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Organización
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Fourth Meeting of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA)

**3 – 5 September 2007
Dakar, Senegal**

Report



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Collective Consultation of NGOs
ON EDUCATION FOR ALL
Consultation Collective des ONG
SUR L'EDUCATION POUR TOUS
Consulta Colectiva de las ONG
SOBRE LA EDUCACIÓN PARA TODOS



**Fourth Meeting of the
Collective Consultation of NGOs
on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA)**

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Consultation of NGOs on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA)**

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REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE COLLECTIVE CONSULTATION OF NGOS ON EDUCATION FOR ALL (CCNGO/EFA)

Dakar, Senegal, 3 to 5 September 2007

1. Background and objectives

Since the World Education Forum of 2000 in Dakar, the expansion and regionalization of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA) has gradually been advancing. Previous CCNGO/EFA meetings served not only to evaluate the progress and challenges of the global EFA movement and the crucial role that civil society could play in that endeavour, but also to strengthen the regional networks in terms of their representativeness, establishment and capacity for involvement and effective dialogue in the public and political arena. Following the Bangkok (July 2001), Porto Alegre (January 2003) and Beirut (December 2004) meetings, Dakar thus served as a new global venue to promote the collective voice of NGOs engaged in EFA, midway to 2015, the target date for achieving the goals set out in the Framework for Action adopted in 2000.

2. Attendance, organization and highlights

Organized by the Division for the Coordination of United Nations Priorities in Education, in partnership with the Regional Bureau for Education in Africa, located in Dakar (UNESCO/BREDA), the fourth meeting was attended by some 100 delegates representing non-governmental organizations and civil society networks from all regions of the world, and UNESCO programme specialists. Opened by Mr Moussa Sakho, Minister of Technical Education and Vocational Training, the three-day session of deliberations and exchanges was enhanced by presentations made by, among others, regional and international focal points of the CCNGO/EFA coordination group, on the outcomes of studies carried out on civil society participation in policy dialogue and in the EFA process since Dakar. The analyses and findings of that research work formed the main focus of the introductory plenary discussions, which were followed by group-based NGO capacity-building training sessions, meetings on regional developments and workshops dealing with each of the six EFA goals. The summaries of the deliberations and recommendations made during the workshops were the main frame of reference for the debate and the declaration adopted by participants on the closing day of the fourth CCNGO/EFA meeting.

3. From Beirut to Dakar: developments and main activities within the CCNGO/EFA

3.1. CCNGO/EFA participation in international mechanisms

At the international level, the CCNGO was now closely involved in the various EFA monitoring mechanisms, which provided a platform for consultation, discussion and redefinition of the strategic thrusts necessary for the attainment of the EFA goals. The CCNGO participated in the Working Group meetings in 2005 and 2006, the High-Level Group meetings held in Beijing in 2005 and in Cairo in 2006, and the Ministerial Round Table on EFA organized by the NGO Committee of UNESCO's Executive Board at its 175th session. The CCNGO also collaborated with the editorial board of the *Global Monitoring Report* and thus contributed to the analyses published in the 2006 and 2007 editions, sharing civil society perspectives on the issues of literacy and education and early childhood care.

Recent years had also afforded opportunities for greater involvement in other global civil society initiatives to promote education. The Global Action Week on Education was an opportunity for

specific focus on joint activities undertaken with the Global Campaign for Education, many of whose active members are central to CCNGO's international and regional coordination efforts. More significantly, CCNGO and UNESCO had been involved in major international civil society events through the organization of EFA workshops as part of the World Social Forums held in Bamako (2006) and Nairobi (2007).

3.2. CCNGO/EFA at the regional level

Arab States region

Against a political backdrop that was not always conducive to civil society participation, the existence of several governmental and institutional initiatives which signal a warming of relations was to be noted. Such signs of rapprochement included the initiation of dialogue, in particular in Morocco and Egypt, between civil society organizations (CSOs) and education authorities and the invitation to 25 NGOs to participate in the first Gulf Countries Forum. Mention should also be made of the establishment of an NGO electronic education network operated through the services of the Alexandria Library.

Africa region

The civil society EFA movement in sub-Saharan Africa, as seen in the development, growth and strengthening of national EFA coordination structures, was continuing to grow, with the establishment of seven new coalitions, thus increasing to 32 the number of countries where the Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA) was represented. That process should not mask the difficulties facing CSOs in terms of human, financial and technical resources. To rectify that situation, ANCEFA had initiated numerous capacity-building programmes for its members, together with regional and subregional workshops, which in many cases had led to the publication of training manuals to ensure the sharing of knowledge and expertise necessary for developing effective advocacy campaigns. As part of those campaigns, the Africa region was building on two main EFA monitoring and evaluation tools with the launch of the Education Observatory in Africa and the national campaigns to track public spending on education, whose initial case studies, entitled "Financing Education and Quality", were the most recent achievements.

Latin America and the Caribbean region

Latin America and the Caribbean had also seen the development of their network of organizations engaged in EFA activities, with the establishment and strengthening of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE). The main initiatives observed in connection with this region reflected a commitment to expanding the base and breadth of associations working to promote education and influence education policy by supporting the formation of networks and national forums that were more open to all social development stakeholders. Strengthening common international approaches and, in particular, South-South synergies formed an integral part of that strategy of partnerships for action, with involvement in the Global Campaign for Education and the Real World Strategy capacity-building project undertaken in conjunction with ANCEFA and the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE).

Asia and the Pacific region

Under a unique and dynamic initiative, the ASPBAE members and other CSOs engaged in EFA promotion had continued the process of regionalizing the CCNGO/EFA mechanism and had launched the Education Watch programme, whose example might serve as a model, in particular for ANCEFA. Major activities also included the holding of EFA advocacy seminars and workshops organized on the issue of women's and girls' education. In addition, a number of studies had addressed challenges of particular concern in the region, such as the trend towards privatization of education.

4. Civil society participation in policy dialogue forums and in the EFA process: discussions and findings drawn from regional analyses

In all regions, the reports and discussions to which they gave rise all identified an increase in the strength of CSOs engaged in EFA activities, which had been accompanied by official pronouncements legitimizing those stakeholders' participation, to the extent of making it, in line with the Dakar Framework for Action, the cornerstone of EFA programmes and their success. The appeal made at the 2000 Global Forum for genuine partnership through which civil society would be fully involved at all stages in the attainment of the education goals had thus given impetus to the formation and strengthening of EFA networks. More and more countries had national coalitions, which were often grouped together as regional and international networks. Those groupings had in many cases helped the voluntary sector to strengthen its legitimacy, which had in some instances been contested by national authorities, and to acquire the right to participate in regional or international forums that were closed to national or local associations.

A further significant aspect of the process of consolidation among voluntary associations was the trend towards the inclusion of trade unions in national coalitions. Although, when viewed from an international standpoint, such rapprochement between educational associations and teacher bodies might seem to be as natural as, for example, the very wide membership of parents' associations, such a coming together was expected to be markedly less straightforward at the national level. The differences in political tradition and organization had long been difficult to overcome, especially since teachers' unions constituted a force that in the past questioned the voluntary sector's representativeness and organizational capacities. The launch of the Global Campaign for Education, which had seen the alliance of the NGO sector and the powerful Education International, was undoubtedly instrumental in the rapprochement that had occurred, primarily in Africa but also in the Asia and the Pacific region and in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

The studies and activities undertaken by CCNGO/EFA members also confirmed the trend, which was accelerating within most networks, towards the assembly of an increasingly broad and eclectic force of CSOs active in the field of education. That comprised service associations that carried out educational programmes and NGOs that campaigned for the right to education through advocacy, lobbying and monitoring of commitments made by the international community and national authorities. Also, the aim of extending participation in EFA campaigning to the social movement and to wider spheres of civil society appeared to be a positive course, in view of the moves made in that direction by the CCNGO/EFA at the international level and by CLADE in Latin America.

In countries where the political climate was conducive, the participatory approach taken by EFA mechanisms and programmes implemented by governments, UNESCO and other agencies of the United Nations system, donors and other technical and financial partners, constituted a step forward which at least provided a negotiating basis for civil society. Most national EFA plans explicitly referred to NGOs' and civil society's involvement at different phases of their formulation, although that was still far more frequent in the area of non-formal education or at the local level of decentralization policy-making.

For the vast majority of technical and financial partners, community and voluntary-sector participation was not merely accepted but in some cases regarded as a decisive factor in national programme and project selection. Educational strategies advanced by civil society with emphasis on reducing inequalities could in certain instances permit the inclusion of some of the most disadvantaged population groups (such as orphans, AIDS sufferers, rural dwellers and nomadic peoples), who would otherwise be denied access to formal education systems or sectoral aid programmes. That was borne out by the examples presented, including that of the Gambia's national network, which would have succeeded (through the redistribution of market gardening income to cover indirect costs of schooling) in bringing about spectacular progress towards parity between boys and girls in the country's primary school classes.

Despite its lack of resources and organizational difficulties, the voluntary sector could take pride in acting as a motivating force that had the potential to influence national education strategies and reveal shortcomings or successes that reflected the varying degrees of validity of participatory mechanisms implemented. Alongside UNESCO, civil society was committed to combating the temptation of a number of governments to abandon some EFA goals in favour of others deemed more pragmatic and achievable. It was in such a context that the Education Watch programme (initiated by ASPBAE and recently taken over by ANCEFA), the Real World Strategy and the African budget-tracking initiatives assumed their full significance. Owing to its grass-roots experience and closeness to the population groups most affected by education projects (primarily parents, pupils and teachers), civil society could take satisfaction in pointing out to authorities, technical and financial partners and the public itself how a holistic approach to the Dakar goals might be a requirement for their success. Literacy, adult learning, secondary education, early childhood care and quality education were all areas in which civil society had already stated its views and influenced educational strategies, whether it be teachers' unions demonstrating against wage freezes and the recruitment of underpaid and undertrained contract employees in Latin America, or NGOs in the Asia and the Pacific region protesting against the circumstances surrounding privatization of education, or African parents' associations opposing direct and indirect costs of primary education. The success of the Elimu Yetu Coalition in Kenya in its campaign for constitutional reform through the introduction of free primary education was an example that many NGOs and networks hoped to take as a model.

Such progress did not prevent delegates assembled at the fourth CCNGO/EFA meeting from all drawing attention to the continuing difficulties that CSOs face in making their voices heard and in influencing education policy-making. Despite increased capacities for local involvement and the call by NGOs themselves, by UNESCO and by other bodies for mechanisms based on civil society participation, the "partnership" referred to at the Dakar Forum had been construed in a variety of ways. That term encompassed highly dissimilar situations which depended, for example, on the nature and quality of the sometimes conflicting relationships between civil society and governments or on the degree of cohesion among donors and their financial weight, which could occasionally be more influential in deliberations than the voice of partner associations, even when consolidated into unified coalitions.

Many examples given in the regional reports or cited in the discussions described situations in which civil society was involved in education policies or programmes only at the final stages of their formulation, and NGOs were allowed to give opinions to monitoring bodies or mechanisms on a consultative basis only, which in some instances were more a case of lip service than actual political commitment to partnership. It was pointed out, by ANCEFA among others, that, at a time when UNESCO was signalling the primacy of the national level in EFA programme implementation, partnerships with NGOs were far more advanced among international bodies than at the country level. Another typical challenge increasingly faced by civil society was the difficult balance between voluntary commitment to participation stemming from the democratization of institutional practices and default-induced participation as a result of disengagement of the State and diminishment of its power.

The deliberations also covered the CSO's structural and organizational weakness, which further exacerbated imbalances in relations with authorities and other education stakeholders, which often characterized existing partnership mechanisms. The issues of advocacy and leadership capacity-building and training had fuelled widespread criticism of the lack or shortage of specific funding granted to NGOs by multilateral and bilateral organizations to help them to fulfil their role more effectively and participate fully on an equal basis in open discussion forums to define education policy. Many participants also expressed their deep concern about the lack of transparency and commitment to communication on the part of education authorities and, in some instances, partner organizations, in particular in information-sharing on EFA programmes and especially in budgetary matters.

5. EFA by 2015: challenges, conclusions and recommendations

The regional group meetings and the six workshops on the EFA goals provided an opportunity to review the EFA movement and strategies employed by the various partners with a view to achieving the Dakar goals and to discuss the formulation of recommendations to address the challenges facing many countries in meeting the 2015 target. A general summary of the conclusions reached in the plenary meeting and of the deliberations to which they gave rise identified three main issues around which the bulk of the concerns raised and recommendations put forward may be centred.

The first point concerned the CCNGO/EFA network's self-analysis of its strengths and weaknesses and proposals for structural and organizational capacity-building, enabling it to strengthen its foundations, networks and communication mechanisms in order to be able to lobby and influence education policies and EFA programmes more effectively.

The second aspect related to the extent of progress towards EFA worldwide and the need to continue to promote all the Dakar goals and uphold the spirit and letter of the Dakar Framework for Action in the face of a global trend in which educational issues were frequently centred on primary schooling, with particularly worrying consequences for the most marginalized sectors of society and population groups.

The Collective Consultation also examined matters relating to discussion platforms, consultation forums and coordination mechanisms, in short, the partnership so sought by all EFA stakeholders yet still so difficult for CSOs to define and achieve.

5.1. Civil society capacity-building

Despite the increase in the number of countries with national coalitions and NGOs actively involved in EFA and the strengthening of existing regional networks, their structural, organizational and human resource deficiencies and weaknesses were unanimously regarded as a serious handicap to the credibility and effectiveness of NGOs as key players and stakeholders. The stated requirements for NGO capacity-building were especially onerous, since they entailed the entire range of skills and resources necessary for exerting influence on national and international partners having at their disposal qualified and informed specialists well versed in the complex processes of sectoral and budgetary analysis and the political strategies and issues underlying education policy options, evaluation and monitoring. In addition to standard quantifiable needs in terms of financial resources (often a major prerequisite) and analytical, research and communication tools (especially access to databases), human resource training – lobbying, research, reporting and policy and programme evaluation and analysis expertise and ability – constituted an area on which many NGOs had also opted to focus.

An interesting follow-up suggestion by the Latin America and the Caribbean group was that EFA network capacity-building should be pursued, primarily at the national, provincial and local levels, to address the negative impact of neo-liberal policies on education and the prospects that alternative economic strategies could open up for EFA. Several delegates noted that capacity-building in the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes implemented by partners required, in turn, that CSOs, and national coalitions and regional networks in particular, undertake to respect scrupulously the need for transparency and accountability in activities with their members and supporters. The latter, especially UNESCO, were requested to assist the networks in this endeavour by providing support for the development of coordination structures and the strengthening of regional focal points.

Many speakers also stressed the importance of continuing and expanding the establishment, consolidation and networking of EFA coalitions and NGOs at the local, provincial, national and regional levels. In addition to the call for national coalitions to be established in countries where there was none and, where appropriate, for parallel bodies to be grouped together as a single

organization, which would thus be stronger and more representative, several delegates and two regional groups recommended that the process of rapprochement and inclusion of the various segments of civil society directly affected by EFA, namely parents' associations, student organizations, universities and bodies conducting social and educational science research and independent teachers' unions, be continued.

Within the specific context of the Arab regional group, it was recommended that governments be urged to adopt and observe legislation guaranteeing trade unions' right of association and organization and that education authorities recognize them as full partners in EFA programme development and implementation. In the view of several delegates, NGOs should also increase their efforts to win over information professionals and gain their support for the EFA cause. The resolutions of both the Arab and the Africa regional groups drew attention to the major advocacy and lobbying impact which the media could have if regularly briefed and invited to work alongside NGOs and even to join them as full members.

The importance of expanding subnational and interregional exchanges between networks and NGOs in order to improve the sharing of experiences and strategies and thus contribute to building the capacities of participating bodies was also covered in several recommendations and statements. The Latin America group expressed its particular commitment to strengthening South-South cooperation and partnerships, primarily through the Real World Strategy and more sustained and closer participation in other intercontinental initiatives undertaken on education matters as well as debt-related issues and conditionalities for international assistance. In developing this broader approach, the Latin America group also stressed the need for NGOs to upgrade their advocacy and communication tools on education quality, for example by focusing them more on children's rights, in order to make them more accessible and appealing to wider sectors of the population. On this aspect, agencies of the United Nations system and NGOs were called upon to continue or revive their policies of financial and logistic support in national coalition capacity-building, primarily in the areas of communication, coordination and networking.

5.2. EFA monitoring and promotion

Without any exploration of the specific contents of the observations and substantive recommendations (set out in the final Declaration annexed hereto) concerning levels of progress towards each of the EFA goals midway to 2015, the Collective Consultation meeting was an occasion for attending NGOs to express deep concerns about the strategic and programme thrusts which seem to predominate within the international community, in particular among donors. All speakers agreed that the strategy of according financial and political priority to universal primary education, far from having the hoped-for knock-on effect, has been pursued to the point of redefining the very concept of EFA and, *inter alia*, removing its goals of quality and literacy. Such reorientation and watering down of EFA in favour of standard sectoral approaches that focused exclusively on formal education were viewed by the vast majority of participants as a particularly worrying departure in terms of foreseeable repercussions for countries furthest from the 2015 goals in general and for the most marginalized population groups in particular.

CSOs thus placed great emphasis on the need to counter the semantic narrowing of EFA by reminding States and the international community of the commitments made at Dakar, in particular the fundamental principle that EFA could not become a reality unless all the goals were reached and sustained. The Africa group and the Latin America and the Caribbean group also maintained that it was essential for civil society to address what they called the "false truths" of international finance institutions by developing accurate progress indicators focusing on quality and access for the most deprived population groups. In similar vein, the Asia and the Pacific group and the Africa group agreed that NGOs should engage in forceful action and campaigns to combat the risks of privatization of education affecting several developing countries through the renewed threat of a growing trend towards elitist education based on a two-tier school system. The Latin America regional group also proposed that the education private sector be approached and reminded of its basic social responsibilities, especially with regard to taxation and to employment and pay

conditions for its salaried workforce, urging it, where appropriate, to invest also in supporting public programmes for the development of quality education for all.

5.3. Towards an open, sustainable, democratic and balanced partnership

Faced with the somewhat bleak picture painted by the vast majority of NGOs and networks of their current status of participation in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of EFA programmes, the views and resolutions adopted at the fourth meeting of the Collective Consultation could not be other than firm and resolute. The thrust of the remarks made on that issue could be summed up as the quest for the most effective courses of action to ensure that the partnership with civil society led to relationships of the type defined in the Dakar Framework for Action. The conclusions reiterated the appeals made on many occasions, both to technical and financial partners and to governments, namely that the partnership in question should be founded on equality and mutual respect and centred around coordination mechanisms open to all EFA stakeholders. The national forums and the role of the national EFA coordinators were sometimes said to constitute a positive yet unfortunately increasingly neglected basis that should be revitalized and reinvigorated. The other side to that return to fundamentals concerned the role of governments, which, in the view of several speakers, should recognize NGOs as legitimate players in the social and political debate and facilitate their lawful existence and communication interfaces. Conversely, faced with what they saw as a further risk of partnership imbalance, NGOs urged donors and development agencies to ensure that the State's authority and responsibility in the administration of education and EFA coordination mechanisms were respected, as were stressed in Dakar in 2000.

Delegates attending that Collective Consultation meeting did not, however, merely note the degree to which genuine civil society participation in many countries fell short of the ambitions set out in the Framework for Action. A series of concrete measures aimed at institutionalizing voluntary sector participation were discussed and approved, including recommendations which, if taken up and adopted by a larger proportion of the partners involved, could help to promote a more affirmative policy towards improved representation of civil society stakeholders in the definition of current and future education policies. It was accordingly proposed that CSO involvement at all EFA policy stages and levels be formalized through government regulations defining access to discussion forums and coordination bodies established within education authorities and partnership mechanisms.

Such mechanisms, often essentially concerned with the administration of relations between governments and technical and financial partners, had risen in number as a result of a gradual increase in sectoral plans and analyses, and it was therefore also proposed that such coordination bodies and other joint review mechanisms be widened to incorporate all areas affected by EFA (non-formal education as well as related sectors such as health) and the major national EFA coalitions and/or CSOs most involved in the field of education. With respect to donors, several delegates also suggested that such financial organizations could make CSO participation in those coordination mechanisms subject to conditionalities markedly less unpopular than others currently in force linked to what in some instances were questionable indicators relating to the EFA goals.

On that issue, several speakers took the opportunity afforded by the summary preview presentation of the forthcoming 2008 edition of the EFA *Global Monitoring Report* to suggest that the next versions might include a set of indicators and criteria showing partnership quality and actual levels of civil society participation. Also suggested was the idea of publicizing examples of best practices in tripartite partnerships between governments, technical and financial partners and civil society, not only in a publication such as the *Global Monitoring Report* but more broadly through training workshops for all EFA stakeholders. A major task to be initiated subsequently would be to research and document possible correlations between situations of satisfactory participation and progress made in attaining the EFA goals, in particular among the most educationally disadvantaged population groups.

6. Looking forward: Strategic directions for the CCNGO/EFA

The Dakar Declaration set out clearly the strategic directions for the CCNGO/EFA and the main focuses of work for the coming months and years. The coordination group would, together with UNESCO, define the specific activities to be undertaken jointly over the following two years.

With regard to the appointment of a new coordination group, the meeting decided that, since the requirements for replacing the current focal points had not been met in Dakar, essentially owing to the insufficient representation of several regions, it should be carried out at a later date. UNESCO undertook to launch the call for candidates, as provided for in the rules, in the coming weeks, in cooperation with the current coordination group. CCNGO/EFA would be consulted on the formation of the new group by electronic mail.

All working documents are available on the UNESCO website at the following address:
www.unesco.org/en/efa/international-cooperation/collective-consultation-of-ngos/



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Midway to 2015: Reaching the Unreached

We, the Collective Consultation of civil society from different regions of the world, have come together, aware of the urgency to address the continuing neglect and erosion of the rights of children, young people and adults to have a quality education, especially those from disadvantaged and excluded communities. This is happening at a time of deepening inequality and disparity and persistent poverty, ironically amidst general trends of economic growth worldwide. This is compounded by the fragility of communities hit by conflicts, natural disasters and the pandemic of HIV & AIDS.

We have struggled to build our capacities for policy engagement and advocacy; we have made tremendous efforts to organise ourselves into bigger, stronger and more mature coalitions and networks and we have attained a measure of impact. Our regional studies on “Civil Society involvement in education policy dialogue and the EFA process” provide ample examples of successful interface between the state and CSOs in the sector. But in many countries, governments either ignore the crucial role of civil society or simply give it merely token roles. Many governments and donors still do not regard civil society as full and genuine partners - they fail to institutionalise our presence in all the structures and mechanisms around the EFA processes. We also express concern about some states forming or co-opting CSOs, thereby undermining the integrity of genuine civil society.

In this fourth meeting, seven years after Dakar 2000 and midway to the promised target date for Education for All, we find ourselves articulating with frustration many of the things we have already said before, even as we take stock of what has been achieved so far in relation to the EFA goals. We are still asking that governments put education in the forefront as a national priority. We are still demanding that they put resources into classrooms and teachers' professional development instead of military expenditure and debt repayments.

Many governments have not embraced the full EFA agenda and do not recognize that the six goals are inextricably interlinked and cannot be approached selectively and in an isolated manner. Most countries in Africa and Asia have missed the 2005 target of getting as many girls as boys into schools. There are neglected EFA goals like early childhood education, adult literacy and quality education, and governments and donors also show very little interest in basic education and relevant technical and vocational skills for youths and adults who have missed out on formal schooling. Even for goals that have shown some level of achievement, the progress across countries has been mixed and uneven. Although progress is reported across regions and the number of out-of-school children reduced from 125 million to 77 million, we insist that the pace is not enough to reach the unreached in time, unless everyone is mobilised into a rights-based movement for EFA - an inclusive platform for both the voiceless as much as for those in power.

We are sorely disappointed that previous unequivocal promises of having no country deprived of the needed resources to finance their EFA plans remain largely unfulfilled commitments, with a global deficit of at least US\$11 billion per year. We deplore the fact that aid to education, especially basic education, remains scant, tied to conditionalities agreed by international finance institutions and adopted by the donors, and not always in grants, adding to the already heavy debt burden of many poor and middle-income countries. The Fast Track Initiative funding mechanism for EFA may have improved its processes to make funds flow more systematically and has started to provide space for civil society representation, but many low income countries still wait to be endorsed for a programme and many lower middle income countries and conflict-affected fragile states are not eligible even when they are constrained from addressing education resource needs due to serious debt and fiscal problems.

In our assessment of the progress and gaps with regard to the commitment of the Dakar Framework of Action “to ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development”, we identify the determining factors for effective participation and for genuine partnership between civil society organizations and national governments.

We took the opportunity of this meeting for self-reflection and to strategise how to strengthen ourselves, our South-South and North-South partnerships, as well as build alliances among EFA advocates and other social movements. We agreed that civil society organisations need to be more accountable, better organised and equipped, and so become more credible for the tasks ahead.

In endeavouring to do so, we shall take these steps forward:

- Build and sustain our capacity for evidence-based advocacy at all levels and persistently push for wider space for CSO participation at every stage;
- Actively participate in major movements for the right to education, for free, universal and quality education, for lifelong learning and for peace, and for eliminating discrimination, exclusion and poverty;
- Ensure that all persons, especially the underprivileged, are fully informed about their right to free quality education and strengthen their ability to demand their rights, including through legal mechanisms when appropriate;
- Strengthen our financial and human/technical resource base but at the same time encourage autonomy and reliance on local resources which we need to pool together for higher impact actions;
- Strengthen our communication mechanisms and scale up information sharing using friendly formats;
- Reinforce accountability, transparency and self-regulation and build up our credibility to contribute to the construction of a common civil society agenda;
- Develop civil society social watch mechanisms to help guide development, government expenditure and political agendas at all levels;

- Promote the CCNGO/EFA widely and spread its goals and principles to reach all partners (communities, private sector, governments and donors); push to give its regional focal organisations and NGO networks a higher profile to be able to formally engage with regional UNESCO Offices as well as regional economic bodies and donors' forums;
- Work towards scaling up the broad-based movement for EFA that will include all CSOs, notably those of parents, children, youth, teachers, in partnership with governments, institutions of higher education, parliamentarians, media, religious institutions and groups, private sector and donors; consolidate ourselves into a unified platform with one strong voice;
- Work to achieve our programmes, projects and advocacy activities, based upon the Convention on the Rights of the Child and all other internationally agreed instruments on children's rights.

We call upon UNESCO and other relevant UN agencies to:

- Formally involve, and support the participation of, NGOs and CSO networks in the EFA Mid-term Assessments as well as in all global and regional EFA processes;
- Ensure that UNESCO funds earmarked for the CCNGO/EFA at central and regional level be really allocated to support the involvement of members of the CCNGO/EFA in regions and countries;
- Harness more support for the CCNGO/EFA mechanism both in funds and human resources in order to facilitate more cohesive linkages between CCNGO members, UNESCO Headquarters and regional offices and to sustain a regular communication flow with the entire CCNGO/EFA membership;
- Facilitate dialogue between the CCNGO/EFA and donors, in particular at the regional and national levels.

We urge national governments to:

- Assume their obligation to ensure everyone's right to quality education and to play a lead role in national partnerships to this effect;
- Make education a priority in the national and regional policy agenda and ensure the implementation of all commitments at country level;
- Look at the EFA goals as 'indivisible' because the attainment of each goal is closely interlinked with that of other goals; pay more serious attention to the neglected goals, in particular goals 1, 3, 4 and 6; and ensure the mandatory enrolment of children with disabilities;
- Institutionalise CSO participation in all EFA-related bodies at all levels and in all phases of education action plans and programmes including impact assessment;
- Encourage a culture of democracy within which institutionalised dialogue on EFA, the right to organise freely and the freedom of expression are promoted;
- Give special attention and funding to marginalized groups, e.g. post-conflict areas, migrants, refugees, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and all those who are socially or economically excluded, and abolish school fees and take action against hidden fees;
- Promote and support, in cooperation with civil society, UN agencies and donors, quality human investment in order to favour the participation of persons vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion in existing education programmes; and involve population groups which are excluded because of poverty or disabilities in the design, implementation and evaluation of education projects and structures;
- Develop comprehensive responses to HIV and AIDS, and fully engage the education sector which must focus in particular on protecting future generations from being infected through the inclusion of HIV life skills programmes in the curriculum and systematic training of educators, as well as mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS and combating stigma and discrimination;

- Anticipate, investigate, publicise and resist privatisation trends in education and/or analyse their impact; fight against corruption and mismanagement of education funds at all levels, and ensure that decentralisation processes lead to local participation and empowerment and not to the abdication by the State of its responsibility for fulfilling the right to education;
- Recognise educators as education specialists and ensure their status so as to retain quality educators in the education system; recognise the need for educators to receive appropriate training to ensure quality education;
- Formalise Early Childhood Care and Development in the education ladder;
- Mainstream gender issues throughout education systems, supported by adequate resources and strong political commitment, in order to ensure gender equality in and through education;
- Investigate, publicise and address the effects of deteriorating environment on access and quality of education;
- Enhance cross-national transparent systems, using a diversity of measurement tools for monitoring EFA progress.

We call on the donors to:

- Fulfil their commitments, fill the resource gaps and fully fund EFA with increased long-term, predictable funding, prioritising basic education in low-income countries, including conflict-affected fragile states, otherwise the full EFA agenda will be compromised;
- Encourage the participation of NGOs in the official processes that decide the allocation and prioritisation of educational programmes that should be funded;
- Be transparent in the whole process including selection, implementation, financial reporting and evaluation of programmes;
- Support independent initiatives of the NGOs to monitor progress towards EFA goals that would review and check official data.

**Fourth Meeting of UNESCO's Collective Consultation of NGOs
on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA)**

Dakar, Senegal, 3-5 September 2007

Statement by Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

This meeting is taking place at the crucial midway point along the time-line to 2015. Although the past seven years have been marked by significant steps towards our collective goal, it is clear that the pace of progress must be accelerated if we are to achieve the six Education for All goals by 2015, agreed by all countries here in Dakar at the World Education Forum in April 2000.

Despite progress, the challenge of EFA remains considerable: the number of out-of-school children, currently estimated to be over 72 million, is still unacceptably high; gender disparities persist at all levels of education; one in five adults worldwide lack minimum literacy skills; and there are insufficient numbers of qualified teachers.

In 2000, the governments, organizations, agencies and associations represented at the World Education Forum stressed in the Dakar Framework for Action that the prime responsibility for EFA lays with governments and that they could fulfil their responsibility "most effectively through broad-based partnerships within countries", backed by the support of regional bodies and the international community.

We need strong and vibrant partnerships between governments and civil society organizations and we must establish or strengthen viable mechanisms for consultation on issues related to EFA. UNESCO is conscious of the diversity of situations and contexts, of the areas of disagreement and of the challenges facing the resolution of those differences in a positive and constructive manner. Let me assure you that we remain fully committed to actively promoting the process of partnership-building at national, regional and global levels.

The Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All is UNESCO's main mechanism for dialogue and cooperation with NGOs in the framework of the EFA movement. The purpose of the Fourth meeting of the CCNGO/EFA is to "assess and further promote the participation of civil society organizations in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of education policies in order to reach the EFA goals". Your conclusions and recommendations will be submitted to UNESCO's Member States and to other EFA partners in the coming months and will constitute a valuable contribution to the Mid-Term review of EFA progress.

The EFA goals will not be achieved unless all partners and actors are mobilized and empowered to play their role in a movement which rests on a solid, democratic foundation. It is evident today that we have to accelerate and scale up our efforts in order to reach EFA and other related development goals, especially the Millennium Development Goals. The active, creative and sustained engagement of non-governmental organizations and other civil society institutions with every aspect of the global EFA challenge is and will continue to be indispensable.

**Fourth Meeting of the Collective Consultation of NGOs
on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA)**

3 – 5 September 2007

Dakar, Senegal

Programme

MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2007

8.30 a.m. – 12.00 noon: Registration of participants

- 9:00 a.m - 11:00 a.m **Opening Session**
Welcome Remarks and Statement of the Director-General of UNESCO
Ms Lalla Aicha Ben Barka, Director, BREDA
Welcome Remarks
Mr Gorgui Sow, Regional Coordinator, ANCEFA
Mr Moussa Sakho, Minister of Technical and Vocational Training, Senegal
Introduction
Mr Mark Richmond, Director, Division de la coordination des priorités des Nations Unies en matière d'éducation, UNESCO

Introduction to the Programme

Progress Report by Coordination Group: From Beirut to Dakar
Discussion

Coffee Break
- 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Outcomes of Studies on Civil Society Participation in Education Policy Dialogue and in the EFA Process since the Dakar World Education Forum (2000)**
Introduction and Background
Presentation of Results
Questions and answers
- 1:00 p.m. – 2: 30 p.m. *Lunch Break*
- 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m **Outcomes of Studies on Civil Society Participation in Education Policy Dialogue and in the EFA Process since the Dakar World Education Forum (continued)**

Group Discussions
(Regional Caucuses and International Group)
Reports of group discussions and recommendations

Coffee Break

Plenary debate on key messages and recommendations
- 5:45 p.m. – 6.45 p.m. **Caucus Sessions**
Regional Caucuses and INGO Caucus (Review of Regional Progress Reports; Representation in CCNGO/EFA Coordination Group/Selection of Focal Points)

7 p.m.	Welcome Reception
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**Fourth Meeting of UNESCO'S Collective Consultation of NGOs
on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA)
Dakar, 3 - 5 Septembre 2007**

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. NGOs in official relations with UNESCO

**ASSOCIATION FRANCOPHONE INTERNATIONALE DES DIRECTEURS D'ETABLISSEMENTS
SCOLAIRES**

M. Moussa Ndoye
Directeur d'école, Président
Ecole Caserne Samba Diery Diallo
Tél: (221) 822 30 34
Email: ecolemeister@gmail.com

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND COOPERATION

M. Oumar Thiam
Chargé de projets
Boulevard du sud, Point E
BP 6112 11524 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tel.: (221) 825 64 14 / Fax: (221) 825 32 38
Email : oumart@ceci.ca; ceci@sentoo.sr

CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION OFFICE

M. Fulgence Koné
277, rue Saint Jacques
75005 Paris
FRANCE
Tel.: (331) 53 73 73 60
Fax: (331) 53 73 73 51/39 48 10 21
Email: f-kone@scolanet.org; fkone@unapec.org

M. Théodore Diouf
Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél./Fax : (221) 834 56 85
Email : snepc@orange.sn

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL

Ms. Monique Fouilhoux
Coordinator, Education and Employment Unit
5 BD du Rou Albert II
1270 Bruxelles
BELGIQUE
Tel.: +32 2 224 0611
Fax : +32 2 224 0606
Email: monique.fouilhoux@ei-ie.org

Mr Wouter Van der Schaaf
5 BD du Rou Albert II
1270 Bruxelles
BELGIQUE
Tel.: +32 2 224 0611

Fax : +32 2 224 0606
Email: wouter.vanderschaaf@ei-ie.org

Mme Assibi Napoe
B.P. 14058 Lome
TOGO
Tél. : (228) 223 12 70 / 932 65 33
Mail : assibi.napoe@ei-ie.org

Mor Mbengue
16, Rue Carnot
Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél : 851 68 92 / 653 94 91
Email : mrbengue@yahoo.fr

Mr Emanuel Fatoma
Coordinator Bureau régional Afrique
EIRAF Africa Office
BP 14058 Lomé
TOGO
Tel/Fax : (228) 223 12 70 / 9300359
Emmanuel.fatoma@ei-ie.org

FEDERATION AFRICAINE DES ASSOCIATIONS DE PARENTS D'ELEVES ET ETUDIANTS

M. Momar Cissé
UNESCO/BREDA
Av. L. S. Senghor
Dakar
SÉNÉGAL
Tél.: (221) 513 51 61

FORUM FOR AFRICAN WOMEN EDUCATIONALISTS [FAWE]

Mane B. Samb Diack
FAWE/ antenne Sénégal
Dakar
SENEGAL
Tel.: (221) 822 41 77 / 569 34 49
Email:

HOPE 87

M. Boubacar Mané
Branch Office Manager Hope 87 Sénégal
B.P. 248 Kolda
SENEGAL
Tel./Fax.: (221) 860 20 71/996 20 20
Email : nianthio@orange.sn
senhope@sentoo.sn

M. Oumar Aidara
Coordinateur Antenne Nord / Dakar
B.P. 248 Kolda
SENEGAL
Tel.: (221) 996 20 20 / 662 83 46
Email: nianthio@orange.sn
senhope@sentoo.sn;
aidaraoumar@hotmail.com

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION

M. Babacar Diop Buuba
Avenida 18 de julio 2095 apto.301
11200 Montevideo

URUGUAY

Tel.: (598 2) 409 7982

Mob.: (598 2) 644 41 62

Fax: (598 2) 409 7982

Email: secretariat@icae.org.uy; buubadiop@yahoo.com

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF THE ELDERLY

Sophie Ndour

Keur Massar

Dakar

SENEGAL

Tel.: (221) 514 17 76

Email: ndsophie01@yahoo.fr

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

Dr Shirley Randell

Senior Adviser, SNV Rwanda

Tel. : (250) 08 30 89 61

Tel. : (4122) 731 23 80

Fax : (41 22) 738 04 40

Email : ifuw@ifuw.org

mail@shirleyrandell.com.au

INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT ATD FOURTH WORLD

M. Philippe Hamel

Délégué ATD Quart Monde Afrique

107, Avenue du Général Leclerc

95480 Pierrelaye

FRANCE

Tel. : (331) 34 30 46 10/Fax : (331) 30 36 22 21

Email : atd.afrique@liptinfor.bf;

atdint@atd-quartmonde.org

INTERNATIONAL YOUNG CATHOLIC STUDENTS (IYCS) (MIEC-IMSC)

Paul Assane Mendy

Dakar

SENEGAL

Tél : (221) 590 33 46

Mail : diazento@hotmail.com

SIL INTERNATIONAL

M. Kombian George Maalug

Literacy consultant

B.P. 378, TL Tamale

GHANA

Tel./Fax (233) 71 23 175

Cell (233) 244 521 464

Email: george_maalug@sil.org

Litadmin_gillbt@sil.org

Ms. Elisabeth Gerger

Spécialiste d'alphabétisation

B.P. 2075 Dakar

SENEGAL

Tel. : (221) 832 28 80

Email : elisabeth_gerger@sil.org

SOLIDARITY IN LITERACY

Ms Ednéia Gonçalves
Education Specialist
Rua Pamplona, 1005 Sao Paulo – SP
BRESIL
Email: edneiag@alfabetizacao.org.br;

M. Daniel Augusto Fürst Gonçalves
Rua Pamplona, 1005 Sao Paulo – SP
BRESIL
Tel:(5511) 3372 4371/Fax:(5511) 3372 4339
Email : danielfg@alfabetizacao.org.br;
drig@alfabetizacao.org.br

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF GIRL GUIDES AND GIRL SCOUTS

Ms Adanlete Akuele Yevona épouse Lawson
Membre du Comité Afrique
B.P. 48 Togo - Tel : (228) 9389193
12 C Lindhurst Road
London NW3 5PQ
UNITED KINGDOM
Tel: (44 0) 20 7794 1181
Fax: (44 0) 20 7431 3764
Email: yevona1@yahoo.fr
waggs@waggsworld.org

WORLD CONFERENCE OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

Brigitte Chevalier
Représentant WCRP auprès de l'UNESCO
Email : bichevalier@hotmail.com /
wwendley@wcrp.org / info@wcrp.org

WORLD ORGANIZATION OF FORMER PUPILS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION (OMAEC)

M. Alain Badiane
Président de la FESAEEC
Rue Paul Holle
Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél : (221) 646 52 65
E-Mail : noelfanfo2000@yahoo.fr

FEDERATION SYNDICALE MONDIALE

M. Ibrahima Sylla
Pikine Icotaf n° 2212
B.P. : 7017
Dakar
SENEGAL
Tel.: (221) 646 33 51 / 853 27 88
Email: uniontravailleurs@yahoo.fr

B. Other International NGOs

CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND AFRICA

M. Andiwo Obondoh
Regional Education Advisor
P.O Box 14038, 00800 Westlands
Nairobi
KENYA
Tel : (254) 020 4444890/4444428
Fax (254) 4444426
Email: andiwoto@hotmail.com ; aobondoh@ccfkenya.org

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

Ms. Anne-Marie Mujica
HLM Advocacy and Campaigns Coordinator
Villa 24 A Zone B, Dakar
SENEGAL
Tel./Fax (221) 824 22 44
Email: campaigns.mujica@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL SAVE THE CHILDREN ALLIANCE

Ms. Kathleen Moriarty
Education Adviser
1 St. John's Lane
London EC1M 4AR
UNITED KINGDOM
Tel (4420) 7012 6800
Fax: 44202 7012 6963
Email: K.Moriarty@savethechildren.org.uk

M. Paul Yao-Yao
Assistant-Coordonnateur
Programme Education
27 B.P. 284 Abidjan 27
COTE D'IVOIRE
Tél.: (225) 22 52 58 26 / 07 09 94 11
Mail: pauly@waf.savethechildren.se

M. Richard Hartill
Programme Director, South America
Oficina 302, Carrera 7, 32=85, Bogota
COLOMBIA
Tel/Fax (00 571) 285 4850
Email: rhartill@coldecon.net.co
r.hartill@savethechildrenuk.org.co

C. Regional and National Networks

Africa Region

AFRICAN NETWORK CAMPAIGN ON EDUCATION FOR ALL (ANCEFA)

Mr Gorgui Sow
Regional Coordinator
Email: gorgui@ancefa.org Gorgui.sow@gmail.com ancefa@orange.sn ancefa.afrique@gmail.com

Mr Elijah Agnew Mbwavi Muhati
Policy Research and Documentation Officer
BP 3007
Zone B Bâtiments –Rue 111 Villa N° 24 A
Dakar Yoff
SENEGAL
Tel : (221) 824 22 44
Mobile: (221) 253 93 19
Fax : (221) 824 13 63
Email: Elijah.mbwavi@gmail.com ; ambwabi@yahoo.co.uk

CADRE DE CONCERTATION DES ONG/ASSOCIATIONS ACTIVES EN EDUCATION DE BASE AU BURKINA FASO (CCEB – BF)

Mr. Saïdou Ouedraogo
Secrétaire Exécutif
06 BP 9341 Ouagadougou 06
BURKINA FASO
Tel.: (226) 50 39 14 87 / 70 24 18 84
Email: cceb.bf@fasonet.bf; saidhidalgo@yahoo.fr

EFA CAMPAIGN NETWORK

Mr. Matar Baldeh
National Coordinator
Tango Building, Fajara M Section
Banjul, GAMBIA
Tel: (220)992 46 88/437 180 04/ 44 96 990 Fax: (220)499 666
Email: efanet2004@yahoo.co.uk matarr.baldeh@gmail.com

GHANA NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COALITION – GNECC

Appiah Kweku Bright
Executive Concil Member
66 Patrice Lumumba Street, Airport Reisidential Area KA PMB 50
Airport Accra
GHANA
Tel: (233) 21 762055 / 0244 40615
Fax (233) 21 761856
Email: briahus@yahoo.com
gneccnational@4u.com.gh

CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION FORUM

M. John Motoko
National Coordinator
Box 12528 Maseru 100
LESOTHO
Tel/Fax: (226) 22324275
Email: ljmotoko@yahoo.com

AFRICAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION NETWORK (ACEN)

Berewa Jommo
P.O. Box 2935-00200 City Sq.
Nairobi
KENYA
Tél.: (254) 20 2715808
E-mail: acen@acen.or.ke; berewajommo@yahoo.co.uk

MOZAMBICAN NETWORK ON EDUCATION FOR ALL (MEPT)

Pastor Reinaldo Jorge Sive
President
622 Avenida Mao Tsé Tung, 1° esquerdo
Maputo
MOZAMBIQUE
Tel/Fax: (258) 21 489494
Cell : (258) 82 5801397
Email: meptcentral@tdm.co.mz
dpsive@zebra.uem.mz

RESEAU DES ORGANISATIONS DU SECTEUR EDUCATIF DU NIGER (ROSEN)

Ms Baraka Diop
Secrétaire générale
OLCAN Niger
Tel/fax : (227) 96 99 23
Email : oolcan@yahoo.fr, Rosen@intnet.ne

COALITION NATIONALE DES ONG / OSC ET SYNDICATS POUR L'EDUCATION POUR TOUS (CNEPT)

M. Souleye Gorbaly Sy
President
B.P. 19380, Dakar
SENEGAL
Tel/Fax : (221) 853 23 76/643 13 54
Email: gorbalsy@yahoo.fr
Coalept@yahoo.fr

M. Macissé Lô
Secrétaire général
Tél. : (221) 520 26 53 / 853 23 76
Email : ilamoumar@yahoo.fr

OPEN SOCIETY INITIATIVE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (OSISA)

Mme Serri La Motte
12th H. Braamfontein Centre
Cnr Jenssen Street
Braamfontien
Johannesburg
SOUTH AFRICA
Tél. : 2184 586 9485 / 2111 403 4313
Email: sherrilm@osisa.org

ZAMBIA NATIONAL EDUCATION COALITION – ZANEC

Mr Isaac Lungu
PO BOX 30774
Design House Room 206-2nd Floor,
Lusaka
ZAMBIA
Tel: (260) 1 226422/226 490
Fax(260) 1 226 491
Email : lungu0057@yahoo.com
zanec@zamel.zm

Arab Region

ARAB NETWORK FOR ILLITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION

Ms. Seham Negm
Secretary general
Ahmed Orabi
Building 90 D, Flat 16, 11th Floor
El Mohadseen – Giza
EGYPT
Tel : (202) 7311007
Mobile : (202) 0127867621
Fax: (202) 7295042
Email: adult_education_net@hotmail.com
women_society@yahoo.com

BAHRAIN TEACHERS SOCIETY

Mr Mahdi Abu Deeb
President
BAHRAIN
Tel : 0097 3 17 727033 / 0097 39916188 (mobile) / Fax : 0097 3 17 727499
Email: abudeebm@hotmail.com

Asia Pacific Region

CAMPAIGN FOR POPULAR EDUCATION (CAMPE)

Ms. Tasneem Athar
Deputy Director
5/14, Humayun Road, Mohammadpur
Dhaka 1207,
BANGLADESH
Tel: 88-02 8142024-5 / 8155031 -2
Fax : 88-02 8118342
Email: Info@campebd.org
tasneem@campebd.org

NGO EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Seng Hong
Executive Director
#11A, Street 248 Vealvong, 7 Makara
Phnom Penh
CAMBODIA
Tel: (855) 23 224 774
Email: ed@nepcambodia.org; hongtholly@hotmail.com; info@nepcambodia.org

Europe and North America

IBIS (GCE)

Ms. Susan Müller
Education Advisor
Norbrogade 68 B,
2200 Copenhagen N
DENMARK
Tel (45) 35358788 (mobile 26152469)
Fax: (45) 35350696
Email: sm@ibis.dk
ibis@ibis.dk

Ms. Annelie Abildgaard
Education Campaign advisor
aa@ibis.dk

D. National NGOs

REACH OUT TO ASIA (ROTA)

Mme Omia Nour
Director
QATAR
Tel : +974 480 0296
Fax : +974 482 3606
Cell : +974 578 3108
Email: onour@qf.org.qa

REAL WORLD STRATEGIES FOR EFA- ASPBAE

Ms Raquel Castillo
Asia Advocacy & campaigns coordinator
13 Dao St. Barangay Quirino 3-A
Quezon City 1102
PHILIPPINES
Tel : (63-2) 995 58955
Fax : (63-2) 4214773
Email : raqcastle@gmail.com ; Raqcastle@yahoo.com

CONSEIL DES ONG D'APPUI AU DEVELOPPEMENT (CONGAD) SENEGAL

Boubacar Seck
Directeur Exécutif
N1983 , Allées Khalifa Ababacar SY,
Liberté III
Dakar
SENEGAL
Tel/Fax : (221) 824 41 16/824 44 13
Email : congad@sentoo.sn; comboubacar@yahoo.fr

FEMME AFRICA SOLIDARITE

M. Moussa Diop
Immeuble Rose, Stèle Mermoz appt. 31 C
BP. 45077 Dakar Fann
Tél. : (221) 860 20 48
Fax : (221) 860 20 47
Email : fas-ong@sentoo.sn

PINOCCHIO

Mme Amrani Soumia
16 Rue Souada
Sectem 21 Bloc E
Hay Ryad-Rabat / Maroc
B.P. 20519 Hay Ryad Rabat
Rabat
MAROC
Tél: (00 212) 67 99 64 42 / 69 27 97 33
Email: soumia.amrani@gmail.com / soumia_amrani2005@yahoo.fr

THE EDUCATION NETWORK

Ms. Eva Iversen
Coordinator
c/o Ibis
Norbrogade 68B
2200 Copenhagen N.
DENMARK
Tel : + 45 35 20 05 40
Cell : + 45 26 81 51 00
Email : ei@ibis.dk

AIDE ET ACTION

Hamidou Soukouna
Dakar
SENEGAL
Tel. : (221) 869 63 30
Mob. : (221) 639 40 65
Email.: hsoukouna@yahoo.fr
Aeasenegal@arc.sn

ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (AED)

Ms Lorraine Denakpo
Chief of Party USAID/Senegal
1825 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE
Tel : (202) 884 8000
Fax : (202) 884 8400
Email : ldenakpo@smtp.aed.org

UNESCO

Mme Lalla Aïcha Ben Barka
Directrice
BREDA
12, L.S.Senghor
B.P. 3311 - Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23
Mail : l.ben-barka@unesco.org

M. Mark Richmond
Director, Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education
Education Sector
UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy - 75352 Paris 07 SP
France
Email : m.richmond@unesco.org

Ms Khawla Shaheen
C/ED/UNP/EFA
Division for the Coordination of UN Priorities in Education
Education Sector
UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy - 75352 Paris 07 SP, FRANCE
el: + 33 1 45 68 13 07
Fax: + 33 1 45 68 56 26/27
Email : k.shaheen@unesco.org

M. Luc Rukingama
Chef d'unité –Education
BREDA
B.P. 3311 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23
Mail : l.rukingama@unesco.org

Ms Sabine Detzel
Focal Point of the CCNGO/EFA
Division for the coordination of UN Priorities in Education
UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy - 75352 Paris 07 SP FRANCE
Tel: +33 - 45 68 10 52
Fax: +33 - 45 68 56 38
Email : s.detzel@unesco.org

Mme Cynthia Guttman
Communications Officer
EFA Report Team
UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP, FRANCE
Tél.: +33 (0) 1 45 68 08 56
Fax: + 33 (0) 1 45 68 56 41
E-mail: c.guttman@unesco.org

Mme Fatoumata Marega
Spécialiste de programme
BREDA
12, L.S. Senghor
B.P. 3311 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23
Mail : f.marega@unesco.org

Mme Zeynabou Gueye
Interprète
BREDA
12, L.S. Senghor
B.P. 3311 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23
Mail : z.gueye@unesco.org

Mme Magna Zormelo
Spécialiste de programme Education
BREDA
12, L.S.Senghor
B.P. 3311 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23
Mail : m.zormelo@unesco.org

Mlle Esther Marcos
BREDA
12, L.S.Senghor
B.P. 3311 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23
Mail e.marcos-moro@unesco.org

M. Youssoupha Seck
BREDA
12, L.S.Senghor
B.P. 3311 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23
Mail : yo.seck@unesco.org

Mlle Oumy Ndoye
BREDA
12, L.S.Senghor
B.P. 3311 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23
Mail : o.ndoye@unesco.org

M. Mademba Paye
BREDA
12, L.S.Senghor
B.P. 3311 Dakar
SENEGAL
Tél. : (221) 849 23 23