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Regional Conferences on Education Post 2015: Outcome Statements



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Introduction

In preparation for the World Education Forum 2015 (WEF 2015), UNESCO organized, in collaboration with partners, Ministerial Conferences on Education Post 2015 in all regions as well as for the E-9 countries.

The conferences, which took place between August 2014 and February 2015, reviewed and analyzed the EFA experience in their regions and provided regional perspectives and recommendations for education beyond 2015. They made important contributions to the Framework for Action to be agreed upon at the World Education Forum 2015 (19-22 May, Incheon Korea) and which will guide the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda.

The statements adopted at these conferences are titled: the Bangkok Statement for the Asia-Pacific region, the Lima Statement for the Latin American and the Caribbean region, the Sharm El-Sheikh Statement for the Arab region, the Kigali Statement for the African region, the Paris Statement for the European and North American region and the Islamabad Joint E9 Statement.

Bangkok Statement

Adopted at the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference (APREC) (6-8 August 2014, Bangkok, Thailand)

Preamble

1. We, Ministers of Education, high-level government officials and representatives of civil society organizations, teachers' organizations, United Nations (UN) agencies, development partners, and members of academia and the private sector, gathered in Bangkok, Thailand at the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference from 6 to 8 August 2014. We thank the Ministry of Education of Thailand for hosting this important event.
2. Having taken stock of the progress made in the region in achieving the six Education for All (EFA) goals, having examined the remaining challenges, and having reflected on future priorities and strategies for the Asia-Pacific region to achieve the emerging post-2015 education agenda, we adopt the present statement. Our deliberations were built on the national EFA reviews, the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education for All Meeting (Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May 2014), and the Outcome Document of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals.
3. We fully endorse the vision, principles and targets laid out in the Muscat Agreement, noting that the overarching goal to '*ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030*' reflects the aspiration of the region for education and development.

Asia-Pacific Perspectives on the Post-2015 Education Agenda

4. We reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right for all children, young people and adults, and an essential condition for peace and inclusive and sustainable development. We also reiterate the importance of education in promoting human rights, human development, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity. We agree that education is essential to inclusive growth, as well as happiness, well-being and prosperity for all in Asia and the Pacific.
5. Since the birth of the EFA movement 25 years ago in Jomtien, Thailand, the Asia-Pacific region has made remarkable progress towards achieving the EFA agenda. Investment and overall progress in education have contributed to rapid economic growth and social transformation. At the same time, we recognize that the agenda remains unfinished. This is the impetus for an expanded vision of Education for All and for meeting persisting and emerging challenges, including demographic changes, migration, climate change, environmental degradation and the technological divide.

Regional Priority Action Areas

6. Lifelong learning for all

Equitable and inclusive access to quality learning should be ensured for all – children, youth and adults – at all levels of education, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to tertiary education, in both formal and non-formal settings. ECCE plays a crucial role in building strong foundations for learning and development. We strongly recommend the provision of 12 years of free and compulsory education for all by 2030. While every effort should be made to ensure that all children have access to quality learning opportunities in school, alternative learning pathways should also be supported and recognized. Given persistent low levels of adult literacy in some parts of the region, in particular among women, we are determined to ensure functional literacy for all from the perspective of lifelong learning.

7. Equity and equality

We commit ourselves to addressing all forms of marginalization, as well as disparities and inequalities, especially gender inequality, in access to education and learning processes and outcomes, including in conflict and crisis situations. The needs of people with disabilities should be addressed at all levels of education. Focused and effective actions including reform must be taken to make education pluralistic, to remove barriers to equal opportunities and to level the playing field for those who are disadvantaged and/or marginalized.

8. Skills and competencies for life and work

In light of socio-economic and demographic transformations, not least of which are shifting labour markets, all learners should acquire relevant skills including technical and vocational skills for decent work and entrepreneurship. In addition, they should acquire skills and competencies that allow them to be more creative and innovative, to think critically, to communicate effectively, to solve problems independently, and to be able to adapt to and assimilate change. Such knowledge, skills, values and attitudes should be developed so as to enable all children, youth and adults to enjoy secure lives, participate actively and responsibly in their communities, embrace diversity, live and work together harmoniously, and contribute to peaceful and sustainable development through Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

9. Quality and teachers

Quality learning is a priority for the region and teachers are central to quality learning. Efforts must be made at all levels and in all educational settings to ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated, committed and well-supported teachers who use appropriate pedagogical approaches. Quality in education will be supported also by learning environments that are safe, healthy, gender-sensitive, inclusive and conducive to learning, mother tongue-based multilingual education, and comprehensive monitoring and quality assurance systems.

10. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) for education

The effective and responsible use of ICTs in education is crucial to enable learners and teachers to adequately respond to the world of change. We will develop and utilize innovative educational platforms that improve access to education, in particular in remote areas, enhance the quality of learning that is responsive to diverse needs at all levels, and strengthen education management. We will ensure that ICTs are fully utilized to achieve the post-2015 education agenda.

11. Governance and financing

We are determined to establish legal and policy frameworks that promote accountability and transparency, and enhance the participation of all stakeholders at all levels of the system. Government is the primary duty bearer for efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of education, but funding can also be drawn from multiple sources, and there should be an enhanced focus on innovative financing strategies that do not burden the poor and that support quality public education. Public investment should help address the equitable distribution of resources across education sub-sectors and geographic locations, and targeted programmes to support marginalized groups. We strongly recommend reaching the internationally recognized benchmarks of 6 percent of gross domestic product and/or 20 percent of total public expenditure for education. While emphasizing that strong domestic financing is the key to success, we also recommend wider development partners to increase and better target their aid to education including official development assistance (ODA). We ask that international financing mechanisms, Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in particular, support the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda according to the needs and priorities of the respective countries.

Towards the World Education Forum 2015

12. We request UNESCO, along with UNICEF and with the support of the other EFA co-convening agencies, civil society, and other international and regional partners, to continue leading the coordination of the development of the post-2015 education agenda, and the development of the corresponding Framework for Action. We further recommend that UNESCO continue to lead, coordinate and provide technical support for the implementation and monitoring of the future education agenda.

We pledge to promote the future education agenda in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. We will also work to ensure that the outcomes of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development to be held in Nagoya, Aichi, Japan, on 10-12 November 2014, are taken into account in the future education agenda. We will ensure that the education goal and targets of the global post-2015 development agenda to be adopted by the UN Summit in September 2015 are fully aligned with the education agenda that will be adopted at the World Education Forum to be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea on 19-22 May 2015. To this end, we will actively participate in future consultations, and will facilitate and coordinate the debates in our respective countries.

Lima Statement

Adopted at the Regional Ministerial Meeting “Education for All in Latin America and the Caribbean: Post-2015 Assessment and Challenges” (30-31 October 2014, Lima, Peru)

Preamble

1. We, the Ministers of Education of Latin America
2. and the Caribbean (LAC), high-level government officials, UN agencies, representatives of civil society organizations and development partners, gathered at the meeting on “Education for All (EFA) in Latin America and the Caribbean: Assessment of progress and post-2015 challenges”, in Lima, Peru, from 30 to 31 October 2014.
3. We thank the Ministry of Education of Peru for facilitating and hosting this important event for the region.
4. Having deliberated on progress towards EFA in the region, the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global EFA Meeting (GEM) in Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May 2014, and the outcome document of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals, and having examined the unfinished EFA tasks in the region, as well as the challenges and priorities that will configure the post-2015 education agenda for the region, we adopt the present statement.
5. We endorse the principles and targets set forth in the Muscat Agreement, noting that the overarching goal “ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030” reflects the aspiration of the LAC region for education and development as well as the roadmap established by the first meeting of the ministers of education of CELAC in Cuba in February 2013.

Perspectives of the LAC region on the post-2015 education agenda

6. We reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right, a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights, and essential for peaceful and inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and prosperity in the LAC region.
7. Since a major challenge to social progress in the region is inequality, we believe that a driving principle of the post-2015 education agenda should be to contribute to the reduction of inequality and poverty through the provision of inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all, and we value the rich cultural diversity of the LAC region.
8. Achieving equity and inclusion requires securing the right to education of all children, young people and adults, and their rights within and through education to realize their potential and aspirations. This also requires responding to the diversity of needs among all learners by increasing their participation in learning, and by reducing exclusion from and within education.
9. We acknowledge that, in our quest to meet the right to inclusive quality education for all, our countries have made recognizable progress. We also take stock of the unfinished tasks which will lead to renewed efforts for a more contextualized and expanded vision of education and learning that recognizes and values our multicultural and multilingual diversity and our respective national development processes towards sustainable development

Priority areas for the LAC region

Equity, quality and inclusion

10. We commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and discrimination, disparities and inequalities, in access to and in the completion of education and learning cycles, processes and outcomes. We will

remove barriers to equal opportunities, and support those who are disadvantaged or marginalized by developing comprehensive education strategies to foster their participation in education and completion of their education cycles, through intercultural, multicultural and multilingual education programmes, and programmes that respond to the diverse education needs (e.g. school feeding programmes). The needs of people with disabilities will also be addressed at all levels of the education. Beyond numerical parity, we will accelerate progress towards gender equality by addressing the causes of disparities in learning achievements at all levels.

11. Interculturality is an indispensable aspect of quality education. Schools are not the only providers of education. It is important that families, communities, social organizations and the media accept their responsibility in education, with the support of educational institutions.

Inclusive and equitable lifelong learning for all

12. Inclusive and equitable access to quality learning should be ensured for all - children, youth and adults, at all levels of the education system, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to tertiary and higher education. As ECCE plays a crucial role in building strong foundations for learning and development, the continued expansion of quality ECCE services should be prioritized with emphasis on the holistic development of children. We recommend the provision of at least 12 years of free, compulsory and quality formal education for all by 2030 that includes at least one year of pre-primary education. Every effort should be made to ensure access to quality learning opportunities through community-based and parenting programmes, in school and education centers. When needed, relevant alternative learning pathways should also be provided and accredited. We are committed to education and literacy for young people and adults through formal and non-formal programmes from the perspective of lifelong learning. We resolve to consolidate the expansion of tertiary and higher education with quality programmes and the strengthening of science and technology, including research, innovation, and local and traditional knowledge that contribute to national development.

Skills and competencies for life and work

13. In light of the rapid social, economic and environmental transformations in the LAC region, all learners should acquire the life skills as well as the technical and vocational ones for decent work, entrepreneurship and for a life of dignity, so that they become more creative and innovative, think critically, communicate effectively, solve problems independently, and be able to adapt to socio-economic change as well as to improve their quality of life and that of their communities.

Education for Sustainable Development

14. We commit to developing programmes in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCEd) so that learners a) acquire the knowledge, values and attitudes to promote human rights, gender equality and a culture of peace and non-violence, b) become the beings they want to be and enjoy secure lives, participate responsibly in society, embrace diversity, live and work together harmoniously and c) contribute to sustainable development, the protection of the environment and life on the planet and be able to confront the challenges of climate change.

Quality of education

15. We commit to excellence in public education for all. Quality of education is a key concern for the LAC region. It is an essential condition for tackling inequality and poverty and for creating more inclusive societies. It is a broad, multi-faceted concept that implies a holistic approach towards lifelong learning. Quality education is defined by five dimensions: equity, relevance, pertinence, efficiency and effectiveness. We highlight the importance of assessing the process and outcomes of learning and the generation of research evidence. We resolve to develop comprehensive national support and evaluation systems that consider all quality dimensions, and generate sound evidence for policy formulation and management of education systems.

16. In the framework of improving the quality of education, we also commit to expanding the use of ICTs and harnessing their full potential in the teaching and learning processes, for improved learning outcomes and environments, and to reduce the digital gap and facilitate the entry of young people in the workplace.
17. Learning environments should be safe, healthy, gender-sensitive, inclusive and conducive to learning, embracing cultural diversity, and responsive to comprehensive monitoring and quality assurance systems.
18. We decide to increase actions and build bridges between formal, non-formal and informal education and will strengthen the role of families so that they can become more involved and better support the education of their children.

Teachers, educators, school principals and school leaders

19. We consider that it is important that the SDGs include a core target on teachers that recognizes the need to underscore teachers as key actors in the post-2015 agenda, and not just as means of implementation as in the current OWG proposal. Teachers, educators, school principals and school leaders are key actors in achieving quality education. We commit to reinforcing a regional strategy for teachers and school principals so that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers in well managed schools, in collaboration with the “International Task Force on Teachers for EFA”. We also commit to providing continuing professional development for teachers, educators, school principals and school leaders, taking into consideration good practices in the region and sharing information on these.

Governance and financing

20. We are determined to establish policy frameworks that promote accountability and transparency, and enhance the participation of all stakeholders (such as civil society, communities, families, teachers, students and other local partners) at all levels of the education system, We commit to strengthening public education as a guarantee for the construction of democracy and the right to education. Governments will remain the primary duty-bearers and custodians for efficient, equitable and sustainable management and financing of education and schools.
21. We declare that financing of education is an investment in development. There should be an enhanced focus on diversified financing that supports quality public education in line with the cultural, social, political and collective rights of all citizens. Public investment should help well as targeted programmes to support marginalized groups. We recognize efforts made by countries of the region to increase investment in education. In accordance with the fiscal space of our countries, we recommend gradually reaching the international benchmarks of 6% of GDP and 20% of total public expenditure for education, and move towards a further increase of these percentages by 2030. While emphasizing that strong public financing is crucial to success, we also acknowledge the importance of development partners in achieving the post-2015 education goals and call upon them to increase and better target their assistance to education, aligned with and under Government’s coordination. We welcome South-South and North-South-South cooperation. We call on international financing mechanisms e.g. the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in particular to support the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda according to the needs and priorities of the respective countries.

Towards the World Education Forum, May 2015

22. We request UNESCO, along with UNICEF and with the support of the EFA co-convening agencies, as well as civil society, and the international, regional and sub-regional groups and partners, to continue leading the coordination of the development of the post-2015 education agenda, and the development of the corresponding Framework for Action, through a broad “Alliance for Education” in the region for the cycle 2015-30, that considers the mandates, priorities, social agendas and agreements of countries and other international organizations working on education in the region. We further recommend that UNESCO continue to lead, coordinate and provide technical support for the

implementation, monitoring and accountability of the future post-2015 education agenda, including reinforcing innovative tools like the flagship EFA Global Monitoring Report.

23. We pledge to promote the future education agenda in upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. We will also work to ensure that the outcomes of the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development to be held in Nagoya, Aichi, Japan, on 10-12 November 2014, are taken into account in the future education agenda. We commit to working towards an alignment of the education goal and targets of the global post-2015 development agenda (SDGs) to be adopted by the UN Summit in September 2015 with the education agenda to be adopted at the World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea on 19-22 May 2015. To this end, we will actively participate in future consultations, and will facilitate and lead the debates in our countries.

Islamabad Statement

Adopted at the Tenth E-9 Ministerial Meeting (27-28 November 2014, Islamabad, Pakistan)

Preamble

We, the participants of the 10th E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 27 to 28 November 2014 adopt this statement. We express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for hosting this important meeting.

We have taken stock of the progress made since 2000 and challenges remaining in the nine countries in achieving the six Education for All (EFA) goals, and have reflected on the priorities and prospects for each of our countries to sustain and further advance educational development beyond 2015. Our deliberations were based on a careful examination of the National EFA 2015 Reviews of the countries concerned, the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global Education for All Meeting (Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May 2014), the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, and take into account the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development as well as the changing global environment that shapes the cooperation among the E-9 countries.

E-9 Perspectives on the Post-2015 Education Agenda

1. Since the establishment of the E-9 Initiative in 1993, with the aim of strengthening national efforts to ensure access to quality basic education in the nine highly populated developing countries, where the scale of the challenge was the greatest, the nine countries have made significant progress towards achieving the EFA goals. While the size and scale of progress has been diverse among the nine countries, we recognize that the EFA agenda remains unfinished in each of the countries in terms of fulfilling the equal right to relevant and quality education for all. At the same time, multifaceted social and economic transformation and the changing landscape of international cooperation have given rise to new challenges for educational development. These persistent and emerging challenges for educational development are well reflected in the current proposal for the education goal in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.
2. We fully endorse the vision, principles and targets laid out in the Muscat Agreement, noting that the overarching goal to '*ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030*' reflects the aspiration of each of our countries for national educational development beyond 2015. We call for the formulation of targets to be responsive to the needs, aspirations and diverse contexts of the E-9 countries. We commit to enhancing the collaboration among the E-9 countries to implement and monitor the Framework for Action of the post 2015 education agenda that will be adopted at the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015).
3. We reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right for all children, young people and adults and an essential condition for inclusive and sustainable human and social development. We also reiterate the importance of education in promoting human rights, gender equality and responsible citizenship in an increasingly globalized world based on principles of respect for life, human dignity, cultural diversity, social justice and international solidarity.

Priority Action Areas for the E-9 countries

Given the diverse contexts of the E-9 countries, the priority action areas outlined below represent the common challenges these countries face in meeting learning needs of societies characterized by large population and significant level of internal social and cultural diversity.

4. Ensuring equitable and inclusive access to quality education

We should make every effort possible to ensure that all children, youth and adults have equal access to quality learning opportunities, at all levels of education, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to tertiary and higher education, in both formal and non-formal settings. We are determined to address all forms of marginalization as well as disparity and inequalities in access to effective and relevant learning opportunities.

5. Quality of teaching and learning

We acknowledge that the priority action for the E-9 countries should focus on the improvement of the professional capability and performance of teachers and education personnel, in particular school principals and on the policies that enable them to deliver effective and quality learning. We also commit to strengthening mandatory pre-service teacher training, large-scale learning assessment and expanding the use of ICTs for improving the teaching and learning processes as well as learning outcomes.

6. Lifelong learning for all

We acknowledge the relevance of lifelong learning for all as an overarching framework that inspires and shapes the vision of learning and organization of its implementation. This must necessarily be based on a system of recognition, validation and assessment of learning, regardless of the non-formal or formal pathways through which learning is delivered. We further commit ourselves to expanding access to and enhancing the quality of compulsory schooling for all children as defined by the national legislation of each country.

The sheer numbers of out-of-school children and youth and adults with insufficient literacy skills in the E-9 countries continues to be a great challenge. In addition, the fact that the absolute number of illiterate adults is growing in a number of countries is an issue of serious concern. We are determined to scale up efforts to promote functional literacy and non-formal education programmes, supervised by the government and adapted to the diverse local contexts and needs.

7. Skills for work and competencies for citizenship and social cohesion

In light of socio-economic and demographic transformations, not least of which are shifting labour market requirements, we are determined to improve technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems in the E-9 countries so that all learners can acquire relevant competencies for decent work and citizenship.

All children, youth and adults should also be provided with relevant skills to enable them to lead their own lives, participate actively and responsibly in their communities, embrace diversity, live harmoniously together and with the environment, and contribute to peaceful and sustainable development.

8. Governance and management of education systems

Given the large size of the education systems, the scale of the challenges and the diversity of the contexts of the E-9 countries, governance and management are key to effective delivery of education. We commit to ensuring that adequate and effective mechanisms for participation, transparency and accountability of stakeholders at all levels of the education system are in place. We further acknowledge that moving management and accountability effectively to the sub-national levels is no straightforward matter but a particular area to be addressed for the large education systems of the E-9 countries.

We commit to improving the collection, analysis and use of data, and the effective functioning of the education management information system to enable the timely collection and dissemination of

information for planning and monitoring of education inputs, processes and outcomes. We further commit to enhancing the capacity of stakeholders in these areas.

9. Financing of education

Education should be the top priority for government funding. While government is the primary duty bearer for efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of education, funding can also be mobilized from other sources and through innovative mechanisms. We commit to putting in place mechanisms required to increase and improve the results of government funding for education including mobilization of resources from both public and private sources.

We strongly recommend reaching the internationally recognized benchmark of 4-6 percent of gross domestic product and/or 20 percent of total public expenditure for education. While emphasizing that strong domestic financing is the key to success, we also recommend development partners to increase and better target their aid to education, in particular to those countries most in need. We ask that international education financing mechanisms support the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda by providing funding according to the needs and priorities of the respective countries.

Towards the World Education Forum 2015

We request UNESCO, along with UNICEF and with the support of the other EFA co-convening agencies, civil society, and other international and regional partners, to continue leading the coordination of the development of the post-2015 education agenda, and the development of the corresponding Framework for Action. We further recommend that UNESCO continue to coordinate and provide technical support for the implementation and monitoring of the future education agenda.

We further pledge to promote the future education agenda in the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. We will also work to ensure that the outcomes of the related international education conferences are taken into account in the future education agenda. We will ensure that the education goal and targets of the global post-2015 development agenda to be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, are fully aligned with the education agenda that will be adopted at the World Education Forum (Incheon, Republic of Korea, 19-22 May 2015). To this end, we will actively participate in future consultations, and will facilitate and coordinate the debates in our respective countries.

Sharm El Sheikh Statement

Adopted at the Arab States Regional Conference on Education Post-2015 (27-29 January 2015, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt)

Preamble

1. We, the Ministers of Education of Arab States, high-level government officials, representatives of the United Nations and intergovernmental agencies, civil society organizations, professional unions as well as technical and development partners, gathered at the Arab States Regional Conference on Education Post-2015 from 27-29 January 2015 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, at the invitation of UNESCO and its partners.
2. We thank the Ministry of Education of Egypt for facilitating and hosting this important event for the region.
3. Having reviewed the progress made and remaining challenges towards reaching the goals of Education for All in the Arab States, and taking into account the Muscat Agreement adopted at the Global EFA Meeting (GEM) in Muscat, Oman, 12-14 May 2014, we endorse the principles and targets set forth in the Muscat Agreement, as well as the Report of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG) for Sustainable Development Goals and the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the post-2015 agenda 'The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet.' We particularly note the primary goal: "Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030."
4. Being aware of the exceptional circumstances that some Arab states are going through and their negative impact on what has been achieved in the framework of Education for All, we adopt this statement that reflects our regional concerns and priorities for the Post-2015 Education agenda.

Perspectives of the Arab States

5. Education is a fundamental human right. We reaffirm that it is a basis for the realization of other rights and essential for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development, as well as prosperity in the Arab States. We, therefore, commit to work together in our region with its shared unique language and rich cultural traditions and history in order to ensure the fulfilment of everyone's right to education. We notably commit to the principle of education as a public good and a building block for democracy, social cohesion and sustainable development.
6. We acknowledge that our countries have made considerable progress since 2000 in achieving the Education for All goals. However, we must exert further efforts to meet the new challenges and demands. We maintain that the EFA framework is still valid, but the current EFA goals need to go further in the Post- 2015 agenda to address all levels of education by giving focus to learning and taking into consideration the transformative, inclusive, lifelong learning approaches.
7. The most significant challenge to progress in the region is conflict which exacerbates inequality, poverty, exclusion and marginalization. The provision of education is strongly impacted by the violation of rights in countries living in conflict and instability and those hosting refugees. Ensuring access to quality education to internally displaced persons and refugee communities exerts enormous pressure on host countries. Evidence clearly demonstrates the long term negative impact of the absence of provision of education on refugees and internally displaced persons of learning age. We must acknowledge that these issues cross national borders and thus regionally supportive strategies and partnerships are required to address them.
8. The promotion of peace and sustainable development must be founded on the provision of equitable and inclusive quality education for all, enabling them to realize their rights and untapped potential in society. Therefore, our education systems need to be resilient to prevent conflict and mitigate its

impact, and enhance social cohesion, tolerance and peace. We call upon all parties to observe education as a human right. We therefore commit to developing policies that support the provision of sustainable quality education for all children and others afflicted by emergency and crisis situations and to ensure that refugee children of school-going age have access to educational systems through special educational programmes and policies.

Priority areas for the Arab States

Equitable and inclusive access for all

9. We will reinforce our efforts to provide at least 9 years of free, compulsory quality basic education for all by 2030, with special attention to early childhood education. We recognize that the foundations of human development are laid during a child's early years and thus early childhood requires an integrated approach to care, development and learning. Therefore, every effort will be made to ensure quality ECCE and increase learning opportunities through community participation, family awareness, and qualified teachers.

Equity and inclusion

10. We commit to addressing all forms of exclusion, marginalization, discrimination, disparities and inequalities in access to and completion of education at all levels. We must take serious steps in eliminating the barriers that people with disabilities face to attain their right to education. Despite the fact that Arab states have achieved gender parity in primary education, significant disparities still exist within countries. We will work with our partners to develop effective strategies to overcome all obstacles to enable girls and women to continue their education. We recognize the value of women's education for our societies to be productive. We will therefore strive to make equity a priority for our education policies, planning and management.
11. We will reinforce the provision of youth and adult education and learning, including literacy, through formal and non-formal pathways, in collaboration with all governmental and non-governmental actors.

Quality and relevance of education, and teachers

12. We recognize that education quality is the priority in our region. We must therefore improve and develop all aspects of education quality and invest in policies, programmes and systems of measuring and monitoring learning outcomes.
13. Since the quality of our education hinges on the quality of teachers, we acknowledge that, while the number of qualified teachers continues to rise, we must ensure the provision of sustained professional development for teachers, educators, school management and members of supporting institutions, taking into consideration the best practices in the region and sharing information on these.

Citizenship and Education for Sustainable Development

14. We commit to integrating values of citizenship, patriotism and 21st century skills into our education systems by emphasizing the knowledge, skills, values and practices conducive to sustainable development.
15. We reaffirm our commitment to improve TVET and higher education, linking youth training to the requirements of the labor market and providing them with guidance and opportunity to become productive citizens, which in turn contributes to inclusive development in their respective societies.

Enabling policies and mechanisms for the future education agenda

16. Considering the impact of experimental and applied educational research on the educational and developmental policies for the post-2015 agenda and to tackle the equity and quality imperatives,

we must support it and make better use of best practices and experiences within the Arab region and from other regions. We resolve to develop comprehensive national monitoring and evaluation systems to generate sound evidence which we will use for policy formulation and management of education systems.

17. Other areas for improvement in the Post-2015 agenda are related to the governance and management of our education systems. We will work together to enhance accountability measures and community involvement to rationalize education decisions.
18. We shall seek to allocate sufficient financial resources in an equitable manner and according to the set internationally recognized benchmarks for public expenditure on education reaching 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and/or 20% of the total public expenditure at least. We will cooperate with our international partners to develop mechanisms enabling long term planning for providing educational services in emergency situations.
19. We must ensure and invigorate community involvement in articulating educational needs of the most marginalized populations and developing innovative approaches to ensure access, equity and quality of education.
20. We call upon UNESCO, in collaboration with the EFA co-convening agencies and other partners, to continue leading the coordination of the development of the post-2015 education agenda and the corresponding Framework for Action. We further recommend that UNESCO continue to provide technical support for the implementation, monitoring and enhancing accountability of the future post-2015 education agenda, including reinforcing innovative tools like the flagship EFA Global Monitoring Report and working to mobilize the adequate financial resources to support educational systems afflicted by crises and conflicts in the region and advocating to support education for all.
21. We stress the importance of coordination and cooperation with all organizations working on education, in particular ALECSO, ABEGS, LAS and ISESCO in all matters relating to the implementation of the Post-2015 agenda

Towards World Education Forum ad Beyond 2015

22. Recognizing the challenges our region encounters such as slow economic growth, high levels of unemployment especially among youth, we will strive to ensure the integration of educational priorities within the broader development frameworks of our countries and in national development agendas as well as sustaining political support at its highest levels and enhancing social mobilization given its paramount importance.
23. We therefore commit to continuing our efforts in preparation for our participation in the 2015 World Education Forum to be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 19 to 22 May 2015 and in following up on its outcomes.

Kigali Statement

Adopted at the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015 (9-11 February 2015, Kigali, Rwanda)

Preamble

1. We, Ministers of Education of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Minister of Education of Mauritania - in his capacity as a member of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF) Bureau, senior government officials, United Nations (UN) and multilateral agencies, representatives of civil society organizations, development partners, academia, teacher organizations, parent associations, youth representatives and journalists, meeting in Kigali from 9-11 February 2015, thank H.E. President Paul Kagame, government and people of Rwanda for hosting this conference and their kind hospitality.
2. Drawing from the assessments of achievements and challenges of the implementation of Education for All (EFA) and the African Union (AU) Second Decade of Education for Africa, we have noted the uneven pace of progress across the continent. Bearing in mind the unfinished education agendas, there is a need to revisit our priorities, strategies and targets for post-2015 within a context of new perspectives and emerging challenges.
3. Informed by the outcomes of the consultations on the post-2015 education agenda already held, including: the Muscat Agreement, the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG) for Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2015 Common African Position, the Africa Agenda 2063, National EFA Reviews, initiatives such as the EFA 'Big Push' and the mid-term evaluation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa, we endorse the overarching goal of the OWG to *'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all'* and adopt the present statement.

Sub-Saharan Africa perspectives on the post-2015 education agenda

4. We reaffirm our commitment to the pursuit of quality education for lifelong learning as a fundamental human right and imperative for sustainable development, which must be unequivocally guaranteed to every child, youth and adult. Taking into account progress made, continued development challenges and emerging development issues, we are resolved to construct new education paradigms in developing human capabilities for inclusive growth, wealth creation, peace and security, to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend of SSA.
5. Recognizing appreciable progress in education over the last 25 years since the EFA movement started in Jomtien, we are cognizant that most countries have not achieved EFA and Second Decade of Education for Africa goals and targets: Several countries do not have universal access in the first grade of primary education, while completion in primary education is only 67 %; 35 % at lower secondary and 17% at upper secondary. Enrollment at TVET is 606 students per 100,000 inhabitants, while only 636 students per 100,000 access higher education and adult literacy levels stand at 69 %. We therefore call for a rethinking of policies, strategies, and target setting to respond to the new priorities in the African context cutting across all levels of education, using an integrated approach for sustainable development. This requires a focus on quality, equity, gender equality and inclusion, teachers, skills development, governance and leadership, innovation, regional cooperation and financing, to make the quantum leap to achieve Africa's vision of peace, prosperity and integration.

Regional priority action areas

6. Equitable and inclusive access for all

Recognizing the right to access inclusive, equitable and quality education, we reaffirm our commitment to ensure that every child, youth and adult, including minorities and the most disadvantaged groups, complete high-quality education from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to higher education with at least a minimum completion of free and compulsory basic education of 9 -10 years.

We commit to an integrated approach for ECCE, which requires collaboration between all relevant ministries, especially the ministries responsible for planning, education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, social welfare and security to build early foundations for every child.

7. Inclusion, equity and gender equality

Exclusion and discrimination, disparities and inequalities, in access to and completion of education and learning cycles, processes and outcomes, remains an ongoing challenge for Africa. Therefore, we commit to eliminating all forms of exclusion and inequality in and through education. To ensure inclusion and equity, we commit to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society and out-of-school children with specific policy action to ensure that all children, youth and adults, girls and boys, women and men, especially the poor at the bottom quintiles have access to and complete quality education to achieve their full potential. We commit to providing flexible options for education for those populations that are in hard-to-reach locations and/or have disabilities.

We recognize the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment for sustainable development, the issue of violence against boys, girls and women in educational institutions, the importance of literate mothers in girls' attendance to school, and the large number of illiterate women.

We therefore commit to support gender sensitive policies and planning; mainstream gender issues in teachers' training; stop violence in education institutions, unwanted teenage pregnancies and early marriages; reduce sexual risk behavior and HIV/AIDS through age-appropriate reproductive health education; address harmful cultural practices; ensure that girls stay in school and can have opportunities to participate up to tertiary level, supported by, among others, feeding and nutrition programs, sanitation, health, accessible secondary schools and provision of scholarships; link women's literacy programs with women's rights, leadership, health, nutrition, peace and security, entrepreneurship skills etc.; and ensure gender sensitive learning environments.

8. Teachers and teaching

Acknowledging the impact of the quality of teachers on equity and learning outcomes and noting the shortage of trained and qualified teachers, low status and motivation, and the often weak standards in training, support and qualification frameworks, we affirm the need for comprehensive teacher policies and call for concerted action to increase investments for the recruitment, training, deployment, management, evaluation and continued professional development and improved welfare of teachers across all levels of education, both formal and non-formal. Action should also include the establishment of national and regional teacher qualification frameworks and appropriate mechanisms to facilitate regional mobility.

Commending the AU Heads of States and Governments for the Malabo Summit Decision that called for a study on the training, living and working conditions for teachers in Africa, we invite policy makers, teacher organizations and education stakeholders to engage in ongoing and constructive social dialogue to improve teachers' working conditions, enhance mutual accountability and promote safe, peaceful and productive learning environments. We further encourage innovation in teacher education and pedagogical practice, including the use of new media and information and communication technologies (ICT) and distance education.

9. Educational quality and learning outcomes

We recognize that achieving quality of education is a matter of urgency in Africa. Noting that educational quality and learning are determined by inputs, processes and outcomes, we commit to putting in place policies, legal frameworks and strategies at the national and regional levels to: a) provide sufficient resources including teaching and learning materials accessible to all; b) define standards and review curricula to ensure relevance to global as well as the African context, values, culture and knowledge and gender responsiveness; c) promote the use of African languages and multilingualism across all levels using multiple learning pathways; d) develop appropriate mechanisms for assessing, and monitoring learning outcomes at all levels; e) explore innovative approach including use of ICTs; and f) further strengthen institutions, school leadership, and governance through greater involvement of communities, including young people in the management of schools, and g) ensure learning environments are safe, free from violence, inclusive and gender responsive.

10. Science, technology and skills development

Recognizing the importance of science, technology and skills development for innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship and employability, that are key to social, cultural and inclusive economic development, we affirm our commitment to strengthen policies and legal frameworks, programmes and structures to increase access to science, technology and skills development across all levels of education, with particular focus on youth, girls and marginalized groups.

We commend the African Heads of States and Governments for adopting the Science, Technology and Innovations Strategy (STISA 2024) and the continental TVET strategy, and for calling for the ratification and implementation of the revised Arusha Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa.

Acknowledging the importance of indigenous knowledge systems, we commit to the promotion and inclusion of the development, use and dissemination of indigenous science in education systems.

We therefore call for: (a) strengthening of research, teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, at all levels of education, including formal, non-formal and informal, with dynamic linkages to the social, productive and service sectors; (b) a holistic transformation of TVET and higher education systems, with a focus on quality, regional cooperation towards joint programmes, the recognition and transfer of credits and the flexible entry and re-entry of students to the world of work and continuing education; (c) recognition of skills and prior learning acquired beyond the formal system; (d) transforming tertiary education to increase the stock and enhance the quality of graduates from science and technology programmes, and work closely with employers to strengthen relevance of programs to country development strategies; (e) developing mechanisms for quality assurance and benchmarking progress at national and regional levels; and (f) strengthening labor market information systems (LMIS) linked to national human resource development plans.

11. Education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED)

We recognize that we are living in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, confronted by emerging human and environmental issues that create conditions and tensions, which require greater cooperation and harmony between humankind and nature. We further acknowledge the importance of GCED in promoting the development of values, attitudes and skills that are necessary for a more peaceful, just, inclusive, and harmonious world. We therefore resolve to institutionalize ESD-GCED through formal, non-formal and informal education by: a) promoting a humanistic approach to education (Ubuntu Spirit) that reinforces among others respect for self, others and the planet, b) involving all stakeholders in promoting the ESD-GCED agenda, c) using existing regional protocols and ongoing regional initiatives to promote the ESD-GCED agenda, and d) reviewing and integrating ESD-GCED components in curricula across all levels of education.

12. Youth and adult literacy, skills and competencies for life and work

We recognize the high percentage of youth as a potential asset to be harnessed for Africa's transformation. Noting the high adult and youth illiteracy levels, particularly of girls and women, and the huge numbers of out-of-school children and youth, we are determined to ensure that all youth and adults, especially women, have access to continuous lifelong learning and functional literacy, numeracy and requisite skills programmes for life and work. We commit to the use of mother tongue instruction before transiting to use of national/international languages for literacy programmes. We further call for the promotion of literacy programmes at the work place.

13. Financing, governance and partnerships

We take note that government is the primary duty bearer for efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of education. Recognizing the limited financial investment in education, the weak governance and administrative structures of educational systems, we are strongly committed to strengthen governance and increase domestic resource allocation and internal resource mobilization for education with specific focus on under-resourced sub-sectors, including ECCE, youth and adult literacy, TVET and higher education, among others. We recommend adherence to the internationally recognized benchmarks of at least 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or 20% of public expenditure on education as well as the efficient use and equitable targeting of these resources.

We recognize the contribution of all development partners including those participating in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and call upon them to recommit to increase, better target and coordinate official development assistance (ODA) in alignment with regional and national education priorities and plans. In particular, we call upon the GPE mechanism in meeting the financing gap and broaden the areas of support towards the achievement of the post-2015 education targets.

We recognize and promote the role of civil society organization within a coalition of partners working on education in Africa.

We endorse open and transparent governance systems and mechanisms for budget tracking, reporting and accountability for efficient use of resources.

We commit to strengthening comprehensive Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) in Africa and improve capacities to collect quality disaggregated data at the sub-national, national and regional levels for effective monitoring and evaluation of education goals and targets.

We call for strengthening the role of parliamentarians in ensuring allocation of adequate budgets for education.

14. Education in crisis situations

Conflict, crises, natural disasters, terrorist attacks and pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola are major challenges to education in this region.

We underline the importance of education being maintained during emergency, conflict and post-conflict situations and for reconstruction. We recognize the important role that education plays in preventing conflicts, crises, disease, and in addressing the needs of displaced persons. Therefore, we commit to undertake initiatives for the protection of students, education personnel, and school infrastructures in times of conflict, develop plans for preparedness and response to emergency situations for education, as well as promote education for a culture of peace and non-violence, and intercultural dialogue and understanding.

We commit to include in education policies, sector plans and budgets relevant risk assessment and planning to respond to the education needs of children, youth and adults affected by disaster, conflict, displacement and epidemics, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Effective education response requires good coordination between neighbouring countries, therefore we commit to support existing sub-regional and regional mechanisms and strategies to address the education needs of displaced and refugees populations. We commit to planning and financing for education services in protracted crises.

We commit to develop systems and ensure capacity building for disaster risk reduction (DRR); resilience and peace education. We pledge to secure multi-year funding to establish budget lines for crisis response.

Towards the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 and beyond

15. We commit ourselves and request relevant UN agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, youth representatives and the private sector under the leadership of UNESCO and the African Union to maintain the momentum to finalize a comprehensive, well-coordinated post-2015 education agenda and Framework for Action.
16. We pledge our support to continue the negotiation for the promotion of a future education agenda in all upcoming fora to reach final agreement on priorities for the next global development agenda. We will continue to ensure that the education goals and targets are mainstreamed and receive pride of place in every aspect of the *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* and the *Common African Position on the Post-2015*.
17. We further recommend that UNESCO continue to lead the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda after its adoption at the United Nations Special Summit in September 2015 at the global level.
18. We commit to strengthening the partnership between AU, UNESCO, civil society organizations, teacher organizations, youth representatives and other development partners, to develop and implement the African regional education strategy.

Paris Statement

Adopted at the Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015 - European and North American States (19-20 February 2015, Paris, France)

Preamble

1. We, Ministers of Education, high-level government officials from Ministries of Education and of Cooperation and Development, and representatives of UN agencies, civil society organizations and development partners of European and North American States, gathered at the Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015 of European and North American States, in Paris, France, from 19 – 20 February 2015;
2. Having deliberated on the status of EFA in Europe and North America as well as on lessons learnt; on challenges and priorities in education that will shape the post-2015 education agenda and on the implementation and monitoring requirements of the future agenda; we endorse the principles, goal and targets set forth in the Muscat Agreement, and support the proposed education goal and targets outlined in the Report of the United Nations General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG) for Sustainable Development Goals.
3. We take note of the Synthesis Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the post-2015 agenda 'The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet.
4. We support the proposed goal of the future education agenda: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", which reflects the aspiration of the European and North American States for education and development and adopt the present statement. Accordingly, we support a single, integrated education agenda, which is fully aligned with the post-2015 SDG framework.
5. We reaffirm that education is a fundamental human right, a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights, and essential for peaceful and inclusive, equitable and sustainable development and poverty reduction in Europe and North America and globally. We reaffirm that education should be at the heart of the future global development agenda, given its central role in achieving sustainable development and in forging more just, peaceful, democratic, tolerant, resilient, transformative and inclusive societies and in providing people with the understanding, competencies and values they need to resolve the challenges that our societies and economies are facing.

Priority Areas for European and North American States

Equity, inclusion and gender equality

6. We are committed to the principles of non-discrimination in education¹ and recommend addressing all forms of exclusion, disparities and inequalities in education, based on differences in age, gender, wealth, nationality, religion, language, geographical location, disability, identity, culture, citizenship status, socio-economic background and health condition among others.
7. Addressing inequities in access, participation and learning outcomes by developing comprehensive inclusive education strategies is a vital consideration to ensure a transformative post-2015 education agenda. This requires a focus on the quality of education which should be addressed from an equity and inclusion perspective in particular for vulnerable and marginalized groups. We remain committed to enhancing education systems which reflect and welcome cultural diversity and foster intercultural dialogue, thus achieving social cohesion.

¹ See Convention against Discrimination in Education adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1960; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of racial Discrimination, 1969; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, [CEDAW], 1979; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 1981 and Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990 among others.

8. We recognize the importance of gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment for sustainable development. We therefore commit to supporting gender sensitive policies and planning; mainstream gender issues in teachers' training; eliminate school-related gender-based violence, provide age-appropriate reproductive health and comprehensive sexuality education², link women's literacy and adult education programs with women's rights, leadership, health, nutrition, peace and security, entrepreneurship skills etc.; and ensure gender sensitive learning environments.

Quality of education

9. We are committed to the quality of education for all, with attention to improving and measuring progress across inputs, processes including functioning and governance of the system and learning outcomes. Special focus should be put on gender equality and the most marginalized so as to improve overall levels of student learning and reduce achievement gaps.
10. We consider it crucial that all learners are taught by professional, competent, committed and well-supported teachers at all levels of education who are able to respond to diverse learning needs. Appropriate systems and policies on teacher pre- and in-service training, recruitment, certification, deployment, professional development, career advancement, accountability, remuneration, as well as an enabling working environment and conducive conditions of service are essential for ensuring teacher effectiveness and teacher status. Given the critical importance of teachers for the realization of quality education, teachers should remain key actors and a central focus of the post-2015 education agenda.
11. We stress the importance of curricula and of diverse learning materials and tools to reflect the needs of multi-cultural and multi-lingual societies and knowledge-based economies and the changing skills demands for life and the labour market. This includes better alignment of pedagogical practices to the needs of increasingly diverse student populations and to enable the achievement of relevant learning outcomes including non-cognitive skills and competencies essential for life. Quality learning through learner-centred approaches also needs to be supported by effective and safe learning environments, competent school leadership and parental and community participation; and should be underpinned by cutting-edge findings of scientific research on learning. We also acknowledge the importance of ICTs and the need for harnessing their full potential in the teaching and learning process for improved learning outcomes, and to facilitate the entry of young people in the workplace and to improve the quality of life.
12. We highlight the importance of monitoring and assessing the process and outcomes of learning. Ways to measure not only academic performance but also other outcomes such as critical thinking, innovation, entrepreneurship, flexibility, cooperation, etc. need to be developed. It is important that we further develop and improve global, regional and country or sub-national- based evaluation systems that consider various quality dimensions including literacy and numeracy, and generate sound evidence for policy formulation and the management of education systems.

Lifelong learning for all

13. Inclusive and equitable access to quality education should be ensured for all - children, youth and adults, at all levels of education, from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to higher education, offered formally, non-formally or informally. As quality ECCE plays a crucial role in building strong foundations for learning and development, the continued expansion of quality ECCE services should be provided to all with emphasis on the holistic development of children. We also acknowledge that poor and disadvantaged children benefit most from quality early childhood education. Timely and appropriate early detection and intervention in early childhood can reduce and prevent learning difficulties and disabilities. Therefore, early childhood education should be considered one major strategy for effectively addressing equity issues in education.

² In acknowledging the call for sexuality education one country delegation indicated that it should be noted that the provision of sexuality education should be provided in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities and the appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians.

14. We recommend the provision of at least 12 years publicly funded quality formal education for all by 2030 that includes at least 9 year of free and compulsory primary and lower secondary education and at least one year of pre-primary education. The equitable expansion of higher education with quality programs and the strengthening of science and technology, including research and innovation should also be a priority for the region. We further recommend mechanisms that support flexible learning pathways, credit transfer and the recognition, validation and accreditation of knowledge, skills and competencies through non-formal and informal learning
15. We recognize that adequate and advanced life and work skills including functional literacy and numeracy are essential for effective participation in a changing life and work context. Yet many adults lack these skills. Such skills are necessary and relevant life and work competencies to boost innovation, prosperity, social participation, cohesion and democratic citizenship. Demographic changes, which include migration and aging populations poses opportunities and challenges that require us to provide well-designed continuing education opportunities to enable adults to maintain and develop new skills. Well-designed education systems should be put in place to enable adult workers to keep their skills up-to-date and improve the quality of life and their productivity, and thereby contribute to extended careers of productive employment in a life-long learning perspective.

Skills and competencies for life and work

16. We recognize that in light of the rapid social, economic and environmental transformations in Europe and North America, there is an acute need to identify policy options that effectively enlarge the relevant skill sets of children, youth and adults, to manage and attain a better quality of life and realize their full potential, We acknowledge that beyond mastering work-specific skills, there is need for information-processing skills and other high-level cognitive and interpersonal skills. Therefore, we recommend that education and training opportunities should provide learners with those knowledge, skills and competences needed to be creative and innovative, able to initiate, adapt to and assimilate change and to continue learning, and navigate a technology-intensive world.
17. Attention is also needed to strengthen work-related skills in order to improve education to work transitions, and enhance adult up-skilling and reskilling. Reducing the mismatch between qualifications and credentials supplied by education and training systems and the required skills and competencies in the current labour market is particularly important. Developing lifelong learning frameworks is important to improve the linkages between education and training and employment and to enhance a dialogue between governments and social and economic partners to facilitate the transition of young people from education to work. We recommend the establishment of flexible education systems which facilitate pathways between different education streams and the transition between school and work.

Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education

18. We acknowledge the need to strengthen the contribution of education to the fulfilment of human rights, peace, responsible citizenship, gender equality, sustainable development, health, respect for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Programs in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), stated and reinforced in the Nagoya Declaration and the Global Action Programme, and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) that include attention to human rights education and gender equality and among other priorities are needed to empower learners to contribute to sustainable development and take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and just democratic societies for present and future generations, and to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world and counter violent extremism. In line with this, curricula, textbooks and educational materials and tools should promote mutual respect, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. ESD and GCED are holistic concepts and key components of adult learning systems in addition to education for the arts, education for community development and intergenerational understanding.

19. We recognise that the participation of children, students and young people in education governance, can help develop skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making, and strengthen the behavioural capacities required to effectively engage in society. We commit to strengthen existing and emerging education governance processes in formal and non-formal contexts and ensure the active involvement of children, students and young people, parents, families and communities and work with them to monitor the quality of educational services.

Education in Crisis Situations

20. Conflict, crises, natural disasters and global pandemics are major challenges with significant consequences for education and development globally. We underline the importance of education being maintained during emergency, conflict and post-conflict situations and for reconstruction. We recognize the important role education plays in preventing and mitigating conflicts and crises and for reconciliation and in addressing the needs of displaced persons. We fully recognize the need to ensure the protection of education personnel, students and school infrastructure in times of conflict and emergency situations with particular attention to girls and women, develop plans for preparedness and response, as well as promote education for a culture of peace and non-violence, and intercultural dialogue and understanding. In the spirit of disaster risk reduction, we acknowledge the need for inclusion in education policies, sector plans and budgets relevant risk assessment and planning. We recognize the need for multi-year funding for education in humanitarian and protracted crises.

Governance, Coordination and Partnerships, Financing and Monitoring

21. Governments are the primary duty-bearers and custodians for efficient, equitable and sustainable management and financing of public education and schools. At the same time, we underline the importance of partnerships between governments and key stakeholders such as civil society, the private sector, parents, school administrators, teachers, children, students, young people, and the wider community and aim at enhancing these, with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities.
22. We emphasize that strong public financing of education is crucial for the success of the education agenda and recommend that education should be a priority in governments' budgets. We recommend that action should be taken to improve the efficiency of educational financing and that there should be an enhanced focus on diversified financing that supports quality public education.
23. Given the greater ambition and increased scope of the post 2015 agenda there is a need to mobilize funding and resources from multiple sources, and pay attention to more efficient use of resources, an enhanced focus on innovative financing and strengthened partnership, including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In accordance with the country contexts, we recommend that governments consider adherence to the international benchmarks of 4 - 6% of GDP and/or 15 - 20% of total public expenditure for education for domestic investment in education. At the same time we reiterate the commitment to the international target of providing 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) as official development assistance (ODA)³. We also call for international financing mechanisms that support the implementation of all the targets of the post-2015 education agenda according to the needs and priorities of the respective countries.
24. We are determined to uphold accountability and transparency in the provision of education, supported by strengthened monitoring and evaluation. We further recommend regular and independent monitoring to track progress at global, regional and country and sub-national mechanisms; therefore mechanisms such as the current EFA Global Monitoring Report should be maintained in the form of a Global Education Monitoring Report, with regular opportunities to discuss results at a high political level. As needed systems may have to be developed or improved and supported at these levels.

Towards the World Education Forum, May 2015

25. We request UNESCO, along with UNICEF and with the support of the EFA co-convening agencies, as well as civil society, and the international, regional and sub-regional groups and partners, to continue

leading the coordination of the development of the post-2015 education agenda, and the development of the corresponding Framework for Action and of indicators drawing on the contributions of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). We further recommend that UNESCO continue to lead, coordinate and provide technical support together with other partners for the implementation, monitoring and accountability for the post-2015 education agenda.

26. We are committed to promote a single, integrated future education agenda in upcoming intergovernmental negotiations, and to facilitate the alignment of the Framework for Action, to be agreed upon at the World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea on 19-22 May 2015, with the global post-2015 development agenda to be adopted by the UN Special Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015. We believe that education has a fundamental role to play in the transformation of people's lives and we look forward to meeting at Incheon to set this agenda for that transformation.