers. These would provide useful signals of progress;
- ▷ tracking the flow of resources will lead to better assessment of donor responsiveness, coordination and the timing of funding.

3.3 Exchanging ideas

While the debate that followed did not overtly move towards the 'International Action Agenda for the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005', as noted in the expected outcomes for the meeting, participants gave attention to specific positive measures which should be further strengthened in order to accelerate progress, such as the following:

- ▷ schooling completely free of charges and fees;
- ▷ feeding programmes and incentives (stipends, scholarships) such as the Bolsa Escola in Brazil that benefits 10 million children and 4 million families;
- ▷ clean water, sanitation and separate toilets for girls, lighting and security at school;
- ▷ schools close to users;
- ▷ promoting female employment/job opportunities for school leavers;
- ▷ more female teachers and valuing the teacher profession;
- ▷ teacher housing in remote areas;
- ▷ teacher input into planning and better support to school managers;
- ▷ enhanced literate environments, particularly in the home – literate mothers make a difference;
- ▷ reintegration of young women into education after early pregnancies;

- ▷ earning/micro-credit schemes for mothers, enabling them to free daughters to go to school;
- ▷ address specific impact of HIV/AIDS on girls' education.

Emphasizing the need for strong political will from the highest levels to secure change, several countries, such as Burkina Faso, drew attention to recent policies that had resulted in higher enrolment of girls. The Forum for African Women Educationalists pointed to innovative experiences conducted in 33 countries in partnership with education ministries.

The Global Campaign for Education reiterated that child labour was one of the biggest hurdles to achieving EFA. There was a clear call for attention to the specific needs of adolescents, particularly adolescent girls. In four countries of the South Asian region (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan), for example, 65 per cent of this group is out of school, of which half have never been to school. Problems of drug abuse, drift towards urban areas, alienation, risky sexual contact and recruitment by criminal or fundamentalist groups are clear dangers for adolescents. Innovative and holistic educational strategies are required to channel and develop the high potential of this age group to be instruments of positive social change.

A further area of relative neglect in the strategies and plans of the international community is the deteriorating situation in Latin America, where economic changes have resulted in fewer resources for education. Disparities in poor rural areas, among indigenous groups and in the Afro-American population are being exacerbated. There is a risk in this region of sliding backwards unless such issues are addressed in a concerted and collaborative manner.

The quality of education is crucial to motivating parents to send their children, both girls and boys, to school and to retaining children in school. A concern for quality implies a wide range of issues – relevance of content and curriculum, well-trained teachers and a stimulating learning environment are three essential elements. North-South cooperation between teacher training colleges was flagged as one strategy to improve performance.

Participants also underlined the key principle of links between school and community, based on building strong awareness both of gender issues and of the value of education. Such awareness is often generated as women feel that their voices are being heard and that they can participate in community debate and decisions.

Finally, the High-Level Group must play its role as a vigorous advocate for girls' education, ensuring that gender parity and gender equality continue to be tracked at all levels and monitored explicitly in future *EFA Global Monitoring Reports*.

Towards gender parity by 2005 – eight pointers from UNICEF

1. Scale up efforts so that more girls participate

This depends upon strong networks at national, regional and global levels, including governments, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, bilateral and multilateral agencies. Integrated approaches must involve ministries of education, agriculture, health, labour and social affairs. We should develop the capacity of communities to participate in education.

2. Strengthen existing synergies that focus on gender equity goals

This means putting gender at centre of all relevant policies, plans and budgets. Intensify literacy programmes that empower women, and look at how fathers can be better champions of girls' education.

3. Reduce the direct and indirect costs of education especially for poor households

Guarantee and support free and compulsory primary education as a policy of all states. Demand rises when direct fees and indirect fees (eg uniforms, books) are removed. Equal opportunities for all children may mean support for the most disadvantaged groups (eg scholarships, incentives).

4. Allocate resources to ensure both gender equity and efficiency

Sharpen the focus on girls' education in national development plans and external assistance. Local government and schools themselves need to plan and make resources available for girls' education.

5. Quality along with access

Support innovative delivery models, particularly for minorities, remote and marginalized groups. Well-trained teachers, especially women, and the school environment (eg security, water and sanitation) are crucial.

6. Confronting HIV/AIDS with a gender sensitive approach

Lifeskills education empowers girls to protect themselves. School must be a social situation where discrimination is minimized, if not eliminated, so look at what administrators can do to reduce discrimination and keep those affected in school.

7. Children living in emergency or post-emergency situations

Education is not a secondary intervention to health, but a key response to emergencies. Restoring viable education has a highly desirable impact on the community.

8. Up-to-date information for planning and monitoring

There is a need for disaggregated data and local information for planning, monitoring and accountability. It is also very important that local level government leaders – governors, mayors, district chiefs – see girls' education as a development goal, as an investment for the future.

4 Plans, policies, reform – what makes a difference?

- **The state should be the engine of an inclusive EFA process, leading to policy development and reform.**
- **Teachers are the friendly face of learning. There are not enough; they are often poorly trained and distributed inequitably.**
- **Civil society offers pro-poor strategies of alternative education for girls and adult women.**

4.1 The state must play its role

A framework for planning, policy development and reform must be set by the state – this was how Mr **Arthur Zahidi N’Goma**, Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, introduced the third session of the meeting. Three key elements form part of the framework:

- ▷ undertaking active political and legislative reform;
- ▷ restructuring income distribution so that the most disadvantaged can afford to send their children to school; and
- ▷ adopting reforms which address the specific circumstances of women and girls.

Among successful reforms, Mr Zahidi N’Goma noted the following, drawn from examples around the world:

- ▷ enshrining education as a human right in the constitution and in legislation;
- ▷ ensuring full participation of government, civil society, communities and other stakeholders in designing policies and reforms;

“It is clear that commitment to values and political will determine the success or failure of progress towards EFA. This is not to deny the evident difficulty of the task, but rather to stress that it is not beyond the means which countries have at their disposal and, even less, beyond the means of the whole international community.”

— Arthur Zahidi N’Goma
Vice-President
of the Democratic Republic
of the Congo

- ▷ planning strategically, with timed objectives and effective monitoring and evaluation systems;
- ▷ mobilizing internal and external resources;
- ▷ coordinating and harmonizing aid processes;
- ▷ promoting decentralization and good governance; and
- ▷ free compulsory education, particularly at primary level.

These reforms depend above all on the political will to adopt and implement them, and they will succeed best where education is regarded as a central and integral part of national development goals.

4.2 Contexts of reform – two experiences

Responding to the theme of the session, Mr **George Saitoti**, Kenya’s Minister of Education, and Mr **Kailash Satyarthi**, Chairperson of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), shared their experiences of reform through government and civil society respectively.

Kenya has recently undertaken significant reforms which have resulted in 1.3 million more children attending primary school. The principal measure was the abolition of fees and charges. Gender parity has almost been achieved with a GER of 48 per cent for girls and 52 per cent for boys. In these developments, additional funding has not been adequate on its own. Accountability at school level, strong community participation in education and a decentralized framework have also proved important.

In addition, the government took affirmative measures such as boarding facilities for girls, rescue centres for those affected by certain cultural practices, re-entry for student mothers and a gender-responsive curriculum. Nevertheless, issues of access and parity remain in more marginal areas and for nomadic communities, where poverty is much greater. Even with free education, problems of dropout and of quality must urgently be addressed, and education must tackle the ‘natural disaster’ of HIV/AIDS. At the broader social level, Kenya works to appoint more women to leadership positions in government – as role models for girls.

Speaking on behalf of the civil society organizations grouped together in the Global Campaign for Education, Mr Satyarthi stressed the need for a broad collaborative

approach to educational reform. In government, the issues go beyond the Education Ministry and must involve also ministries such as finance, labour, health and many others. Only such coordination will begin to tackle the issue of child labour, for example. Citing the case of a Cambodian girl sold into sexual exploitation, he stressed the loss of childhood which so many suffer. Poverty, child labour and child rights violation – these form a triangle of destitution which must be broken.

Whatever the role of civil society in specific contexts, its legitimacy must derive from its pursuit of the interests and rights of the poor and marginalized – input into policy and reform must be based on this perspective. Regarding the Fast-Track Initiative, the Global Campaign for Education proposes it should be reshaped into a compact between countries and funding agencies that would:

- ▷ guarantee that funds become available once a plan is approved;
- ▷ be based on long-term commitment to enable reforms to be followed through; and
- ▷ require transparency on all parts, with full disclosure of information.

Mr Satyarthi concluded his presentation by confessing to both optimism and impatience – optimism because definite progress is being made, and impatience because millions of children still await the chance of a quality education.

4.3 Exchanging ideas

Picking up on the **role of civil society**, participants remarked on the models of alternative education for children outside school. These are rarely scaled up, lacking national and international visibility, yet they offer viable alternatives and workable solutions. Some of these practices include adult learning experiences which are 'the back door to girls' education' since 'adults without a second chance will not give girls a first chance'. Where learning in school is of low quality, we may end up paying twice for education – once in school and again in non-governmental organization literacy groups.

A number of comments addressed issues of **decentralization, management and governance** – all of which contribute to equitable and effective educational reform. The role of communities in school management was stressed; this requires capacity-

building so that community leaders can participate actively in management, thus building transparency in local governance. Making progress in these areas is crucial as many countries put plans for decentralized administration in place.

Citing experience from the Caribbean, **small states** are particularly vulnerable economically in the rapidly developing global market place. However, a strong economic base is fundamental to effective implementation of education – no education can provide enhanced opportunities in life if the country is unable to make a living in the global market. Restructuring small economies to this end may require international support.

The role of **teachers** was once again emphasized – the need for adequate numbers, their training and qualifications, their workload and their morale. Participants noted that it is frequently schools in the poorest or most remote communities that receive less qualified teachers. In the same vein, teachers move to schools offering better conditions, resulting in higher quality education for those who can pay. In some countries teachers are leaving the profession for higher paid work, or are being attracted away from developing countries to better conditions in the schools of industrialized countries. In some countries of sub-Saharan Africa there are simply not enough teachers (see box). These situations call for close attention to the problems of teacher supply, training and conditions in particular contexts – the teacher is perhaps the key element in stimulating children's learning.

Planning from the grassroots up

The 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' programme is India's response to its huge EFA challenges. Covering all aspects of elementary education, it is a bold attempt to provide basic education for every child. Planning is initiated at the village and school level. Community involvement is structured through Village Education Committees, Parent Teacher Associations and Mother Teacher Associations. Educational management is decentralized to the Panchayat level, and civil society organizations are a major partner in managing and delivering education, particularly in innovation and in reaching hard-to-reach groups.

— contributed by
Sri Naveen Patnaik
Chief Minister of Orissa, India

Not enough teachers!

In one village in Niger, awareness-raising led parents to register all their girls and boys for school. However, when school started the school inspector asked the headmaster to send half the children home again since there was no extra teacher that he could assign.

In another village, the headmaster registered only the number he could accommodate – half girls, half boys. The other school-age children had to stay at home.

— contributed by
Ms Bouli Ali Diallo
President of FAWE

Questions were asked about the state of national **EFA plans and planning** – is there a picture of how complete national plans are and what their quality is like? Where there are problems in developing plans or in creating an inclusive planning process (such as an EFA Forum), UNESCO and the international community must look at how it can best give support, so that all six Dakar goals continue to be addressed.

5 International commitments: where are we now?

- **How fast is the Fast-Track Initiative?**
- **Listening, mutual respect and joint responsibility must characterize our spaces of negotiation.**
- **The need for greater, more predictable aid flows is urgent.**
- **How much schooling makes a difference?**

5.1 Assessing the Fast-Track Initiative

Mr **Pierre-André Wiltzer**, Ministre délégué à la coopération et à la francophonie, introduced the fourth working session by recalling the nature and scope of the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) which seeks to bring 'increased and faster support to low-income countries which are solidly committed to realising universal primary education.' Noting that eighteen countries have now been invited to join the initiative, he commented that official development assistance remains well below the level required to finance it. Nevertheless, the Fast-Track Initiative offers three major advantages:

- ▷ it is based on real partnership between funders and developing countries;
- ▷ funders earmark a growing proportion of aid to education, improving coordination and transfer processes; and
- ▷ developing countries mobilize more internal resources and use them more effectively.

In inviting three respondents to address these issues, Mr Wiltzer concluded by asking how greater effectiveness in the use of aid to education might be achieved, how the commitments of Monterrey and by the G-8 might be followed through, and what lessons may be drawn from the first phase of the Fast-Track Initiative.

5.2 Responses from Fast-Track Initiative partners

Mr **Mathieu Ouedraogo**, Burkina Faso's Minister of Education and Mass Literacy, opened his remarks by questioning the results thus far of international financing for education. Official development assistance is down, and action plans for education are ready, but

still waiting to be financed. He called for action on the political level – a more holistic approach to developing plans, across government departments, and underlined the importance of good governance, transparency and accountability.

Mr Ouedraogo signalled the need for better working relationships between governments and international partners – better listening, greater modesty and less arrogance on the part of international experts, with greater respect for their national counterparts. Negotiations must take place on equal terms, with both success and failure being a shared responsibility. Burkina Faso instituted a regular series of consultations to improve dialogue and cooperation – weekly, monthly and twice a year at various levels. This led to better harmonization of procedures and reduced slowness of action. He further remarked that international experts must visit the field rather than dealing only with paper plans. He concluded by remarking that the Fast-Track Initiative does not appear to be fast – the plane may be ready to leave but there is no fuel in the tank.

Declaring himself to be an optimist, Mr **Henry Jeffrey**, Minister of Education of Guyana, opined that there is much goodwill around the Dakar goals, even if funding is becoming available only slowly. For Guyana, one of the first to be accepted into the Fast-Track Initiative, the process of setting up mechanisms and transfer procedures was necessarily slow, but perhaps less so than in other cases. Guyana has an overall funding gap in its EFA planning, but in practice has not yet used all the funds it has available. The country will use funding specifically for reaching the poorest and indigenous populations, improving teacher remuneration, providing teacher housing, improving school feeding programmes and implementing stakeholder participation.

Two impressions formed in the mind of Mr **Jean-Louis Sarbib**, the World Bank's Senior Vice-President for Human Development, when he read chapter six of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* on international commitments: proliferation and effort – signals that the international community is mobilizing around education. These efforts call for coordination in advocacy and at the technical level. In financing, the Monterrey consensus created strong expectations for development assistance in general, but these have not been met. However, he emphasized that the World Bank increased its lending to education from US\$700m to US\$2.4bn in the two years since 2001, a fact not yet captured by the *Monitoring Report*.

Mr Sarbib observed that many questions are asked about the Fast-Track Initiative – there is need for realism and a moral commitment to make only those promises that partners can keep. What are the lessons of the first eighteen months of the initiative?

- ▷ The Fast-Track Initiative has increased the momentum towards the EFA goals;
- ▷ at country level, the Fast-Track Initiative has raised the profile of EFA with finance ministers and other stakeholders;
- ▷ the Fast-Track Initiative has demonstrated the important link with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; and
- ▷ there is now a set of indicative benchmarks which, applied flexibly, can serve as a basis for shared objectives.

There is concern over the financing and disbursement processes in the Fast-Track Initiative – Mr Sarbib stated that the mechanism for giving access to funding immediately, when countries are ready with their plans, is missing. As a result some funding agencies have proposed a catalytic fund as a bridging facility. Noting the 'constructive impatience' on the part of countries to see results from the Fast-Track Initiative, he concluded that a system needs to be created that will transform promises into reality.

5.3 Exchanging ideas

In discussion, participants addressed three major areas: a critique of the Fast-Track Initiative, the status of development aid generally, and some consequences of the prevailing lack of resources.

Critique of the Fast-Track Initiative

- ▷ The initiative was felt by some to be slow and complicated – could it be simplified? The needs for immediate aid flows are pressing and there is some impatience with the Fast-Track Initiative processes.
- ▷ Others asked about the selection of participating countries, underlining the fact that some countries are ready with their plans, have absorptive capacity and have demonstrated political will, but are not yet integrated in the FTI. Further, the international community should give greater recognition to the fact that some countries have increased internal investment in education.
- ▷ There were some reservations about the Fast-Track Initiative benchmark for teachers' salaries – 3.5 times GDP/capita – since such a limit risks undermining the quest for quality education for all in some contexts.
- ▷ Regret was again expressed that the Fast-Track Initiative does not include adult education and literacy, but is restricted to formal primary schooling. This ignores the close and organic links between adult learning, particularly on the part of women, and the enrolment and success of children in school.
- ▷ The links between the High-Level Group, the EFA Working Group and the FTI donors' group should be strengthened and clarified. Up to now the High-Level Group has been a global forum, while the FTI brought together only funding agencies. Clarification of roles will increase impact.
- ▷ Beyond financing, the Fast-Track Initiative must include mechanisms to track funding agency performance and monitor their behaviour.

Status of development aid

- ▷ The fact that funds committed by rich countries are not coming forward invites the question whether they are serious about tackling illiteracy and health problems. Where is the movement towards 0.7 per cent of GNP?
- ▷ After declining aid in the 1990s, it was pointed out that the G-8 are now in a phase of mobilizing resources. France is moving towards a target of 0.5 per cent of GNP by 2007, and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) doubled its education budget in two years.

- ▷ Particular emphasis was placed on the need for more resources in South Asia, with its high population. Countries in the region have identified financing gaps – there is a need for a mechanism to offer a prompt response to these needs.
- ▷ It is not only more aid which is necessary, but a long-term commitment, allowing countries to plan on the basis of a predictable flow of resources. EFA requires a long-term approach and financing arrangements must be developed to cater for this.

Consequences of lack of resources

- ▷ Lack of resources leads countries to make minimalist plans for EFA. Whereas in many countries plans are being made for nine or more years of basic education as a norm, poor countries plan for much lower levels of education.
- ▷ In consequence, the quality of education is reduced such that it has hardly any impact on the lives of individuals and their families. A much greater amount of resources is required to ensure that every child not only goes to school but emerges with a quality education which gives them meaningful opportunities in society.
- ▷ In funding discussions there is a need to increase the capacity of countries to negotiate on equal terms, moving towards a mentality of self-reliance rather than one of dependency.

6 Accelerating the momentum: challenges of coordination and cooperation

- Pro-active international coordination avoids overlap and makes partnerships easier to build.
- UNESCO's coordinating role is key, but its capacity should be further enhanced.
- Early childhood care and education, adult learning and literacy continue to be neglected areas of EFA.

6.1 Principles of coordination

For Dr **Zhou Ji**, chair of the fifth working session and China's Minister of Education, a significant element of progress is the higher awareness and profile of the EFA agenda, evidenced in the increasing number of national plans of action and the inclusion of educational concerns in high-level international meetings. This testifies to a new stage of international collaboration among partners from North and South. However, the challenge remains tough, requiring bold and workable strategies, based on at least the following principles:

- ▷ international cooperation to build and sustain a peaceful environment as a pre-condition for effective teaching and learning;
- ▷ coordination of programmes and assistance, avoiding overlap and based on national contexts;
- ▷ mobilization of ministries in addition to the Ministry of Education to ensure government-wide support for EFA;
- ▷ a balanced approach recognizing local responsibility and external assistance, with UNESCO serving as an arena for international intellectual cooperation; and
- ▷ improvement of data collection processes with a consequent enhancement of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report's* authority.

“Without peace, there will be no development and without development, there will be no peace. However, without the success of EFA, there will be neither peace nor development, in the long run.”

— Dr Zhou Ji
Minister of Education, China

Noting the huge educational challenges that China and the other E-9 countries are facing, Dr Zhou Ji expressed China's willingness to host the 2005 High-Level Group Meeting on the theme of lifeskill training and adult education.

6.2 Complementary viewpoints

Two respondents offered their views on international coordination, largely complementing the chair's introduction to the topic.

Mr **Ichiro Fujisaki**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, called for a speeding up of the resource allocation through the Fast-Track Initiative. Welcoming the national ownership of FTI proposals through their links to national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), he cautioned against awarding funds only to well-performing countries – those lagging behind must also be remembered, since a generation of children should not be victims of what their governments do or do not do.

Mr Fujisaki emphasized the important role of UNESCO in coordinating international efforts in EFA and observed that it would be of benefit to countries if there were greater coordination among international organizations. In this, countries should use their membership in such organizations to encourage close cooperation with and support for UNESCO's role. The High-Level Group should continue to play an important role, perhaps in future with the financial authorities in recipient countries invited to attend. The EFA Working Group could play a bigger role in preparing policy options for the High-Level Group which should also consider asking the United Nations Secretary-General to devote time to education at the start of the General Assembly session in 2005.

Accelerating the momentum of EFA was also a key point made by Mr Fabian Osuji, Nigeria's Minister of Education. This requires good coordination among stakeholders – a key challenge for delivering programmes on target. Further, the interface between funding agency initiatives and national programmes must be improved to increase ownership and avoid conflicting conditionalities. In order to enhance its international coordinating role, UNESCO should become more pro-active, fortifying the EFA Working Group and High-Level Group as expressions of

collective will and effort, aiming at maximum impact of the messages they send.

6.3 Exchanging ideas

These viewpoints resonated in the ensuing discussion, with debate coalescing around four major themes:

Coordination: participants agreed on the need for greater and more pro-active coordination, at national and international levels. Among funding agencies, between funding agencies and governments, among national ministries, among civil society organizations, and between them and government, in planning, funding processes, monitoring and learning lessons – these are all key areas where coordination will bear fruit in boosting EFA efforts.

UNESCO and the High-Level Group: participants expressed support for the key role of UNESCO in coordinating international EFA efforts and called for an enhancement of its capacity for this purpose. UNESCO should also do more to ensure that EFA is on the agenda of an increasing number of international agencies and meetings, for example in the Organization of American States (OAS). Some comments that the High-Level Group should be restructured were countered with affirmations that it was too early to do so as the High-Level Group is evolving into an effective mechanism – a period of five years would be an appropriate time span before any changes may be considered. The suggestion that the current High-Level Group be replaced by a small group of wise persons did not find favour with the participants. This discussion led to a decision in the final Communiqué to clarify and improve the linkages between EFA's international forums: the Working Group, the High-Level Group and the FTI Partners' Group.

Accountability and efficiency: these are ways not only to ensure good use of resources, but also to increase them. Good accounting procedures are necessary in order to know exactly what education costs – there are frequently elements that are not included, such as for example bringing water to schools. Monitoring resource flows to civil society and non-governmental organizations is also necessary as their input often remains invisible. Accountability also involves the collection and use of relevant information – particularly important at national level to support evidence-based action.

Neglected Dakar goals: once again, as in previous High-Level Groups, voices were raised to decry the continuing neglect of certain Dakar goals, notably those relating to early childhood care and education, and to adult education and literacy. Non-formal approaches to learning are crucial to the accomplishment of EFA targets, yet they are rarely addressed with conviction and commitment. Women's literacy remains a key component of enabling children, particularly girls, to enter and to stay in school, while supportive early childhood care, whether non-formally in the family or in a more structured way, often prepares the way for a child's positive experience in school. The final Communiqué picked up these concerns by calling for increasing investment in these goals.

7 Conclusion

The mandate of the High-Level Group, given in Dakar and recalled in the introduction to this report, envisaged that each year it would give renewed impetus to worldwide efforts to realize the goals of Education for All. Expectations of its impact were high. What assessment can we make, therefore, of the impact of the third meeting? The programme laid out four expected outcomes:

- ▷ Maintaining global political momentum and mobilizing resources for realizing the EFA goals;
- ▷ Developing an International Action Agenda for the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005;
- ▷ Reviewing progress towards the achievement of the Dakar goals, identifying key challenges, and setting strategies and priorities;
- ▷ Assessing the extent to which the international commitments made at Dakar and after are being met, and agreeing on ways to ensure that they are met.

As a preliminary remark, it is clear that the deliberations of the High-Level Group, global in their scope, are at a certain distance from implementation of EFA plans and strategies in particular contexts. However, the Group's role in establishing a framework for effective cooperation, for setting priorities, and for identifying and mobilizing resources is key; these impacts are a function as much of the quality of the process of the meeting as of its content. Thus some comments on the process follow an assessment of the expected outcomes.

- ▷ There is no doubt that the Delhi meeting contributed to the maintenance of political momentum, bringing together, as it did, political, professional or administrative leadership in the educational sphere, from a wide range of stakeholders. While the level of participation could be further enhanced, as the 2002 Abuja Communiqué called for, the profile of EFA continues to grow;
- ▷ The matter of mobilizing resources needs further clarification with regard to the role of the High-Level Group. This is implied in the communiqué which calls for more effective linkages between this Group, the Working Group and the FTI partners' group. While the Fast-Track Initiative promises to mobilize resources for the goal on primary education

(including gender parity and quality in that context), the mobilization of resources for the other Dakar goals has not yet exercised the collective mind of the High-Level Group;

- ▷ The High-Level Group spent a session considering the urgency of action needed to reach the 2005 target on gender parity. 2005 is around the corner and the gender parity goal has not yet been met. The Action Agenda, as presented in the communiqué, is a challenge to governments, civil society, funders and international agencies. Its impact will therefore become visible, or not, as these stakeholders adjust their priorities and strategies;
- ▷ With the annual input from the *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, the High-Level Group is now able to discharge adequately its duty of reviewing progress in EFA. The setting of strategies and priorities on that basis remains somewhat unfocused, but is again to be found in the exhortations of the communiqué to actors on the ground. Accurate and timely data is key in tracking progress on EFA.
- ▷ This meeting of the High-Level Group grappled seriously with the extent to which international commitments are being met, both financial commitments (through its examination of the Fast-Track Initiative) and commitments to coordinate and cooperate (through its discussion of the role of UNESCO and of EFA mechanisms). The Group constitutes a forum par excellence where international commitments should be spelt out and accountability made explicit.

And what of the process? The Minister of Education and Mass Literacy of Burkina Faso, Mr Mathieu Ouedraogo, observed in the final working session that the meeting appeared not to engage substantively with the input and data provided by the *Monitoring Report*. Instead, participants took the opportunity to present their own experiences and contexts, preferring such an approach to a more robust and interactive debate on the implications of the current status of EFA. These observations underline the need for a pro-active, deliberate and focused process during the meeting enabling the High-Level Group to speak with the authority which its composition undoubtedly warrants.

Appendices

I. Communiqué from the third meeting of

The New Delhi Statement

1. We, Heads of States, Ministers, Heads of international organizations, Heads of non-governmental organizations and high-level officials of international agencies met, at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO, for the third meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All during 11-12 November 2003 in New Delhi, India. We thank the Government of India for hosting the meeting and for generously providing the venue for us to continue our ongoing, annual monitoring of progress towards achieving the EFA goals. Two delegates of the Children's Parliament on the Right to Education that met in Delhi presented the conclusions of their debates. We paid particular attention to the imminent goal of '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'.

The Leap to Equality

2. We welcomed the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4. Gender and Education for All: *The Leap to Equality*, the second in an annual series produced by an independent Team. The Report has provided us with high-quality analysis based on data reported to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics for the school year 2000/2001 to help us maintain political support for EFA and hold the international community to account for its commitments made at the World Education Forum in Dakar (April 2000). Its findings emphasize that education of girls and women is not only a human right but also a *sine qua non* for achieving other development priorities, including the Millennium Development Goals, and that gender equity is an important indicator for progress towards these goals. A commitment to Education for All is the best guarantee for humanity, of hope, peace, confidence and progress. As representatives in the High-Level Group, we consider ourselves to be champions for policies, reforms and actions that are critical to achieving the EFA goals. We shall work tirelessly with our constituencies to further accelerate our efforts.

3. We are encouraged by the evident progress in gender parity, particularly at primary level, where the proportion of girls to boys enrolled rose from 88 per

cent in 1990 to 94 per cent in 2000. Girls' participation in secondary education also increased in all developing countries during the 1990s.

4. Nevertheless, the fact that the majority (57 per cent) of 104 million out-of-school children are girls and that almost two thirds of the 860 million non-literate people are women indicates that girls continue to face sharp discrimination in access to education at all levels. Progress needs to be drastically accelerated since more than half of the 128 countries for which data are available are unlikely to meet the gender parity goal in primary and secondary education by 2005. Unless policies change, even reaching gender parity by 2015 will remain a serious challenge for more than 40 per cent of the countries. This requires that special measures be taken to target adult illiteracy since educated mothers enhance the access of girls to education. The global HIV/AIDS pandemic, armed conflict, child labour, various forms of disability and lack of resources all play a part in curtailing the right of children, particularly of girls, to education.

Meeting the EFA Commitments: An Action Agenda

5. We must not fail in the commitments we made at Dakar and reiterated at Monterrey. We, therefore, urge our constituencies to work in genuine partnership and give prominence to the following actions:
6. **Governments** should provide strong and visionary leadership. They should implement policies and reforms in an integrated manner to ensure effective and efficient use of domestic and external resources. They should seek to diversify their resource base and give budgetary priority to policies that promote gender equality. Prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS should be central to all national education and development policies, plans and programmes. Immediate strategic and other supportive actions towards gender parity by 2005 and gender equality by 2015 should include:
- ▷ Enacting national legislation to enforce children's right to free and compulsory quality education, prevent and progressively eliminate child labour, and prohibit early marriage.
 - ▷ Eliminating school fees and reducing other indirect costs of schooling for parents, while sustaining quality through adequate investments.

the High-Level Group on Education For All

- ▷ *Adopting policy measures that favour girls' education, such as developing and applying gender-sensitive curricula and teaching methods, establishing safe and positive learning environments, and integrating HIV/AIDS issues and reproductive health in curricula and teacher-training programmes.*
 - ▷ *Strengthening the number, competencies and status of teachers, particularly female teachers, and encouraging their retention in the profession.*
 - ▷ *Increasing investment to ensure quality, early childhood care and education, and skills and literacy programmes for women and adolescents.*
 - ▷ *Recognizing, encouraging and supporting communities, parents, teachers and children in carrying out their duties to uphold the right of all children to basic education of good quality.*
 - ▷ *Formulating national policies to ensure equal opportunities in access to jobs and equal pay.*
7. **Donor countries and international agencies** should fulfil their commitments made at Dakar and Monterrey. Working with partners, they should bridge the financing gap between the current level of support for basic education, amounting to US\$1.5 billion per year, and the amount needed in external support to reach the gender goals and universal primary education by 2015, estimated at an additional US\$5.6 billion per year in last year's EFA Global Monitoring Report. They should redress the decline of total Official Development Assistance (ODA) that remains below the level of the early 1990s. This can be done by:
- ▷ *Strengthening the Fast-Track Initiative as an effective instrument for mobilizing additional support to EFA and harmonizing donor contributions.*
 - ▷ *Paying early attention to the financial requirements of the five analytical Fast-Track countries, with due recognition to the need for flexibility so that country-specific reforms are taken into account.*
 - ▷ *Increasing ODA to, at least, the levels agreed upon in Monterrey and ensure that a higher proportion is allocated to basic education.*
 - ▷ *Increasing support for basic education by multilateral agencies, in particular the regional development banks whose recent declining support is particularly damaging.*
- ▷ *Demonstrating visible movement on harmonization of procedures among agencies, and between agencies and governments in support of national policies.*
 - ▷ *Accelerating support to those efforts, partnerships and interventions that target girls' education in countries most at risk of not meeting the 2005 gender parity goal.*
 - ▷ *Increasing attention to gender in development assistance and budgeting, and strengthening a focus on gender and HIV/AIDS in all major instruments and initiatives, including SWAPS, PRSPs and the Fast-Track Initiative.*
 - ▷ *Supporting capacity-building to overcome institutional and other obstacles to the successful implementation of strategies and policies in support of gender parity and equality.*
8. **Non-governmental and other civil society organizations** should become fully recognized and accepted partners in the effort to achieve the gender and EFA goals through engagement in national policy dialogue and other participatory processes between governments and international agencies. Civil society should complement government efforts, and governments should promote genuine partnerships with civil society organizations based on their respective comparative advantages for advancing EFA. The potential of the private sector to work in partnership with governments and within national education policies and programmes should be fully exploited. These organizations should increase their efforts to:
- ▷ *Urge governments and the international community to fulfil their stated commitments for support of education.*
 - ▷ *Provide innovative education programmes for out-of-school girls and women within the context of development programmes.*
 - ▷ *Build a broader national constituency in support of EFA and girls' education.*
9. *The adoption of decentralization policies can provide a stronger voice for civil society and a fuller response to local and rural needs in basic education. International agencies should support capacity-building of local bodies and community-based organizations to improve delivery of educational services, particularly for the poor.*

Coordinating work towards EFA

10. We recognize the need for better coordination of the range of international initiatives concerned with achieving the EFA goals. This must be achieved at the global, regional and national levels. These include:
 - ▷ The Millennium Development Goals.
 - ▷ The Fast-Track Initiative, SWAPs and PRSPs.
 - ▷ The United Nations initiatives, in particular the Literacy Decade and the forthcoming Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and EFA Flagships.
 - ▷ A strengthened United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) along the lines recommended in the Istanbul Consensus Statement and support to the UNICEF programme to accelerate progress towards gender parity in 25 countries by 2005.
 - ▷ The E-9 Initiative.

The way forward

International initiatives

11. The donors' meeting in Oslo, Norway (November 2003) should reach agreement on a clear framework to improve the effectiveness of the Fast-Track Initiative and mobilize resources for endorsed countries. A statement on its future should be made as soon as possible and no later than at the meeting of the Development Committee of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Spring 2004.
12. Particular attention should be given to EFA in nations that are in the process of rebuilding their education systems following conflict, instability and disruption.

Statistics

13. The capacity of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) should be enhanced in identifying data gaps, improving data collection and quality, helping countries supply disaggregated data, and building national and regional statistical capacities.
14. Governments should strengthen their data collection systems and statistics-related capacities both to inform the development of national EFA policies and to enable the timely reporting of data to the UIS for the annual monitoring of EFA.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report

15. The EFA Global Monitoring Report should:
 - ▷ Provide a country-level assessment of the attainment of the gender parity goal in its 2008 edition.
 - ▷ Analyse the effectiveness of regional, sub regional and national coordination of EFA.
 - ▷ Continue to develop the EFA Index.
 - ▷ Review the status and implementation of national EFA and other education sector plans.

UNESCO

16. UNESCO should:
 - ▷ Continue to play the key role in EFA coordination as stated in the Dakar Framework for Action. Other international organizations should continue to support the role of UNESCO in enhancing EFA.
 - ▷ Review and enhance its capacity for coordination.
 - ▷ Ensure more effective linkages between the Working Group on Education for All, the High-Level Group and the FTI Partners' Group.
 - ▷ Take appropriate measures in these respects and report to the High-Level Group at its meeting in Brazil in November 2004.

Next meeting

17. We welcome the invitation of the Government of Brazil to host the next meeting of the High-Level Group in November 2004.

II. Address by Koïchiro Matsuura,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to each one of you to this, the third meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA). Let me begin with an expression of sincere thanks to our host, the Government of India and, in particular, the Prime Minister and Minister Joshi, for the excellent arrangements and the warm hospitality we have received. It is a pleasure to be here.

It is important that we are holding this meeting in India and South Asia, where the challenges of achieving EFA sometimes seem as high as the Himalayan mountains. But positive steps are being taken. In India, for example, we can point to the Constitutional Amendment to make elementary education a fundamental right; to the recently announced national programme on girls' education; to the innovative efforts to reach the unreached children, in partnership with civil society; and to EFA planning processes at state and national levels. Please note that India's National EFA Plan is an excellent example of a country strategy designed with reference to an international framework, in this case the Dakar Framework for Action. It is a federal country, where the States are aware of the international dimension of EFA.

At this meeting of the High-Level Group, we shall retain the format that proved effective in Abuja, Nigeria, by aligning the agenda and outcomes to the *Monitoring Report*, which this year is focused on gender and education; by preparing the meeting as a collaborative enterprise; and by working closely with the main EFA partners through the Sherpas Group, especially with UNICEF which leads UNGEI and has made useful contributions to developing the Action Agenda for achieving gender parity by 2005.

The meeting has attracted greater participation, more attention and considerable interest, judging from the number and size of delegations and the interest in side events – notably, the Children's Parliament and the international panel discussion on child labour and EFA. High-level political representation has been assured, though the industrialized countries are under-represented.

Review of the past year in EFA since Abuja

Let me now provide a brief overview of several key developments during the past 12 months since last year's meeting in Abuja. First, there has been a widening of the EFA debate within the UN system, especially through the processes relating to the Millennium Development Goals. One can point to the EFA paper discussed by the CEB (April 2003) and the paper on Universal Primary Education (UPE) discussed by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) last month. These and other interactions are serving to sensitize the higher echelons of the UN system to EFA, to strengthen links with other UN agencies and international financial institutions, and to promote synergy with the other Millennium Development Goals.

Secondly, there has been a noticeable strengthening of collaboration with civil society at the international level. Here reference can be made to the EFA Week's largest lesson in history last April and the plans for next year's EFA Week, which will seek to mount the largest ever lobby, focused on out-of-school children. Meanwhile, the Collective Consultation of NGOs continues to gather strength and momentum.

At the country level, however, the picture is mixed; there is clearly room for improvement in Government/NGO partnership. It is not just a question of misunderstanding; there are real differences of opinion and interest that need to be addressed in a constructive spirit. In UNESCO, we see the role of civil society as complementary to government and seek to promote genuine partnerships between them, based on their comparative advantage, for advancing EFA.

Regional and sub-regional meetings represent a third important area of activity. Examples include MINEDAF VIII in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in December 2002; the South Asia Forum of Ministers on EFA, whose last meeting was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in May 2002; and the meeting of African Ministers of Education on the NEPAD process in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in March 2003. In prospect are a number of further EFA-related meetings of a regional, sub-regional or South-

Director-General of UNESCO

South character: the forthcoming E-9 Meeting in Cairo in December 2003 and then, in January 2004, which will be a very busy month for me, a series of ministerial conferences – the Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Accra, Ghana; the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Countries having Portuguese as an Official Language (PALOPs) and Equatorial Guinea, to be held in Sao Tomé and Príncipe; the Conference of Ministers of Education of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States (CEMAC) in Yaounde, Cameroon; and the meeting of Pacific Ministers of Education in Apia, Samoa. The latter, by the way, will see the regional launch of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* and a presentation of a synthesis of Pacific-region EFA Action Plans.

A question arising from these regional meetings, however, is how they can be better linked with the international mechanisms for coordinating EFA, especially for follow-up of the High-Level Group and the Working Group. Important gatherings of regional political leaders on EFA convened by UNESCO deserve to be supported and owned by the international community. This is as much a challenge for UNESCO as its partners.

A fourth key area of development is accelerating the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI). The forthcoming Donors Meeting in Oslo (20–21 November) will be vital for the future of the FTI. Let me re-affirm that UNESCO sees the FTI as a major EFA development that is in keeping not only with the pledges made in Dakar but also with the understandings reached in Monterrey. Please note here that the Dakar Framework for Action endows the High-Level Group with an important role in resource mobilization and we shall be reviewing international commitments in Session IV, based on the Monitoring Report's analysis of donor behaviour and performance.

Countries that have devoted time, energy and effort to preparing EFA Plans and fine-tuning them to meet international demands (as expressed, for example, in UNDAF, PRSPs and the FTI) are anxious for a donor response that is commensurate with their need for external

assistance for EFA. Country ownership and the current political drive for achieving results may flag if funds are not forthcoming soon. The Dakar Framework for Action stressed the need for credible national EFA plans but the credibility of donor commitments and pledges is now also at stake. The presence here of a number of Heads and Senior Officials of multilateral and bilateral agencies provides an opportunity to convey our collective concerns to the Donors Meeting in Oslo.

A fifth development relates to the widely acknowledged success of the meeting of the Working Group on EFA in July 2003. On this occasion, the EFA Flagships received focused attention but, more generally, the July meeting manifested a greater sense of partnership and shared engagement which was most heartening.

The sixth development relates to UNESCO itself and the role it plays in EFA. The Organization's new Programme and Budget for the next biennium are aligned more closely to the Dakar goals and wider EFA concerns like HIV/AIDS. Thus, 80% of the budget of the Education Sector is now devoted to EFA and 70% of the entire budget of the Education Sector is decentralised. We are strengthening our cluster offices with educational expertise and have just held a "General Assembly" of field office specialists to gear up for the challenges ahead. Please note that the recent 32nd session of the General Conference gave full support to UNESCO's role in EFA regarding international coordination, monitoring, advocacy and technical assistance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me now turn to the major messages arising from the *Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*. I would like to compliment the Monitoring Report team for once again producing a report of high quality. Even though UNESCO hosts the *Monitoring Report* team and provides support of various kinds, not least from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, I should like to emphasize that the Monitoring Report enjoys full editorial independence and freedom. UNESCO has stood by its promise made at Dakar that it would not interfere editorially in the generation of the *Report*.

The *2003/4 Monitoring Report* raises concerns regarding the pace of EFA progress generally and towards the 2005 gender parity goal in particular, basing its analysis on statistics for the year 2000. There is no denial of the fact that real progress is being made in many countries and regions to reduce gender disparities in education, but the rate of improvement in at least 54 countries leaves much to be desired. And without gender parity in enrolment, one cannot seriously expect the 2015 goal of gender equality throughout education to be achieved. This is not pessimism, let me stress, but a realistic appraisal that faster rates of change and deeper processes of change will be needed if countries are to reach the goals agreed upon.

Hence the importance of meetings such as this where we can try to reinvigorate the drive for gender parity in education, in the knowledge that this will assist the overall EFA efforts. Hence the importance of the *Monitoring Report's* insistence that there are tried and tested tools to bring about the necessary changes. Hence the importance of working in partnership in practical ways to obtain concrete beneficial effects.

Let me draw attention to certain new features of the Monitoring Report: for example, the Education Development Index, which is a useful instrument for capturing what can seem an over-complex reality. In addition, the coverage of EFA in industrialized countries alerts us to the fact that no one can rest on their laurels. The report also stresses the need for an integrated inter-Ministerial, inter-agency approach to address the various challenges of achieving gender parity and equality.

This year's report reminds us that EFA is not a construct of the 1990s. Its origins go back much further, and are enshrined in the human rights legislation that proceeded from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after World War Two. Most countries have incorporated these basic principles into their national legislation, and are therefore legally bound to provide free and compulsory education – at least at primary level – to all children. Unfortunately, this obligation is too often honoured in the breach, and we know that many countries are far from achieving universal primary enrolment, let alone completion, at the present time.

The *Monitoring Report* has also done useful work on clarifying the distinction between parity and equality. The former, which is focused on enrolment, is within reach for most countries by 2015, provided the commitment to do so is maintained. The latter is more fundamental, and will require policy change covering a broad range of social and economic issues. Ultimately, attaining equality in education also requires the attainment of equality in much wider aspects of life and work.

The *Report*, furthermore, is valuable for providing concrete example of policies and strategies that work on the ground. This kind of information should bolster the "can-do" attitude that is so necessary for making practical progress. In addition, the *Report* provides clear priorities for both national and international policy, if EFA is to be achieved over the next dozen years. The international community is shown to be responding only slowly to the challenge of Dakar. Although movement is in the right direction, higher levels of resourcing are required, and aid must be more sharply focused upon those countries needing it most.

We are in an increasingly better position to understand the challenges of data collection and analysis facing countries and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). I am certain that the UIS is doing a fine job; we should recognize that the collection, analysis and presentation of statistics inevitably involve a time-lag. An important benefit of the concurrent review and analysis of EFA progress by the High-Level Group and the *Monitoring Report* is that both Governments and UIS are looking more closely at data collection systems and the need to strengthen statistics-related capacity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International coordination is a complex evolutionary process that, in my judgement, has improved since Dakar and is moving in the right direction. We need to build on our experience and improve follow-up to the High-Level Group and the Working Group and to link these with G-8 and UN processes. These improvements should be based on the mandate given to us by the world's Ministers of Education at the World Education Forum in Dakar in April

2000. After lengthy discussion about suitable mechanisms of coordination and follow-up, the participants made clear their decision in the Dakar Framework for Action. I wish to honour and respect that decision and shall do my utmost to fulfil the responsibilities it places on our shoulders. Member States have endorsed our work at the recent UNESCO General Conference, where I gave my assurance that we are not complacent in any way about the need to secure appropriate and viable improvements in coordination and mobilization.

UNESCO is confident that, with the continued and constructive support of its partners and with a broadened base of partnership, we can move rapidly forward towards meeting the EFA challenges. We should adopt a robust, practical approach inspired by the many examples of vision, courage and leadership that are provided by the EFA movement. We should work in harmony and with determination to stay the course together up to 2015. The millions of children, youth and adults still lacking basic education deserve nothing less.

Thank you.

III. Declaration of the Children's Parliament on the right to education

1. Education should be free. School fees and all materials related to school should be free.
2. Communal violence and tensions should be stopped, so that children are able to enjoy their childhood and get an education.
3. There should be a school within every 1 kilometre of a child's home.
4. Children should be provided with good schools, with all the basic amenities and facilities in the school.
5. In every government and private school there should be the same education; education at government schools should be as good quality as private schools.
6. The governments of the whole world should make arrangements for education and shelter for orphaned and helpless children.
7. Child labour should be completely abolished.
8. Special classes should be given on diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, at school. There shouldn't be any discrimination against children infected with HIV/AIDS at school.
9. Girls and boys should get the same education.
10. Information should be given to all schools about dangerous diseases, like HIV/AIDS and all children with AIDS should get an education in schools (with special facilities).
11. All the rich and poor governments instead of spending money on making materials for war should spend money on education.
12. All children under 18 years of age should get free and compulsory education.
13. In all matters that relate to children, children themselves should be allowed to participate.
14. Special arrangements should be made, and separate schooling be provided to child labourers.
15. There should be no sexual harassment or exploitation of girls in school. School should be a safe place for all children, especially for girls.
16. During natural disasters and other difficulties special arrangements should be made for children and, at that time, special arrangements should also be made for education.
17. There should be quality education, and for us that means:
 - (i) Trained teachers, who are knowledgeable about how to teach, and want to teach.
 - (ii) There should be medical facilities in school.
 - (iii) Games and fun in school.
 - (iv) Participation of children in school planning and lessons.
18. Education should be interesting and useful – it should help with getting a job.
19. There should be at least one teacher for every thirty children.
20. There should be separate education for children from 0-6 years. All children should be given love by their parents.

Delhi, 10 November 2003

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V. Programme of the meeting

The High-Level Group serves as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization. Informed by a monitoring report,...it will also provide an opportunity to hold the global community to account for commitments made in Dakar (Dakar Framework for Action, Para. 19).

Expected outcomes

- Maintaining global political momentum and mobilizing resources for realizing the EFA goals;
- Developing an International Action Agenda for the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005;
- Reviewing progress towards the achievement of the Dakar goals, identifying key challenges, and setting strategies and priorities; and
- Assessing the extent to which the international commitments made at Dakar and after are being met, and agreeing on ways to ensure that they are met.

Monday, 10 November 2003

10 am-1 pm *Registration at the Ashok Hotel*

6-7.00 pm *Opening ceremony at Vigyan Bhawan*

Chairperson:

Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister of Human Resource Development, India

Welcoming address:

Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Keynote addresses:

- *The challenges of EFA in transition countries:*

Askar Akayev, President of Kyrgyzstan

- *Achieving EFA in post-conflict and reconstruction situations*

Arthur Zahidi N'goma, Vice-President, Democratic Republic of the Congo

- *Message from the President of France on Education for All*

Pierre-André Wiltzer, Ministre délégué de la coopération et de la Francophonie, France

Opening speech: Education for All an inalienable right:

A.B. Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India

8.30 pm: *Welcome reception hosted by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India: Ashok Hotel*

Tuesday, 11 November 2003

Working Session I (Ashok Hotel)

9.30 am-1 pm: *Education for All: on the path to gender equality?*

Chairperson: Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO

Lead Commentary: Christopher Colclough, Director, EFA Global Monitoring Report

Respondents:

- Luis Gomez Gutierrez, Minister of Education, Cuba
- Zéphirin Diabré, Associate Administrator, UNDP
- Friedrich Hamburger, the Head of Cabinet of Paul Nielson, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, European Commission

The Session will highlight progress towards all six EFA goals paying particular attention to gender. It will discuss the major barriers to and opportunities for the attainment of gender parity by 2005 and gender equality by 2015. Critical planning and financial issues will be highlighted. Policies and strategies that have led to positive outcomes in achieving gender parity and equality in specific contexts will serve as a basis for further reactions by the respondents and should lead to provisional recommendations by the High-Level Group and for identifying actions to be taken by the different constituencies (governments, funding and technical assistance agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations). While covering issues from the full EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4. Gender and Education for All: the Leap to Equality, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are particularly relevant.

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions:

Mary Hatwood Futrell, President, Education International

1-2.15 pm: *Lunch hosted by Director-General of UNESCO: Ashok Hotel*

Working Session II

2.30-6 pm: *The urgency of action: achieving gender parity by 2005*
Chair and Lead Commentary: Zobaïda Jalal, Minister of Education, Pakistan

Respondents:

- Jahan Ara Begum, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Primary and Mass Education, Bangladesh
- Rosalie Kama, Minister of Education, Congo
- UNICEF
- Maria Khan, Secretary General, Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education

This Session will build on the findings of the Monitoring Report and the provisional recommendations and actions as presented and discussed in Working Session I. Its purpose is to reach agreement on specific steps that need to be taken without delay by governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies, non-governmental and other civil society organizations in order to speed up the process towards eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015. There is a risk of goal fatigue if the international community continues to set goals that are not achieved in the agreed time-frame. The Action Agenda will reflect the renewed commitment of EFA partners to accelerate progress to achieve gender parity in schooling. Chapters 3 and 4 of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 are particularly relevant.

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions:

Peter Piot, Executive Director, UNAIDS

7.30 pm: *Cultural Programme followed by dinner hosted by Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India: Ashok Hotel*

Wednesday, 12 November 2003

Working Session III

9-11 am: *National planning and policy reform - what makes a difference?*
Chair and Lead Commentary: Arthur Zahidi N'goma, Vice-President, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Respondents:

- Georges Saitoti, Minister of Education, Kenya
- Kailash Satyarthi, Chairperson, Global Campaign for Education

Achieving greater gender equality requires targeted planning and policy reform as well as more fundamental political and social measures that extend beyond the mandate of ministries of education. The discussion will focus on reforms, strategies and programmes that have been identified in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 as having made a critical difference in progressing towards EFA in specific contexts. They include: the broader environment of governance, the engagement of civil society, decentralization, free primary education and reform for quality education. The Session aims at highlighting their more general applicability as a basis for specific recommendations and actions. Chapter 5 and (part of) Chapter 6 of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 are particularly relevant.

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions:

Masood Ahmed, Director-General, Policy and International Programmes, the Department for International Development (United Kingdom)

Working Session IV

11 am-1 pm: *Meeting our international commitments: at a critical juncture?*

Chair and Lead Commentary: Pierre-André Wiltzer, Ministre délégué de la coopération et de la Francophonie, France

Respondents:

- Mathieu Ouedraogo, Minister of Basic Education and Mass Literacy, Burkina Faso
- Henry Jeffrey, Minister of Education, Guyana
- Jean-Louis Sarbib, Senior Vice-President, Human Development, World Bank

Despite the declared commitments in Dakar, at Monterrey and at meetings of the G-8 countries, total ODA still stands well below the 1990 figure and aid to education continues to fall far short of projected needs to finance the EFA agenda. Certain countries and regions in high need are unable to attract their proportionate share. The Fast-Track Initiative is suffering from a financing gap for supporting even the first seven endorsed countries. This raises concerns regarding the ability of multilateral and bilateral agencies to live up to their pledges and commitments in support of EFA. Better and more efficient harmonization of practices is also necessary to reduce the administrative burden on developing countries. The Session will aim at making recommendations and proposing actions for better support for EFA, using the Fast-Track Initiative as an effective instrument, and ensuring higher visibility of gender in the international agenda. First part of Chapter 6 of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 is particularly relevant.

Discussion

Major points, recommendations and actions:

Fred Schieck, Deputy Administrator, USAID

1-2.15 pm: *Lunch hosted by the Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India: Ashok Hotel*

Working Session V

2.30-4.30 pm: *Accelerating the momentum: challenges of coordination and cooperation*

Chair and Lead Commentary: Zhou Ji, Minister of Education, China

Respondents:

- Ichiro Fujisaki, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Japan
- Fabian Osuji, Minister of Education, Nigeria

In view of the need to accelerate progress towards all six EFA goals, coordination and collaboration need to be strengthened at international, regional, sub-regional and national levels. Participants are invited to suggest ways of enhancing the impact and improving the follow-up to the High-Level Group and the Working Group on Education for All. The linkages of the High-Level Group to the FTI donors group need attention. The Session should reach agreement on further critical work on data collection and analysis undertaken by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, especially the development of indicators for literacy, non-formal education and quality. A review of the role and function of the annual EFA Global Monitoring Report should be undertaken. The second half of Chapter 6 of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4 is particularly relevant.

*Discussion**Major points, recommendations and actions:*

John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

Working Session VI

- 4.30-5.30 pm: *Agreement on the way forward*
Chairperson: John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO
- 6.30-6.45 pm: *Adoption of the Communiqué*
Chairperson: Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO
- 6.45-7 pm: *Concluding remarks*
 Murlī Manohar Joshi, Minister of Human Resource Development, Science and Technology, India
- 7.30 pm: *Farewell reception hosted by the Director-General of UNESCO:* Ashok Hotel

Notes:

- Each of the working sessions will be introduced by the Chair and Lead of the session who will, with point of departure in the Monitoring Report, outline in 10 minutes the most critical issues for discussion by the meeting. This will be followed by three responses of 5 minutes each providing further reflections and considerations for the debate. The role of the Chair will be to lead the session towards specific recommendations for actions. The major points, recommendations and actions will be highlighted in 10 minutes at the end of each session. The summaries will form the basis for reaching consensus on the lines of action, communication and follow-up in Working Session VI.
- The meeting will be co-chaired by the Director-General of UNESCO and the Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- The Opening Ceremony will be public (live telecast on television in India); other sessions are restricted to participants.
- Tea/Coffee will be available to participants, but there will be no breaks, except after the inaugural session at Vigyan Bhawan on 10 November.
- A drafting group ('sherpas') will develop the Communiqué. The Group of Sherpas will meet at Ashok Hotel on Monday afternoon, end of Working Session II on Tuesday and over a working lunch on Wednesday.
- A media briefing on the Communiqué will be held at the conclusion of the meeting.
- Side events:
 10 Nov. 7.45-8 pm (Ashok Hotel): Inauguration of Exhibition on EFA in India (organized by the Government of India, UNESCO and UNICEF); 8-8.30 pm: Screening of film on EFA in India (Produced by UNICEF and the Government of India).
 11 Nov. 7.30 pm (Ashok Hotel): the Government of India will present a cultural programme.
- General information on the meeting and accommodation can be found on <http://www.hlgnewdelhi.com/>
- A donors' group on the EFA Fast-Track Initiative, convened by the World Bank and UNESCO and co-chaired by Canada and Norway, will meet in Oslo 20-21 November 2003.

List of acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ASPBA	Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
E-9	Nine high-population countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan
EDI	EFA Development Index
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
FTI	Fast-Track Initiative
G-8	Group of eight major industrial democracies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States.
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund USAID United States Agency for International Development