

**World**  
**Education  
Forum**

Dakar, Senegal  
26-28 April 2000



**Final**

**Report**



**Final**

**Report**

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# Forever

# Foreword

Education is a fundamental right enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet, today, millions of individuals deprived of basic education are still unaware that this is a right they can demand.

The World Education Forum, held in Dakar from 26 to 28 April 2000, was about making this right a reality. It was the culminating event of the decade of Education for All (EFA) initiated in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and, more specifically, of the EFA 2000 Assessment, the largest evaluation of education ever undertaken. This bottom-up exercise, benefiting from the unprecedented participation of all the EFA partners — governments, aid agencies, non-governmental organizations — brought the meeting solid facts, collected and analysed at country level and subsequently synthesized by region.

The Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the close of the Forum is largely based on the Assessment's invaluable data. The most accurate picture to date of the state of basic education worldwide, the EFA 2000 Assessment highlights the gains and shortfalls in educational provision, pinpoints problem areas and unreached groups, and serves as a blueprint for future action.

Clearly, the message of the World Education Forum is not one of complacency. On the contrary, it is a wake-up call and an invitation to act urgently and effectively. First, the Dakar Framework for Action calls on national governments to take full responsibility for ensuring that its goals and strategies are implemented. Education for all is the obligation and prerogative of the State. In working towards this goal, the Dakar Framework urges governments to establish broad-based partnerships with civil society and to give the ensuing national action plans the strongest political support.

Secondly, it calls on UNESCO to co-ordinate global action. We are, indeed, glad to take up this challenge and to work more closely with countries. Our efforts will be directed towards developing education systems that are authentic, affordable and modern, and accessible to all without exclusion or discrimination and that inspire a universal culture in which all human beings can share.

UNESCO will provide concrete support and guidance to countries in drafting their national action plans and will enhance dialogue between countries, donors and civil society, ensuring that national governments maintain full ownership of their education. The task ahead is enormous and the collaboration of all our partner agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society will be vital.

Funding too will be of the utmost importance. The resources we allocate to education for all will need to be proportional to the challenge ahead. If governments have to make clear, coherent and courageous choices in this respect, as they will indeed have to do, so too will the donor community. UNESCO is currently engaged in a broad consultation on how to strengthen mechanisms for co-ordinating, reporting and evaluating aid flows and how to deal with debt relief.

World leaders at the G8 meeting in Okinawa, Japan, in July agreed to ensure that additional resources would be channelled to basic education. Citing the Dakar Framework for Action, they reaffirmed "that no government seriously committed to achieving education for all will be thwarted in this achievement by lack of resources."

UNESCO, for its part, will focus on strategies identified in Dakar as deserving particular attention, such as early childhood development, girls' education, literacy, education in emergencies, HIV/AIDS and health issues, and the role of information and communication technologies in education.

As Director-General of UNESCO, I am currently taking steps to enable the Organization to develop its innovative potential and capacity to guide and inspire the work of actors on the ground.

The Organization's essential asset is the unique multi-disciplinary approach it can bring to bear on all these issues so that education for all becomes a reality by 2015 at the latest, and much sooner if possible.



Koichiro Matsuura  
Director-General of UNESCO

# Pref

# Preface

In April 2000 more than 1,100 participants from 164 countries gathered in Dakar, Senegal, for the World Education Forum. They ranged from teachers to prime ministers, academics to policy-makers, political activists to the heads of major international organizations.

Although the participants in the Forum came from diverse backgrounds, they shared a common vision. They dreamed of a world in which everyone, child and adult alike, would command the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to function as a citizen, worker, family member and fulfilled individual in the emerging global society. The purpose of the three-day gathering was to agree on a strategy to turn this vision of 'education for all' (EFA) into a reality.

The goal of universal basic education had been vigorously articulated a decade before at the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, which was held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990. On that occasion, participants from 155 countries and representatives of 160 governmental and non-governmental agencies adopted a World Declaration on Education for All, reaffirming the notion of education as a fundamental human right and urging the nations of the world to intensify their efforts to address the basic learning needs of all. They also approved a Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs that spelled out targets and strategies for reaching this goal by the year 2000.

The World Education Forum in Dakar was convened to assess progress toward EFA since Jomtien, to analyse where and why the goal has remained elusive, and to renew commitments to turn this vision into a reality. For three days the participants presented data, debated strategies and listened to speakers ranging from students in developing countries to heads of state. In his keynote address, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

announced a major new United Nations initiative to 'demonstrably narrow the gender gap' in primary and secondary education by 2005. Leaders of several major donor organizations and delegates from several large donor countries also announced important new programmes.

Not all of the action took place inside the Forum's meeting rooms. On the opening day hundreds of Senegalese children attired in white T-shirts took part in a Global Campaign for Education rally outside the main entrance. They displayed placards and banners celebrating EFA and held up yellow cards warning that the nations of the world are failing to provide education to every child. Representatives of non-governmental organizations – some of whom were official participants – kept pressure on delegates by passing out literature, talking to them in the halls and making themselves available to the media.

At the final plenary session on April 28, Forum delegates adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments. The Framework reaffirms the goal of EFA as laid out by Jomtien and other international conferences, commits participants to working toward specific educational goals by 2015 or earlier and affirms that 'no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.' It also calls for the developing or strengthening of national action plans and the reinforcing of national, regional and international mechanisms, built on existing national, regional and international structures, to co-ordinate global efforts and to accelerate progress towards EFA.

This document constitutes a report on the World Education Forum. The pages that follow describe the discussions that took place and record the actions that resulted from participants' conviction that education is, as Kofi Annan put it in his keynote address, 'the key for enabling succeeding generations to succeed' ■



# Introduction

The convening of a major international conference on EFA in the year 2000 was anticipated in 1990 by the World Conference for Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand). In pledging to strive toward primary education for every child and a massive reduction in adult illiteracy by the year 2000, participants in the Jomtien conference were careful to establish mechanisms for assuring that the work was carried on in a systematic manner. They created a Consultative Forum on Education for All with a mandate that called for periodic review of progress towards these goals, including a major ten-year appraisal.

In June 1996, 250 participants from 73 countries met in Amman, Jordan, for a four-day Mid-decade Meeting of the Consultative Forum on Education for All to assess progress up to that point. The meeting's final communiqué, adopted as the Amman Affirmation, declared that, in the six years since Jomtien, 'there has been significant progress in basic education, not in all countries nor as much as had been hoped, but progress that is nonetheless real.' Progress was also taken note of by other international conferences that took place during the 1990s.<sup>1</sup>

As a prelude to the ten-year review at the World Education Forum in Dakar, the participating countries took part in the EFA 2000 Assessment, a massive and detailed analysis of the state of basic education around the world. Each country assessed its own progress toward the goals of Jomtien and then reported its findings at six regional meetings in the late 1999 and early 2000. An overall summary was presented at Dakar (see Part I). The national assessments were complemented by fourteen thematic studies on educational issues of global concern, twenty case-studies, and sample surveys of learning achievement and conditions of teaching and learning. These data, analyses and observations were then used by the Consultative Forum as a basis for redefining

strategies and drawing up the revised Framework for Action to meet basic learning needs for all by 2015.

The World Education Forum was sponsored by five convening agencies: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank. Participants included delegates from 164 nations as well as representatives of the sponsoring agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other agencies and groups with an interest in global education issues.

The Forum opened with a welcoming address by President Abdoulaye Wade of the Republic of Senegal, who stressed the importance of viewing education as a fundamental human right 'rooted in the legal and social environment as well as in the individual's active resolve to enjoy his rights to the full.' Respect for such rights, he said is essential to the functioning of a democratic society. 'Like a building,' he said, 'democracy is constructed freedom by freedom, right by right, until the one is reached which tips the balance ... and leads to a changeover.'

In his keynote address (Annex 1), United Nations' Secretary-General Kofi Annan sounded what was to become a leitmotif of the Dakar Forum: whereas much progress has been made toward the goal of EFA, much remains to be accomplished. 'As we open the twenty-first century, we do have some achievements to celebrate,' he told the assemblage. 'Educational levels in many developing countries have climbed dramatically. The percentage of adult illiterates in the world has declined steadily. An explosive innovation of technology has brought new learning opportunities to millions. We have reached a new level of capacity-building and understanding in our work to attain basic education for all. And yet, at least 800 million adults worldwide are still illiterate, most of them women. A yawning digital divide exists between those who have access to new technology and those who have not. A quarter of a billion children work, in often hazardous or unhealthy conditions. And, according to conservative estimates, more than 110 million school-age children are not attending school.'

<sup>1</sup> The World Summit for Children (1990), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993) the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (1997) and the International Conference on Child Labour (1997).

The defining mood of the Jomtien Conference had been one of hope and expectancy. Jomtien put the concept of EFA on the global development agenda and raised global consciousness about important strategic issues, most notably the need to focus attention on the education of girls and women. A decade later, the concept of EFA continued to be alive and well.

Whereas Jomtien had looked primarily to the future, participants in the Dakar Forum also had a decade of experience to consider. The optimism of Jomtien was tempered by recognition that, for all of the gains, the overall goal of universal basic education by the year 2000 had not in fact been met. As Koïchiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO, told participants, 'The broad vision of Education for All proclaimed in Jomtien ten years ago has lost nothing of its wisdom and relevance. What we could not foresee, however, were the sometimes tragic events of the decade affecting all societies and consequently their education systems.'

Much of the discussion at Dakar was thus driven by recognition that the world has changed in ways that could not have been anticipated at Jomtien. There are now thirty more countries than there were in 1990. The collapse of Communism in Europe and the resultant end of the Cold War has led to a redrawing of the global map and major shifts in national alliances. There has also been a proliferation of ethnic conflicts and a growing number of refugees and displaced persons. It is now generally accepted that education must be thought of in 'global' as well as 'national' terms, and there is far more acceptance

of an important role for the private sector in the delivery of 'public' education. Criticism of donor agencies by non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society is much stronger than it was in 1990.

Three developments over the last decade were particularly important themes at Dakar. The first was the revolution in communication and information technologies that is transforming virtually all human institutions. There was no such thing as the Internet or the World Wide Web as we now know them at the time of Jomtien. Participants at the Forum struggled to understand how to harness these new technologies as tools for EFA.

The second was the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has had a devastating impact on the teaching force in many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The final development was what Mr Matsuura described as 'the ever-increasing rift between rich and poor'. Speaker after speaker reminded the Forum that poverty remains the single most important factor explaining the inability of many governments to meet their goals for EFA. Many called for forgiveness of loans as a requisite first step in addressing the problem.

Such were the challenges as participants in the World Education Forum began their deliberations. 'This conference is a test of all of us who call ourselves the international community,' Kofi Annan told them. 'Ten years ago, at Jomtien, we set ourselves the goal of basic Education for All. We are still far from achieving it. Let us start this conference by resolving not to rest until we have made it a reality! ■

### The faith and vision of Dakar

**W**e are optimistic because, for us, universal education does not depend on spending money but is above all a question of political will – the determination to attack head on and to eradicate this vice and injustice by mobilizing all segments of the population. If we are Utopian, we should be left with our Utopias as long as they drive us to act, as long as they motivate us. For it is undeniable that a Utopia that inspires action is preferable to one that results in inertia and day-dreaming.

Ladies and Gentlemen, if you think our discussions are going to highlight a new approach, if you think that the idea of education should be broadened to encompass the pre-school level and adult education using national languages, and if you think that this challenge concerns not only governments but all levels of the population, why not put a seal on our faith and vision in what we might call the Dakar Declaration or Dakar Appeal?

With this question, I now declare open the World Education Forum.

*Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, in his welcoming address*

# Progress since Jomtien

The World Education Forum was preceded by the most in-depth evaluation of basic education ever conducted: the EFA 2000 Assessment. This detailed review examined the current status of basic education in more than 180 countries. Its purposes were to evaluate the progress that each country had made during the 1990s in promoting the goal of education for all and to generate vital information on a wide range of programmes, activities and services that aim to promote basic learning.

Results of the Assessment will help governments and their partners to determine how far they have come towards the realization of EFA goals and to identify effective strategies for future gains. At the international level, the Assessment will provide the basis for dialogue and co-operation for years to come. Denise Lievesley, Director of UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, described the review as 'a vital benchmark to enable us to assess progress in the future and to ensure that any targets we set are realistic and accompanied by appropriate resources.'

The Assessment drew mainly on national assessments of the extent to which governments are meeting the basic learning needs of their people. The project was carried out by thousands of educators and others around the globe who were linked by a network involving ten regional technical advisory groups that were run by regional staff members of the EFA Forum's convening agencies. In each country national co-ordinators, usually from Ministries of Education, were in charge of the Assessment and produced country reports. Results were reported at six regional meetings in 1999 and 2000 leading up to Dakar.

In addition to individual country reports, the Assessment produced sample surveys of learning achievement and the conditions of teaching and learning in primary schools in more than twenty developing countries, mostly in Africa. These surveys give precise information about the working conditions of teachers, the school environment and the quality of learning. Twenty

interested countries also carried out case-studies on the literacy and educational attainment of their young people and adults.

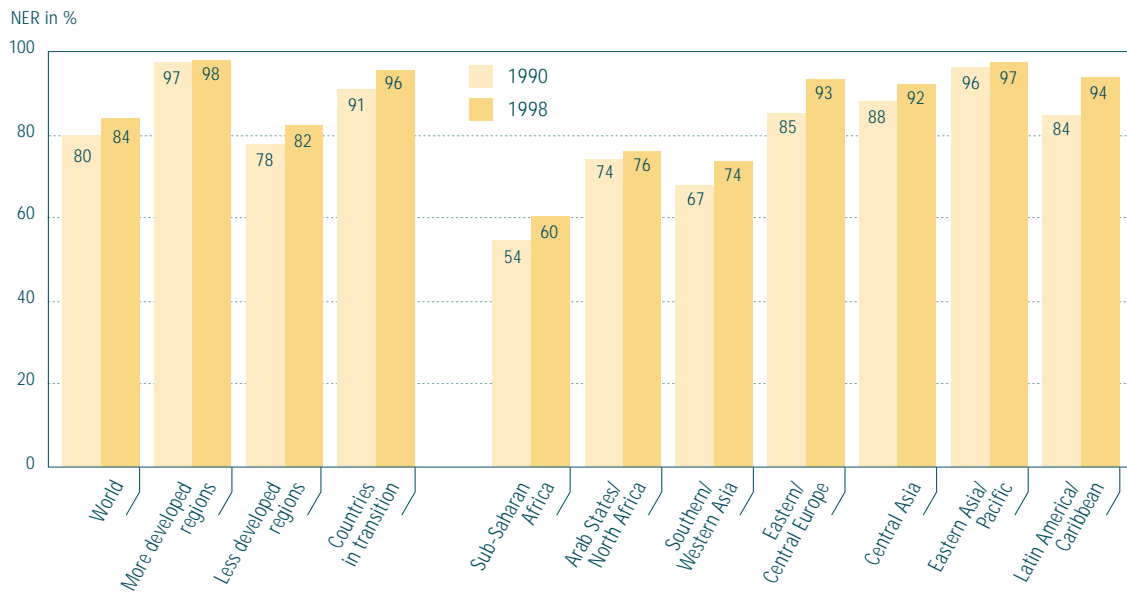
Another feature of the worldwide review was a series of fourteen thematic studies on educational issues of global concern sponsored by a development agency or a major non-governmental organization. These themes were: adult education, applying new technologies, children in difficult circumstances, decentralization and community participation, demographic transition, donor financing of EFA, early childhood care and development, special needs education, education in economic crises, girls' education, refugees, school health and nutrition, and textbooks and learning materials. Each thematic study gives examples of best practices and describes successful and unsuccessful experiments in policy implementation.

Finally, the EFA 2000 Assessment collected data from participating countries on eighteen Statistical Indicators that quantify progress towards the goal of EFA. A complete list of the documents produced through the Assessment can be found in Annex 5.

The major findings of the EFA 2000 Assessment were summarized in *Education for All: Global Synthesis*. At the opening plenary of the World Education Forum, Malcolm Skilbeck, author of this report, presented its highlights. He listed a number of ways in which progress had been made over the past decade toward the various goals of EFA.

**More children in school.** A major objective articulated by Jomtien was universal access to and completion of basic education. The number of children enrolled in school rose from an estimated 599 million in 1990 to 681 million in 1998. This means that some 10 million more children have been going to school every year, which is nearly double the average increase during the preceding decade. Eastern Asia and the Pacific, as well as Latin America and the Caribbean are now close to achieving universal

**Figure 1.**  
**Net enrolment ratios (NER) in primary education by region, 1990 and 1998**



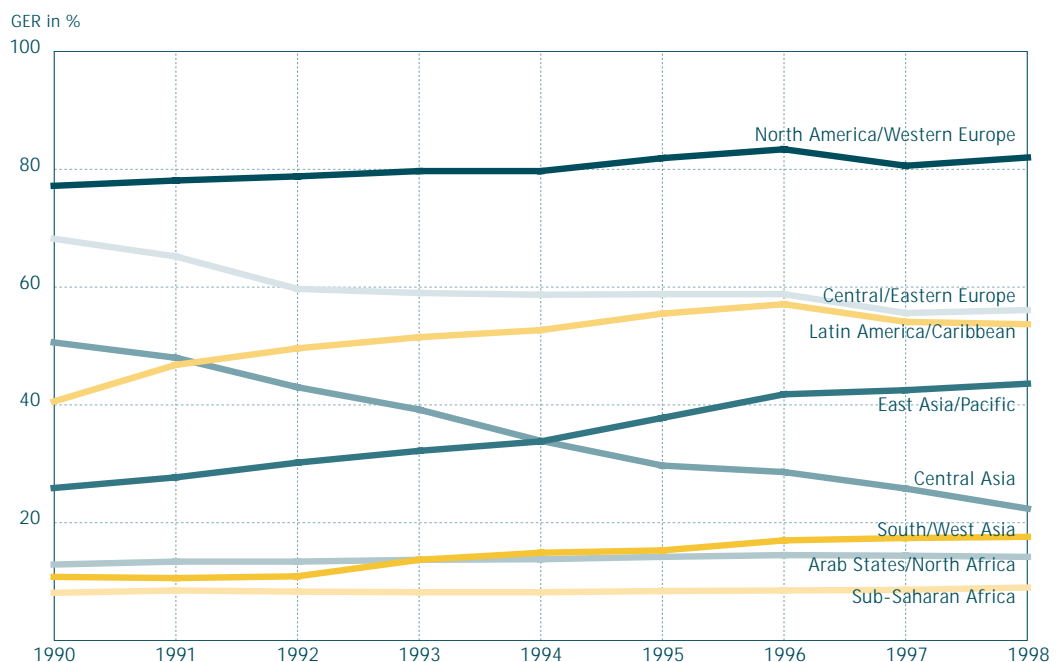
Source: EFA Statistical Document (2000)

primary education (Figure 1). China and India have made impressive progress towards achieving universal primary education, especially with regard to girls. The same countries, along with Bangladesh, register the strongest decrease in population growth rates — a development that has facilitated progress.

**Increased early childhood education.** Jomtien sought both to increase global awareness of the importance of education and care during the early years and to encourage creation of programmes that foster such development

and learning. Understanding of the importance of the early years is now firmly placed on the global agenda and the idea that education begins at birth has taken root in many societies. As a result, the number of children in pre-school education rose by 5 per cent in the past decade. Despite these overall gains, however, the availability of early childhood programmes is erratic, ranging from near-universal in some countries and regions to virtually non-existent in others (Figure 2). New acceptance of the value of maternal care, health and nutritional services is not matched in many countries by adequate supply.

**Figure 2.**  
**Trends in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in early childhood development programmes by region, 1990-1998**

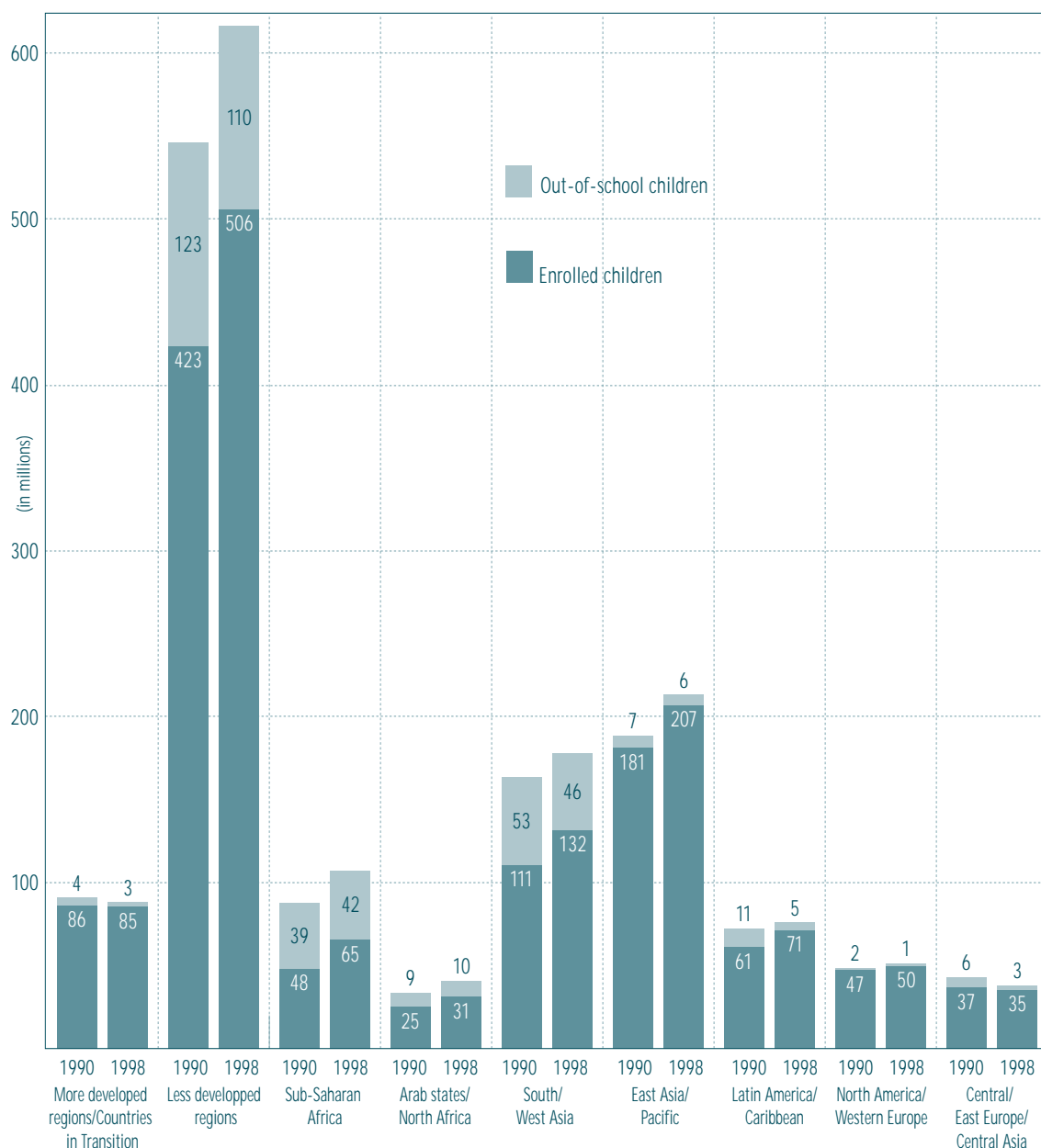


Source: EFA Statistical Document (2000)

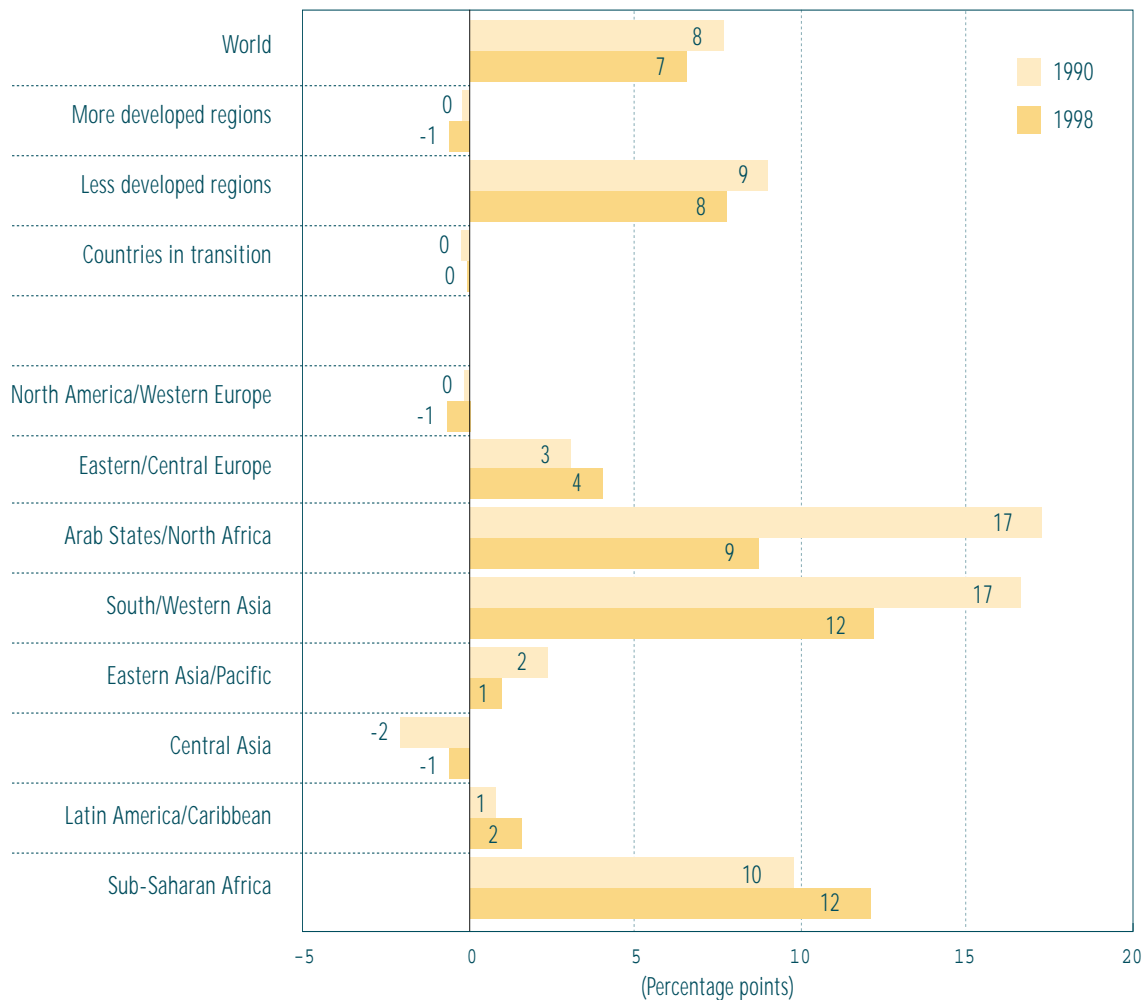
**Fewer out-of-school children (Figure 3).** The number of children not enrolled in school decreased from an estimated 127 million in 1990 to 113 million in 1998. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, the number was more than halved, from 11.4 million in 1990 to 4.8 million in 1998. Countries such as Bangladesh, Brazil and Egypt are leading the way by allocating close to 6 per cent of their gross national product to education. On the other hand, continuing high population growth and other factors make it difficult for many countries in sub-Saharan Africa to make significant reductions in the number of out-of-school children.

**Growing number of literate adults.** The number of literate adults grew significantly over the last decade, from an estimated 2.7 billion in 1990 to 3.3 billion in 1998. The overall global adult literacy rate now stands at 85 per cent for men and 74 per cent for women. In some African countries adult literacy rates are now reported to be as high as 90 per cent (Swaziland) and 77 per cent (Kenya), thus suggesting that the Jomtien ambition of reducing illiteracy rates disparities is reasonable. China reduced illiteracy rates for those aged over 15 from 22 to 16 per cent between 1990 and 1997. Despite such gains, adult illiteracy remains a major problem. An estimated 880 mil-

**Figure 3.**  
Number of primary school-age children in and out of school by region, 1990 and 1998



Source: EFA Statistical Document (2000)

**Figure 4.****Gender gap (M-F) in estimated net enrolment ratios of primary school age, 1990 and 1998**

Source: EFA Statistical Document (2000)

lion adults cannot read or write, and in the least developed countries one out of two individuals falls into this category. Two-thirds of illiterate adults are women – exactly the same proportion as ten years ago.

**Some reduction in disparities.** In keeping with the appeal of Jomtien, a few countries have made progress in reducing disparities in the distribution of educational opportunity as reflected by gender, disability, ethnicity, urban versus rural location and working children. Nevertheless, positive trends in primary education mask disparity of access both between and within many countries, and disparities in educational quality can remain even when access rates are high (Figure 4).

People in poor, rural and remote communities, as well as ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, have shown little or no progress over the past decade. In South

Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than three out of four pupils reach Grade 5. In the least developed countries a little over half reach this level, and many drop out after the first or second grade. Low participation rates for girls continue to be a problem in some entire countries and in parts of others, such as rural areas or among low-income families. On the other hand, underachievement and lack of persistence in school among boys is increasingly being cited as a problem in areas such as the Caribbean and at the secondary level in industrialized countries of Europe and North America, and in Australia and New Zealand.

**Other positive signs.** The EFA 2000 Assessment identified other positive developments that have occurred over the decade since Jomtien. Many countries have adopted new policies, frameworks and legislation aimed at one or more of the EFA targets and backed them up with

additional financial and other resources. There is now greater involvement of non-governmental organizations, community groups and parents in making decisions about school policies and in running child care and education facilities than there was in 1990, and there has been a substantial improvement in the capacity of many countries to use national assessments and other forms of evaluation to inform educational policy-making.

In summary, none of the specific EFA targets have been met in their entirety, most notably the fundamental goal of achieving 'universal access to, and completion of' basic education by 2000. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that a large number of countries have taken serious steps to implement the Jomtien agenda, many of which have been successful. Other countries and some regions have experienced major setbacks, including declining enrolment of particular groups of students due to factors ranging from lack of political will to civil unrest.

In presenting the synthesis of the Assessment, the author suggested that the very fact of setting targets by the World Conference on Education for All has had an energizing effect and that these targets, while not fully achieved, are now more attainable than they were a

decade ago. 'The Jomtien movement cannot be judged a failure simply because targets have not been achieved, although that must be of great concern when little or no progress has been made,' he said. 'What is important, however, is to reach a conclusion about whether the effort has been worthwhile, whether sufficient commitment, energy and resourcefulness have been present, and whether there is value in taking the next step. The answer yielded by this *Global Synthesis* is that the effort has been worthwhile, indeed necessary, and that the mission of EFA must again be taken up, with strengthened resolve and renewed energy. Too much is at stake for anything less.'

On that note, participants in the World Education Forum turned their attention to discussing the major themes that would eventually be reflected in the Dakar Framework for Action. The discussions took the form of addresses to plenary sessions, and presentations and debate at a series of smaller sub-plenary and strategy sessions organized around four broad themes: equity and quality, effective use of resources, co-ordination with civil society and promoting education for democracy. These discussions are summarized in the following pages. ■

## Education as the core of a development strategy

Since political leaders first came together at Jomtien a new wave of political and economic challenges has swept across our world. But one thing that has not changed over these turbulent ten years is the critical need for education. If anything, the need to prioritize Education for All is more morally and economically urgent than ever. Time and again, in study after study and country after country, well-run education programmes have proven themselves to be the best value investment for development dollars. From the Republic of Korea, where a generation of parents allowed the state to plow back the sweat of their labour into their children's education, to my own memories as a first-time visitor to the United States, taking the Greyhound bus across the country and seeing that the oldest building in town after town was always the church or the school – the message is the same: education works.

Ask a parent in a Kenyan village, a young girl in the *alta plano* of Bolivia or a boy in the paddy fields of Thailand: There is no alternative to education. And that is why we at UNDP are very proud to be one of the co-sponsors of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All.

In many parts of the world we have made enormous progress since Jomtien. But even for those countries that have met education targets the goal posts have already shifted; primary education is not enough. Education has moved from being the floor on which a country build its competitive success to being its competitive success. Older measures of competitiveness such as labour costs, resource endowments and infrastructure are being superceded by human capital. The single most important question for economic success is now: How smart are your people? Knowledge does not respect geography or old economies. Ideas have wings, and in the information technology age they fly at the speed of light.

*Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of UNDP, in a plenary address*



# Improving the quality and equity of education for all

The Jomtien Declaration made it clear that achieving education for all involved the twin goals of attaining universal access and equity while insisting on high standards of teaching and learning. In the early 1990s much of the emphasis was placed on quantitative goals such as increasing the number of pupils enrolled in school. By the middle of the decade, however, political and educational leaders had become increasingly mindful of the fact that enhanced access in the absence of quality instruction is a hollow victory.

In a series of sub-plenary and strategy sessions, participants in the World Education Forum held in-depth discussions of aspects of these twin goals. A common theme, seen most vividly in their analyses of the role of new educational technologies, was the impossibility of separating the issues of access, equity and quality. Following are summaries of the discussions that took place around Theme I: Improving the Quality and Equity of Education for All.

## *Technology for basic education: a luxury or a necessity?*

One important change that occurred between Jomtien and Dakar was the emergence of new information and communication technologies, most notably the Internet. Participants in the World Education Forum were well aware that, insofar as it affects the quest for education for all, the information technology (IT) revolution is a potential double-edged sword. On the one hand, the new technologies offer additional tools to extend basic education to underserved geographic regions and

groups of students. They have the potential to overcome geographical distances, empower teachers and learners through information, and bring the world into the classroom by the touch of buttons or the glare of a screen. On the other hand, proliferation of technologies exacerbate existing gaps between the educational haves and have-nots.

The Forum examined the impact of technology – both new and traditional – on basic education at a sub-plenary session that began with a discussion whether the use of information technology is a luxury or a necessity. Participants concluded that such technology can only be thought of as a luxury if basic education is defined quite narrowly as literacy, numeracy and rudimentary life skills. We all live in a society where rapid change and growth in knowledge requires constant learning. In such a situation – one where basic education must be conceived of as a learning activity that takes place anytime, anywhere and on the part of everyone – information technology becomes a necessity. In poor countries, and under present conditions, technologies may not be affordable; paradoxically, the new reality is that poor countries cannot afford *not* to fully use them.

Participants noted the many ways in which the Internet offers an opportunity to reach rural and other communities that have not yet been – and may never be – wired for traditional technologies such as telephones. Affordability is an issue, but countries such as Ghana have successfully addressed this problem through ‘community learning centres.’ These centres, run by grassroots groups, have served as a cost-effective means to enhance basic education, train teachers, develop local businesses,

strengthen governmental and civic organizations, and provide health-care information for populations in small villages. Community radio is another immensely powerful technology whose potential has been enhanced by new technologies such as portable, low-cost FM transmitting stations and digital radio systems that transmit via satellite and through cellular phones.

Speakers emphasized that technology is only a tool and that its success in enhancing the delivery of quality education depends on the quality of prior decisions regarding objectives, methodologies and educational content. As one speaker emphasized, 'No technology can fix bad educational philosophy and practice, nor can it compensate for a lack of political commitment.' The challenge is to rethink learning objectives and to align decisions regarding appropriate technologies, hardware and content-ware with these educational objectives. Evidence was presented at the session on how Costa Rica has balanced priorities regarding hardware, software and 'human-ware' in a 12-year-old programme that has introduced computers to half of primary school pupils and to four out of five junior and high schools.

Another theme that was frequently mentioned during discussion was the importance of lodging new technologies within a sound infrastructure. It is not realistic to expect teachers struggling with new technologies to assume technical responsibility for hardware. Moreover, since integrating new technologies into education is a sophisticated and multifaceted process, it is important to run pilot projects and to make appropriate adjustments before moving to scale.

Speakers emphasized that the new technologies should never be thought of as a panacea for achieving education for all. Nevertheless, with new educational technologies constantly emerging and their costs dropping dramatically, even poor countries must find ways of using these new tools in appropriate manners. For its part, the international community has a significant role in easing regulations that constrain connectivity, in building the necessary infrastructures, in facilitating the sharing both of educational programming and expertise, and in supporting the development of content-ware.

### *Overcoming obstacles to educating girls*

It is widely recognized that devoting resources to quality education for girls is one of the best investments that any society can make. The broad social benefits of girls'

education range from increased family income and reduced fertility rates to improvements in family health and nutrition whose significance is magnified through their impact subsequent generations.

Extending basic education to girls and bridging the gender gap were identified as critical priorities at Jomtien, but progress toward these goals over the past decade has been slow for reasons ranging from entrenched discrimination against females to the fact that assistance from countries and inter-governmental organizations of the North has fallen far short of the scale envisaged at Jomtien. In some countries what at first glance seems like progress in narrowing the gender gap is actually a result of decreasing enrolment of boys.

The sub-plenary session on this topic explored the complexities of the gender gap issue with particular reference to the importance of creating learning environments that are supportive of girls' education. Speakers noted that societal attitudes are key to girls' education and that improvements in the quality of education do not inevitably spur parents to enrol their daughters in school. They called for a broader definition of 'quality' that embodies the concepts of 'girl-friendly' or 'gender-sensitive' education. Participants also noted that assuring that schools are physically safe places is particularly important if they are to attract female children.

Speakers at the session agreed on the urgent need to place greater emphasis on the education of girls and to view education as an instrument of women's equality and empowerment. Particular attention was drawn to the need to assure that larger numbers of girls entered science, technology and professional courses as well as higher education in all areas.

The underlying importance of cultural, social and economic factors in causing the gender gap was seen as reason to take a holistic and integrated approach to the problem – one that links in-school improvements with steps to enhance early childhood care and development, reduce child labour, and retrain teachers and school administrators. Discussants also agreed on the importance of gender-sensitive teacher training, improvements in conditions of safety and the provision of separate toilets for female students.

Finally, speakers emphasized that, while lack of resources is clearly an obstacle to narrowing the gender gap in virtually all developing countries, no country could justify non-action on the basis of resource constraints.

## Why educating girls must be a priority

All countries' experience of development shows the economic value of education. Together with primary health care, education is the foundation of development. Experience also shows the importance of concentrating efforts on education for girls. As we have heard, girls are two-thirds of young people not in school, and two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women.

There are many obstacles to closing the continuing gender gap in education, but none of them are insurmountable. Many of these are solely in the mind. Somehow policy-makers, political leaders and even parents still do not see the over-riding need to educate girls. In many societies all the benefits for girls and women from education – such as knowing their rights to protection against violence, protection against diseases and unwanted pregnancy, economic empowerment – are precisely the reasons why these societies/countries consciously or subconsciously have denied girls educational opportunities. In several countries, the content of girls' education is selective and inclusive only of how to be a good wife or mother. Education for girls and young women is still treated as an optional extra – an aim to be pursued when other more urgent needs are satisfied. But there is no more urgent need than to liberate the human potential and the economic contribution of the half of our young people who happen to be female. These are, of course, the reasons why political commitment and leadership will be so important to realizing the goals of education for all, especially of girls.

Poverty is frequently offered as a reason for marrying off young girls, but I think a far more powerful motive is the cultural conservatism that assigns no value to girls except as future wives and mothers. A girl's future is often predetermined and her choices and options pre-empted by cultural norms and practices. Culture that denies choice to women must be changed.

Over the past thirty years, countries which have invested in education for girls as part of their education priorities, and as part of an integrated approach to social development, have seen excellent results. As a group, they have slower population growth, faster economic growth and a higher level of social cohesion. It is time for all countries to put aside their doubts and fears about educating women and give it the highest priority.

*Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of UNFPA, in a plenary address*

### *Meeting special and diverse education needs: making inclusive education a reality*

The concept of 'inclusive education' has emerged in response to a growing consensus that all children have the right to a common education in their locality regardless of their background, attainment or disability. The Framework stressed the goal of meeting the learning needs 'of all young people and adults.'

Concern about inclusion has evolved from a struggle in behalf of children 'having special needs' into one that challenges all exclusionary policies and practices in education as they relate to curriculum, culture and local centres of learning. Instead of focusing on preparing children to fit into existing schools, the new emphasis focuses on preparing schools so that they can deliberately reach out

to all children. It also recognizes that gains in access have not always been accompanied by increases in quality.

Discussions at the strategy session on this topic recognized that there are no convincing findings of successful inclusive education on a comprehensive scale and that many teachers do not fully believe that inclusion works. Extending EFA to excluded children and adults demands a holistic approach that seeks to change not only current practices but also values, beliefs and attitudes.

Presenters at the strategy session on this theme called for a 'holistic approach' to inclusion that makes this goal explicit in the design of accountability and funding systems and reinforces it through enabling and protective legislation. Teachers must be trained in pedagogies that accommodate diverse learning needs through multiple teaching strategies, flexible curricula and continuous

assessments. Partnerships must be formed between teachers and administrators, NGOs, parent organizations, unions, business groups and community organizations.

### *Making primary education universal and free*

Discussion of this theme focused on particular strategies that have shown themselves to be successful in accelerating progress towards universal, compulsory and free primary education in various countries.

A panelist from Uganda presented evidence that a government policy of paying school fees for up to four children per family had led to a sharp increase in school enrolments. A speaker from Brazil reported that the goal of universal access to primary education has nearly been attained in that country, in part because of more defined and focused funding policies that had a major impact in poorer regions where children, especially boys, are expected to work in order to support their families.

Evidence was also presented from India on how school enrolment was increased through means that included reducing the traditional distance of schools, decentralized planning, community involvement in school mapping and planning, and the use of part-time and alternative schools. A panelist from the International Labour Organization (ILO) stressed the importance of eliminating the worst forms of child labour in order to promote access to schooling among the most marginalized groups.

Numerous participants called for debt relief as a means of freeing up resources for primary education and emphasized the need for the international community to develop procedures to support capacities at the local as well as the national level. Another recurrent theme was the need to promote demand for schooling on the part of families rather than focus exclusively on supply-side issues.

### *Expanding access to early childhood development programmes*

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) emerged at Jomtien as an extension of basic education, one that recognizes that learning begins at birth, not with entrance into primary school. Since then awareness of the importance of the early years has grown in both developed and developing countries, in part because of dramatic new findings from brain research. Recent emphasis has

focused on preventing problems rather than on 'compensating' for them once they develop.

Despite growing awareness of these issues, gains in access to ECCD have been erratic. Very few children under age 4 in underdeveloped countries attend organized programmes, and in some areas, such as the countries of the former Soviet Union, enrolments have actually declined. Attention continues to be concentrated on 'pre-schooling' for children about to enter primary school.

Participants in this strategy session emphasized the need for a multi-pronged approach to the task of increasing awareness of the importance of nurturing children during the preschool years and developing ECCD programmes. By necessity, such an approach must cut across sectoral lines and involve activities and plans of action at the local, regional and national levels. Discussants noted that promoting functional literacy among parents is important to promoting understanding of the importance of the preschool years, and they emphasized the importance of including handicapped students in ECCD programmes and of directing them equally to girls and boys.

### *Designing basic education content to meet the needs and values of society*

The economic, social and other changes sweeping through human society in recent years have forced a reconsideration of what knowledge, skills and values are needed for successful living. The movement toward more open and democratic societies has created a need for learning that goes beyond the academic curriculum and factual knowledge to emphasize problem-solving and open-ended enquiry. The expansion of communication and information technologies necessitates more interactive and exploratory forms of learning, and the increased pace of change has put a premium on the need to engage in continuous learning over a lifetime. There is also a new urgency to ensure that education at all levels and in all places reinforces a culture of peace, tolerance and respect for human rights.

Discussants in this strategy session noted that no country can expect to function successfully in the future with rigid and closed education systems. There are many types of education, but every form of basic education must be designed specifically to include active citizenship and participation at all levels, in all societies. In order to be relevant, the content of basic education must be geared to exploratory learning, including all learners and encouraging them to take an active role in planning

decisions. Culture, art and creativity are essential components of education for all.

Participants suggested that the provision of education might be viewed in terms of an entire 'ecology of learning'. Such an approach would recognize that learning occurs continuously in all activities and throughout people's lifetimes.

### *Enabling teachers to enable learners*

Teachers obviously play a key role in the delivery of education, and the quality of instruction is to a large extent a function of whether classrooms are staffed with competent, well-trained teachers. Unfortunately, there are many barriers to putting competent instructors in classrooms, including low pay, low social status, heavy workloads, huge class size and lack of professional development.

This strategy session considered ways in which the quality of education can be enhanced by providing greater support to teachers. There was general agreement that in many countries additional resources were necessary – a Southeast Asian country that invests US\$20 per student per year has no way of competing against industrialized nations that invest more than US\$5,000 – as well as more efficient use of existing ones.

Participants also stressed the importance of ongoing professional development to equip teachers to move beyond lecturing and rote learning. They stressed the need to use supervision as a means of supporting teachers rather than identifying faulty practice. Others cited studies showing

that teacher motivation is closely tied to quality of teaching and that the quality of instruction improves when teachers are given a role in making pedagogical decisions and in shaping plans for school improvement.

### *Assessing learning achievement*

The World Declaration on Education for All emphasized not only the need to expand access to education but also the importance of assuring that the education offered to children and adults is of high quality. Promoting quality, of course, presumes some way of measuring it. Thus over the past decade there has been a growing awareness of the role that assessment can play in enhancing the quality of basic education.

This strategy session reviewed key findings from recent assessment surveys, including several major projects in developing countries of Africa and Latin America. Discussants noted that achievement differences within the various regions of countries are frequently greater than those between countries. They showed how assessment data have been used as a tool for allocating scarce resources more efficiently by identifying rural and other populations with special needs. Numerous speakers emphasized the need to engage in assessment on a continuous basis and to establish a 'monitoring culture'. Developing a conceptual framework and methodologies for assessing life skills was also put forward as a priority.

Much of the discussion centred on how international support can be used to build local and national capacity for continuous assessment. ■

## Transversal theme

### The importance of child-friendly schools

**A**chieving universal primary education is not simply a matter of having every child enrolled in school. Once enrolled, the child must stay in school sufficiently long to achieve basic literacy and numbers – a period estimated to be about five years of schooling.

Children drop out of school for a variety of reasons, including perceptions on the part of parents that the school is not effectively meeting the child's needs or operating in the child's best interests. Creating 'child-friendly' schools is thus of critical importance for achieving universal primary education, for increasing educational quality, for promoting educational equity and inclusiveness, and for achieving gender equity in education.

The need for child-friendly schools emerged as a theme that cut across several sessions of the Forum. Discussants identified at least three areas of importance to creating such learning environments: physical plant and infrastructure, policies and services, and curriculum and instruction.

The first requirement of a child-friendly school is that the physical plant and infrastructure be in good repair, with adequate space and furniture for each child, adequate lighting and a general appearance that is bright, welcoming and happy. Providing sanitary washrooms and locating schools close to pupils' homes is important, especially for girls.

In addition to regular teaching programmes, child-friendly schools offer counselling, health and nutrition services as well as opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports and clubs. Special policies, such as affirmative action programmes, are needed to address the needs of particular groups of students, such as indigenous peoples or those with special physical or learning needs. In many countries, particularly in parts of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, special policies aimed at attracting and retaining girls are needed.

Finally, child-friendly schools use curricula and textbooks that respect local languages, cultures and cognitive styles, and their pedagogical methods are learner-centred rather than teacher-centred.

Participants engaged in vigorous debate over how to achieve child-centred schools. Everyone agreed that teachers need training in order to use more creative and imaginative approaches that unlock the child's own learning potential. Discussants were divided, however, over the issue of community involvement and responsibility. Most felt that communities and parents were a valuable source of information, guidance and support for educators, but others argued that many parents lack the educational expertise to know what is best for their child's education.

Speakers also noted that decentralization of authority can sometimes be a cover for central governments to off-load their own responsibilities to fund and otherwise support education. It is imperative that programmes of decentralization and community empowerment be accompanied by the transfer of resources that will enable communities to assume the responsibility. Locally generated resources should only supplement, not replace, central government financial commitments.

# Making effective use of resources for education

Achieving both enhanced access to basic education and improved quality of teaching and learning requires financial, human and other resources. Finding these resources has never been easy, and the task has been further complicated over the past decade by developments such as the HIV/AIDS crisis, military conflicts, natural disasters and the mounting debt levels of many developing nations.

Clearly ways must be found not only to enhance traditional sources of resources but also to target resources more effectively through means such as educational assessments, and to develop new alliances with potential allies such as the business community. Forum participants addressed these issues in a sub-plenary session and a series of strategy sessions. Following is a summary of the discussions carried out under Theme II: Making Effective Use of Resources for Education.

## *Overcoming the effects of HIV/AIDS on basic education*

The fact that the World Education Forum took place in sub-Saharan Africa lent urgency and poignancy to discussions about the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the work of the Forum. As Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, put it in a plenary address, 'AIDS constitutes one of the biggest threats to the global education agenda. What HIV/AIDS does to the human body, it also does to institutions. It undermines those institutions that protect us.'

Discussion of HIV/AIDS at a sub-plenary session of the Forum revolved around two interrelated issues: (1) the impact of the pandemic on the education sector and

(2) how HIV/AIDS-specific education can have a salutary impact on the prevalence of infection.

Many speakers, many of them from sub-Saharan Africa, offered disturbing statistics about the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector and the capacity of the pandemic to undermine and even negate the progress being made on other fronts toward the goal of education for all. School attendance has declined due to various HIV-related phenomena affecting children. In countries such as Zambia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe the number of children of primary school age will be more than 20 per cent less by 2010 than projected before the epidemic, and a high proportion of these children will be orphans with limited resources and few incentives to enter school. Parents concerned about the early death of their children are likely to be unwilling to spend their limited resources on education.

High morbidity and mortality rates among teachers and administrators have severely affected countries' capacity to deliver teaching and learning. In Zambia, for example, the mortality rate among school teachers in the 15-49-year-old age-group is 70 per cent higher than that cohort in general, and two-thirds of newly trained teachers die of AIDS each year. Shortages of educators lead to erratic teaching schedules and even the closing of schools, and make long-term planning by central authorities difficult. HIV/AIDS is also having an impact on the social climate of schools. Young girls may face increased risk of sexual exploitation when they are assumed to be free from infection and thus 'safe'.

Participants in the sub-plenary session presented evidence that education can be a powerful force – perhaps

the most powerful force of all – in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS. A number of studies have shown that, in countries where concerted prevention programmes have been carried out within the education system over time, such as Thailand, Uganda and Senegal, these efforts appear to have helped reduce the incidence of HIV, especially among younger age groups. Successful programmes tend to be those that are targeted, flexible, prolonged, intensive and consistent, and operate across sectoral lines. One speaker from Thailand attributed gains in that country in part to the fact that the pandemic was identified as a national crisis early on and that relevant content was introduced into the national curriculum by 1987. A close working relationship was also developed between the Ministries of Education and Health.

A key objective of an international strategy must be to realize the enormous potential that the education system offers as a vehicle to help reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS and to alleviate its impact on society, thereby also reducing the very constraints that the epidemic is imposing on the quest for education for all. Speakers noted that power structures often resist policies and actions aimed at combating the impact of HIV/AIDS and that legislation and national policies are needed to ensure that children and adults affected by the illness are not denied their rights and excluded from services. They stressed the need to train teachers in HIV/AIDS preventive education and to support them through a healthy and caring learning environment. Education programmes should emphasize life-skills relevant to local communities and adopt a multisectoral approach that, among other things, links education with comprehensive health programmes.

### *Utilizing debt relief for education*

The ability of many developing countries to pursue EFA has been severely restricted by the heavy and unsustainable debt burdens that limit their capacities to invest in education. In recent years, however, a series of global partnerships have emerged with the aim of relieving debt burdens and freeing up resources for investment in poverty reduction and other social purposes.

Presenters at this strategy session described how, in keeping with the spread of democratization and the need of governments to respond to challenges with greater agility, precision and capacity, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are instituting new frameworks to address poverty. These frameworks align education and social sector development closely with macro-economic developments. Because the interaction

between education and a nation's economic and social conditions has become so much closer as markets become more open, global communications faster and technological change more rapid, the education sector is necessarily at the centre of these new development initiatives. Among the new efforts is the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), which has reduced the debt burdens of many of the world's poorest and most heavily indebted nations. In 1999 the World Bank and IMF endorsed a proposal linking debt-relief to country-owned poverty reduction strategies.

The discussion showed that international partners and alliances can play important roles in fostering linkages between education sector policy frameworks and macro-economic frameworks. Participants described how a number of countries have already made substantial progress in developing strategies that link social, structural, human, governance, environmental, economic and financial elements not only to progress in education but also to overall national development. Mozambique, for example, has used its relief under HIPC both to increase its budget allocation to education and to mobilize external resources in pursuit of education for all. As a result, it was able to improve access to education, reduce disparities and improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. Bolivia is another example of a country that used its debt relief to channel resources into education.

### *Working with the business community to strengthen basic education*

Governments bear primary responsibility for organizing and funding basic education. Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly common in developed and developing countries alike that governments seek to build partnerships with the business community in carrying out this task. The private sector is in a position not only to contribute additional financial resources but also to bring diverse approaches, experiences and innovations to the delivery of basic education. A good example of such innovation is the Escuela Nueva project in Colombia.

This strategy session cited contributions that the business community and other partners such as NGOs and development agencies can make in areas such as creating locally designed and produced educational materials. Participants explored ways in which the private financial communities can function as allies of governments in promoting privately financed and even privately run educational programmes. They examined the role of the telecommunications industry in particular in creating



networks for teaching and learning, and delivering educational content to schools.

Many speakers at this session, however, expressed concern about the motivation and the agendas of private corporations donating money to education systems. One speaker asked whether, given the fact that ministries of education, agencies and private sector organizations have quite different agendas and constraints, there is the need for some sort of intermediary actor or facilitator to co-ordinate activities. Another suggested that countries must become as creative in the finance field as they are in technology and spoke of the possibility of organizing national capital markets, such as the issuing of bonds, to serve the needs of long-term financial needs of education.

Above all, there was general consensus that emphasis must be placed on local models, local resources, local buy-in and local responsibility for finding solutions.

### *Strategic choices in the development and use of teaching and learning resources*

In pursuing the goal of EFA it is important for States to make the most effective and efficient use of their in-country resources, including textbooks and other printed teaching and learning materials. This strategy session examined recent trends in this area, such as a decentralization of textbook selection and procurement that has led to a shift in many countries from single textbooks to choice among textbooks and other media. Other developments include growing privatization in the production and distribution of textbooks and the emergence of large conglomerates that have the clout to challenge the policies of governments.

Speakers described how countries in the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, Africa and India have developed means of using resources effectively. Pleas were made for 'people-inclusive' strategies to develop books that are written by and about local people, and can be produced locally. Discussants also emphasized the importance of developing materials in local languages, even though such an approach can increase the cost of production. One solution, they said, lies in using local resources to produce the materials. Several speakers called for micro-credit schemes to help develop co-operative publishing ventures at the community level.

Participants stressed the importance of developing national strategies or policies that extend all the way

from the jurisdiction of telecommunications to the role of the public, private and non-governmental organization sectors in ensuring that resources reach schools. Without a strategic view on the part of government, it was argued, practice is likely to be driven principally by the interests of the private sector. Policies should include tax structures that encourage rather than discourage local production of materials. Balance must also be struck between print media and other forms of technology.

### *Providing basic education in situations of emergency and crisis*

The Jomtien Declaration and Framework made only limited reference to education in emergency situations, but over the past decade conflicts and natural disasters have proved to be a major barrier to the achievement of education for all.

A special study commissioned as part of the EFA 2000 Assessment documented the extent to which displaced populations and others suffering from chronic insecurity lack educational services. In some situations an entire generation of children may miss out on basic schooling. The study stressed the responsibility of the international community to affirm the fundamental human right to education, even under conditions of emergency, and to provide resources. A key recommendation was that education in emergency situations should be built into a country's development process from the outset, not seen as a 'relief' effort.

The strategy session heard first-hand reports from ministers of four countries – Albania, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Sudan – on emergency situations they had faced. Among other things, they stressed the need for co-ordinated efforts between national and international agencies as well as for co-operation among donors. Participants in the session reaffirmed the lead role of UNESCO both in developing strategies and in assisting Member States in putting programmes and projects in place in emergency conditions.

### *Monitoring the provision and outcomes of basic education*

The establishment of sound statistical systems for monitoring progress is important to the success of education for all. Participants in this strategy session presented evidence of how countries as diverse as Benin, Nicaragua and Uganda have made effective use of such

systems and discussed the ways in which co-operation between countries can encourage their development elsewhere.

Speakers emphasized the central role that political will plays in the establishment of sound statistical systems. Statisticians often face political pressure to produce statistics that show the government in the best possible light. Thus it is important for policy-makers to be convinced of the importance of quantitative data and of the need to build robust, sustainable statistical capacity for

making evidence-based decisions. In order to achieve this goal, producers of statistics must adjust their operations to the clocks of policy-makers, understand their needs and produce the relevant statistics to help them to take decisions.

Participants in the strategy session stressed that statistics should be collected to serve the needs of particular peoples and government, and designed to allow feedback at the local level. Donors should be aware that the quality of statistics will vary widely, especially in countries that

## Education is the key to relieving poverty

**N**o country has succeeded without educating its people. Education is key to sustaining growth and reducing poverty. Everywhere I go I see the power of education to improve people's lives.

The World Bank is firmly committed to achieving the goal of Education for All. The Bank has fulfilled its EFA commitments made in Jomtien in 1990 and, subsequently, in Beijing in 1995. We have doubled our lending for education from \$918.7 million to an average of \$1.9 billion a year. We have increased the percentage of our lending devoted to basic education, from 27 to 44 per cent. We have set up a programme to target 31 countries with populations over 4 million where the gender gap is greatest and have increased lending for girls' education to an average of \$860 million per year. Our support, combined with that of other agencies and governments themselves, has helped produce significant progress in raising the number of children in school, especially girls, in many countries.

We have come a long way on EFA, but we still have a long way to go. Too many people are still excluded from education because of poverty, poor policies and corruption. So how do we move forward?

First, we must place education squarely at the core of the global and national development agenda. We pledge to work with renewed vigour with governments and other donors to reach the EFA goals by integrating actions and outcomes across sectors and with macroeconomic policies to ensure co-ordinated, coherent strategies.

Second, we need to provide fresh leadership with a very different set of alliances. After Dakar, the EFA movement must move forward at the country, regional and global level. It must be broader, more inclusive, more innovative and more flexible than in the past.

Third, we must intensify our efforts by leveraging stronger partnerships on key interventions that we know make a difference. Of course, we recognize that, in order to help poor countries reach this goal in a sustainable way, we may have to be open in the interim to innovative ways of funding education, including community-based approaches. Clearly we have to work with governments to ensure that the poorest are not further disadvantaged in the process.

Finally, we need to put into place a fast-track action plan for countries that are committed to achieving EFA goals sooner than the 2015 timeline. Under such a demand-driven process, we as donors must be ready to respond more quickly and help countries when they are ready to move.

We need a truly global plan of action. The time for action is now.

*James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, in a plenary address*

do not have reliable information on population levels. Donors can play an important role in increasing national monitoring and sharing information about successful practices.

### *Mobilizing new resources for basic education*

The volume and management of resources for basic education are insufficient to achieve quality education for all and recent years have seen important changes in the sources of even those resources that are available. External funding has declined and domestic funding relies increasingly on community and family contributions, a situation that leads to regional and social disparities.

This strategy session focused on growing need for partnerships of varying kinds as a means of attracting new resources for basic education. Participants emphasized the need to define 'resources' broadly and to recognize human as well as financial contributions. They spoke of the responsibility of the international community to pressure wealthy nations to shift resources from armaments to education.

Speakers discussed the complexities involved in striking a balance between the responsibility of the State to promote national unity while respecting the rights of communities to devise an education system adapted to their specific needs. They spoke of education as, first and foremost, a community effort and emphasized the critical

importance of transparency in the generation of resources. It is essential that democracy and decentralization be accompanied by good governance.

### *Building effective partnerships with funding agencies*

The last decade has seen a significant shift in thinking about development, moving from preoccupation with structural adjustment to an emphasis on poverty reduction. As a result, the traditional project approach has come under severe criticism and planners have focused attention on sectorwide strategies built around enhanced co-operation among various actors, including donor agencies, governments and non-governmental organizations.

This strategy session heard presentations on successful efforts to implement this new 'co-operation paradigm' in Mozambique and India, and by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

Speakers emphasized that the fostering of co-operation between donors and recipients can be problematical, especially in poor countries that lack institutional and technical capacity or in situations where national authorities have little or no commitment to the well-being of their population. They stressed the paramount importance of developing local capacity, implementing reliable systems of monitoring progress and establishing effective financial and procurement mechanisms. ■

## PART IV

# Co-operating with civil society to achieve social goals through education

Schools never exist in a vacuum. As institutions they are powerfully shaped by the economic, social and political contexts in which they operate, but the influence runs both ways. Schools can also have a powerful impact on the societies they serve.

Participants in the Forum examined this symbiotic relation between educational institutions and civil society with an emphasis on how better co-operation can further the cause of education for all. Following is a summary of the discussions at the sub-plenary and strategy sessions relating to Theme III: Co-operating with Civil Society to Achieve Social Goals.

## *Fighting poverty and marginalization through basic education*

Extreme poverty and exclusion are significant obstacles to education and the absence of education in turn leads to further marginalization of the poorest individuals and groups. If basic education is to be extended to these populations, it is important to find ways to break this vicious circle through specific, appropriate and innovative actions.

Participants in the sub-plenary session on this theme identified three conditions for using education as a means of fighting poverty and marginalization, starting

with the elimination of debt for the poorest countries. They stressed that debt relief will not produce positive effects unless governments actually allocate the corresponding funds for the education of the poor. It is also imperative that northern countries not view debt forgiveness as a substitute for other assistance to poor nations.

Second, discussants called for redefinition of the roles of the various parties in the education process. Since education cannot be left to the whims of diverse actors, the state has an important responsibility to organize education. At the same time, the role of local communities is fundamental, especially for the poor. Partnerships among the state, communities, organized groups, NGOs and donors thus become the key to the development of education in poverty-stricken regions. Such co-operation can be facilitated by controlled decentralization of authority and by efforts to develop synergy between the formal, non-formal and informal channels of education.

Finally, discussants called for a fundamental rethinking of current concepts of education. The poorest populations, who do not readily relate to traditional educational structures, nevertheless need education in order to better understand modern society, to be able to take informed decisions, in short, to become emancipated and shape their own destinies. Alternative schools, designed and run by communities, often provide solutions that are insufficiently recognized and supported. Conceiving of

education within specific contexts also requires a new view of the role of teacher. No longer simply a transmitter of knowledge, teachers must be viewed as facilitators of learning who listen, share and invent forms of education for population groups that society has excluded.

### *Promoting population and reproductive health, especially among young people, through basic education*

The information needs of young people in today's fast-changing world are changing rapidly and it is particularly important that educators in both the formal and non-formal sectors find ways to enhance teaching about life skills and reproductive health.

Speakers at this strategy session included a Senegalese secondary school student who emphasized the extent to which economic and social crises over the past two decades have placed new burdens on schools to equip young people with practical life skills. Representatives of various types of agencies spoke of the need for innovation in dealing with sensitive issues such as reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, and cited examples of successful efforts in countries ranging from India and Burkina Faso to Mexico. Evidence was presented that providing young people with sexuality education actually helps them to delay sexual activity, reduce the number of sexual partners and prevent unplanned pregnancy.

In emphasizing the importance of education in preventing problems such as unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, participants stressed the need for curricula to be flexible and for teachers themselves to be attuned to emerging issues that concern young people.

### *Building social integration through bilingual and mother-tongue education*

Considerable evidence has accumulated over the past four decades that teaching young pupils in a language other than their own is ineffective and contributes to high rates of repeating and dropping out. Nevertheless, instruction in the mother tongue is by no means universal. National languages typically enjoy more prestige than local ones with parents and learners, and education policy-makers argue that practical problems, such as training and deploying teachers in a multiplicity of languages, make mother-tongue instruction expensive and logistically difficult.

Presenters at this strategy session argued that the case for mother tongue instruction is compelling for social as well as pedagogical reasons, including the pride that learning in indigenous languages fosters for children's own culture. They maintained that the practical problems, including cost, could readily be managed if the political will existed to do so. Speakers suggested that decentralization in pedagogical and administrative matters is a prerequisite for the successful use of mother tongue instruction and that community participation is 'vital for success'. Cameroon was cited as a country where associations have set up local language committees to promote multilingual education. Another example cited was South Africa where multilingual policies have been adopted in the first three years of primary education. In Latin America bilingual intercultural education is progressing in seventeen countries.

Participants also spoke of the importance of maintaining quality in mother-tongue instruction and of paying attention to the importance of official national languages. Mastery of the latter at the end of the basic education cycle, they noted, is critical to the vitality of instruction in local languages and to overcoming resistance to this approach.

### *A FRESH start to school health: improving learning and educational outcomes by improving health, hygiene and nutrition*

The interrelationship of health and education is well documented. Nutrition and health have a major impact on the ability of children to learn, and improving the health of students and teachers is a key strategy to achieving education for all. Moreover, effective instruction in these subjects in schools can have significant impact on the health of nations.

This strategy session heard reports about the way in which health education is organized in various countries. Only one-third of countries surveyed by UNESCO/WHO investigators in a 1999 study were found to provide health education as a separate subject in primary and secondary schools. Most include such instruction as part of science or physical education courses. The FRESH Start Partnership (Focused Resources for Effective School Health) was presented as an example of a project in which international agencies can work together in support of national and local initiatives.

Participants agreed that education and health workers, teachers, students, parents and community members must work together to implement effective school health and nutrition programmes. Water and sanitation were seen as first steps in the creation of a safe and protective physical and psychosocial environment in schools. Instructional programmes should include skills-based health education focusing on the knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills required for positive health-related decisions. There was also general agreement that teachers are the key to the promotion of health in schools. They must be trained to take care of their own health as well as to understand matters affecting the health of their students.

### *Promoting basic education and democracy: the role of the media*

Print and electronic media in all countries are in a powerful position to promote participation in basic education programmes and to monitor progress toward education for all and the spread of democratic values. In recent years the media in many nations have shown a growing willingness to co-operate with education authorities in pursuit of these goals. They recognize that the creation of a literate audience and citizenry is not only essential to their own prosperity and survival, but also for the survival of the democratic societies they serve.

This strategy session focused on different ways that the media, especially newspapers, can contribute to basic education and democracy, including Newspaper in Education programmes that are helping educators teach a full range of subjects ranging from basic math and reading to higher level analytical skills. Research has shown that children who learn reading and writing skills from newspapers not only often attain greater proficiency than those who experience traditional teaching materials but take a greater interest in the world around them. Using newspapers in classrooms has proved to be an inexpensive but powerful teaching device in developing countries, where textbooks are scarce, as well as in former states of the Soviet Union, where relevant civics textbooks have yet to be developed.

Participants noted that reporters who cover education should receive continuing training in both reporting practices and background about education that will offer valuable context and rigour to their stories. They also noted the important role that teachers play in encouraging students to read newspapers and the importance of working both with editors and reporters to improve the

coverage of education. Examples were presented from Ireland, Republic of Korea and France of instances in which newspapers had developed materials designed to help children develop greater understanding of themes such as the need for understanding and tolerance of persons from different backgrounds than themselves.

### *Including the excluded: enhancing educational access and quality*

While notable progress has been made since Jomtien in improving the quality and scope of education for many children, only marginal progress has been made toward extending education to the millions of excluded children. This strategy session considered ways of addressing this problem, which has implications that extend far beyond the damage done to individual children. The presence of large numbers of uneducated young people in any country makes economic and social development difficult, and is a recipe for civil unrest.

Speakers noted that children are deprived of educational opportunities for a wide range of reasons and that understanding the causes of the problem is a prerequisite for finding solutions. Some children are excluded for circumstantial reasons such as poverty, discrimination or communal violence. Others are pushed out by systematic factors such as unsafe schools, unqualified or unmotivated teachers, inflexible schedules and irrelevant curriculum. Still others are denied access to education because of competing priorities and values within their families.

A first step in addressing the problem, participants suggested, must be to find ways to make excluded children visible. Since excluded children typically have distinctive needs, policy-makers must also change the way traditional education is perceived so as to recognize the diversity and value of non-formal and alternative educational structures. The sessions heard reports on a number of alternative approaches to teaching and learning, including the Bolsa Escola school scholarship programme in Brazil under which poor families are paid a monthly wage to keep their children in school rather than sending them out to work.

Discussants also emphasized that, as in other areas of education for all, solutions to the problem of excluded children will require changes in attitudes both within school systems and in the larger community. People who run the education system must want to include all children in the system.

## A plea to 'Shout It Out'

**A**dult illiteracy is not limited to developing countries. Millions of persons in industrialized nations fall through the cracks of their education systems and end up as functional illiterates. Sue Torr, who is English, was one such person until, at the age of 38, she finally learned to read.

Sue Torr told her story to a plenary session of the World Education Forum. Following are excerpts from her personal testimonial:

*I want to tell you what's it's like learning to read at 38 years of age. It's embarrassing.*

*Every day of your life is frustration, fear, anger, isolation and rage when you don't know how to read. You've got no self-esteem. You lie a lot. You are classed as a dunce, a bird-brain, as thick.*

*I went to school every day but somehow I slipped through the net. Others learned to read. I didn't. I was excellent at sport, everyone knew that. But nobody knew I couldn't read or write. That was my secret. I kept thinking, 'I'll be all right, I'll catch up.' But I never did – until now.*

*When I was carrying my first child I remember thinking to myself, 'I won't be able to read stories to her.' And I remember taking my second child to school for the first time with a book on my hand. I wanted people to see me with a book. I wanted to say to this teacher, 'I've got time on my hands now – can you teach me to read, please?' But I never did say that to him.*

*You get this feeling in your stomach, a very anxious feeling. You want to ask for help, but it's so embarrassing that you can't. All through my children growing up I could never help them with their school work. They used to ask me for help, but I always made some excuse – 'I'm too busy.' 'Go away.' 'I haven't got time.'*

*If I needed any help with reading and writing I'd ask my son. He would say things to me like 'Didn't you learn anything at school, Mum?' And I would feel so ashamed of myself.*

*When I took my third child to school for the first time it was like a dream come true; the answer to all my prayers. There she was, Sue Cousins – my fairy godmother, my adult education worker. She was giving books out to parents, asking each parent if they would read the book and pop into her room when they liked and discuss what they thought about it.*

*I went back to Sue's room a few days later, and Sue asked me if I had a problem with reading. I said 'yes' very quickly. For the first time in my life I had admitted to someone that I was illiterate. It was a very emotional time for me. I went back to Sue every day. Then I started basic adult literacy classes.*

*I remember the first time I actually read a book from cover to cover. It was only a thin book with pictures in it. I wanted to open the window and shout it out to the whole world, 'Hey look. I've just read my first book, all by myself, without any help from anyone! I can read! I can read!'*

*I found myself reading the book over and over again, out loud. Even to this day I like to read out loud. It's a fantastic feeling – being able to read.*

*It changed my life completely.*

*One day, my teacher asked me to go home and write down all the things you cannot do if you can't read or write. My teacher understood my writing and took it home to type it out. Then she took the typed manuscript to a local writers' group. With their help, it became my first play.*

*Shout It Out – that's the name of it. It was performed at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth and Dartmore prison. I then started up the Shout It Out Learning Project. Today I tour schools and colleges with it to encourage children and parents to come forward for help with their literacy problems.*

*My life has totally changed since I have become literate.*

Two years ago Sue Torr was made a Member of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II for outstanding work for the community. Her play *Shout It Out* was recently performed before members of Parliament.

## *Literacy for all: a renewed vision for a ten-year global action plan*

Jomtien adopted an expanded vision of basic education that encompasses the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults. Literacy is at the heart of basic education, but with nearly 1 billion illiterate adults and tens of millions of children still out of school, it is painfully obvious that this vision is far from realized.

Given this situation, a movement has developed within the United Nations General Assembly to launch a major worldwide initiative to promote universal literacy under the banner of a United Nations Literacy Decade. This strategy session offered an opportunity for participants to offer comments on a preliminary framework prepared by a group of specialists as a basis for such a ten-year plan.

Participants by and large supported the idea of a United Nations Literacy Decade for reasons that included its centrality to cultural, civic and economic success in all countries. Speakers noted that literacy – especially for adults – was not sufficiently addressed during the Jomtien decade and that a decade is a reasonable timeframe to be able to show major gains worldwide.

In backing the idea, participants emphasized that the United Nations initiative should be framed within the EFA global initiative, not pursued as a separate and parallel programme, and that quantity must not be pursued apart from quality. Speakers stressed that ownership of the initiative must be country-based and driven from the bottom up rather than the top down within each country. They also emphasized that, inasmuch as illiteracy is a structural problem, it cannot be dealt with effectively if it is not accompanied by serious efforts to address the roots of poverty at the local, national and global levels.

## *After primary education, what?*

Abundant evidence exists that secondary education is the 'missing link' in the EFA agenda. All too often the mandate of Jomtien has been interpreted in the narrow sense of achieving universal primary education.

In today's world, however, primary education must be seen as a minimum, not a ceiling. Primary school leavers are too young to start working and, even when they do enter the workforce of the twenty-first century, they need more than mere literacy and numeracy. Democratic participation in social and economic development requires larger numbers of citizens with access to quality secondary-level education. The success of efforts to increase primary enrolment is bringing thousands of qualified adolescents to the doors of secondary schools, and means must be found to accommodate them, including the education of large numbers of teachers.

In addressing these issues, participants in this strategy session emphasized the need to focus on broadly conceived learning rather than on access to traditional forms of education. Young people want solid education, not merely seats in schools where curriculum and teaching methods are out of date. Such education must stress interdisciplinary approaches to solving real problems and more creative linkages between schools, communities and enterprises.

While stressing the need to increase secondary school capacity, speakers also stressed the need to move beyond traditional distinctions between education and training programmes and to make more creative use of a wide range of options, including community polytechnic institutions, evening classes for working youth, non-formal courses and apprenticeship combined with schooling. It was noted that expansion of secondary education opportunities is needed in all countries, including those in the developed world. ■



# Promoting education for democracy and citizenship

Democracy has made great strides in recent decades. The number of states where leaders are elected in multi-party and multi-candidate systems increased from 22 in 1950 to 119 in 2000. According to the non-partisan organization Freedom House, 58 per cent of the world's population now reside in such countries.

This growth of democratic political systems has been paralleled by a dramatic expansion of market economics around the globe. Economic globalization has had a powerful impact on developed and developing countries alike and led to trends such as the predominance of corporate over political power, the weakening of states and national boundaries, and a widening of the gap between haves and have-nots. Even in their most dynamic forms, market economies cannot be expected or relied upon to deal with issues of social justice. They must be supplemented with coherent and realistic social policies. Clearly education must play a central role in the development of such policies. Enlightened political leadership is necessary to ensure that all children receive a good education, not only because it is their right but because pressing social problems such as poverty, inequality, exclusion and disease can best be addressed by informed citizens.

Participants in the World Education Forum took up the consequences of these developments under Theme IV: Promoting Education for Democracy and Citizenship. A plenary session focused on the role that schools can play in creating and fostering democratic cultures and insti-

tutions, and in helping people to shape society and to cope with globalization. Ingemar Gustafsson, the chair, opened the session by affirming the importance of education in promoting democracy and citizenship. He reminded participants of the opening words of the Amman Affirmation: 'Education is empowerment. It is the key to establishing and reinforcing democracy, to development which is both sustainable and humane, and to peace founded upon mutual respect and social justice.'

Discussions at the plenary session centred around two distinct themes. The first concerned what education systems can do to promote democratic values through their instructional activities. Schools bear a primary responsibility for preparing students to become well-informed citizens and active participants in social and political life. They must transmit knowledge to successive generations concerning how democratic institutions are structured and function, the privileges and responsibilities that come with citizenship, and the need for constant vigilance to preserve these institutions.

The most obvious role that schools play in the promotion of democratic institutions is to use their curricula, textbooks and pedagogy to convey the knowledge and skills that students need to become productive workers, citizens and individuals. But the obligation of educators extends well beyond the transmission of knowledge and skills to the promoting of much deeper attitudes, behaviours and values. As Graça Machel, a former Minister of

Education in Mozambique and leader of the Forum for African Women Educationalists, told the plenary session, the challenge is to 'mould persons whose minds and hearts are ready to embrace the principles and practices of a society where solidarity and justice are a daily way of life.' The central question thus becomes 'which values do our school-leavers learn from school?'

Participants noted that while it is important for schools to have curricula that prepare children for democracy and citizenship, the context and manner in which instruction is offered deliver powerful lessons of their own. The way schools are governed, whether teachers and administrators treat students and peers with respect, the extent to which educators not only tolerate but encourage intellectual dissent – all of these characteristics of school life send signals that are just as important as the words that flow from the mouths of teachers or the pages of textbooks.

Corporal punishment was cited as an example of a school-based policy that undermines the transmission of democratic values. In a plenary address, Erica George of Human Rights Watch cited situations in countries as diverse as Kenya, South Africa and the United States where violence in the form of corporal punishment or harassment of students who are seen as 'different' is either condoned or tolerated by school officials. Such a

stance, she said, 'sends a message that violence is an effective and legitimate means of controlling and correcting people's behaviour.' By contrast, 'Child-friendly learning environments provide the test lessons in learning for democracy.'

In some cases the messages that schools seek to transmit in support of democratic values are undermined by outside forces beyond the control of schools. Gender disparities are a major problem and in many countries children belonging to ethnic and religious minorities are systematically denied their fundamental right to education. The same can be said of marginalized groups, including children of refugees, street children, children in detention or in institutions such as orphanages, child labourers and children affected by armed conflicts. The exclusion of whole categories of students from school is not lost on those who do have the opportunity to attend, nor are crude efforts by political leaders to control what is taught.

'When whole categories of children are unable to attend school because of discriminatory barriers to entry, when violence is endemic in the school environment, and when teachers are arbitrarily arrested or fired for political reasons, any lessons in democracy offered in the classroom, however brilliantly conceived or conveyed, are likely to fall on deaf ears,' Ms George said. 'Actions speak louder than words.'

### Why a free press is necessary for development

**U**nderdeveloped nations are in most, if not all, cases those without free information and a free press. We often hear governments justify their restraint of the right to free expression by the need to develop other rights such as the right to education. In truth, however, freedom of expression is not a luxury which governments can throw in once other problems have been resolved. It is truly the key – an integral part of the solutions to these problems.

A free press and the right to criticize and challenge are absolutely necessary for effective development because they are the real enemies of corruption and waste and mismanagement and the real promoters of honest and sensible governance for the good of the people.

*Timothy Balding, Director-General of the World Association of Newspapers, in a plenary address*

The second, and closely related, theme related to whether societies themselves are organized so as to promote democratic values. Ms Machel framed this issue when she declared, 'If societies themselves are not organized in a democratic way and access to work is the privilege of so few, how can we expect schools to have an enduring impact on the values of democracy and citizenship? Should we not have the courage to re-examine the model of society itself?'

Ms George also picked up on this theme as it related to the political rights of teachers. In far too many cases, she told the plenary session, 'teachers who are politically active as citizens face reprisals from the state.' She cited a recent example in which thirty-six teachers and a headmaster were fined because they attended a teacher-training programme sponsored by a pro-democracy non-governmental organization. 'Educational institutions cannot fulfil their mission of strengthening respect for human rights when the basic rights of educators themselves are not respected,' she said. By contrast, governments can foster respect for democratic culture among school children by demonstrating respect for the rights of school personnel. 'Educators who can freely and fully enjoy and exercise their internationally recognized human rights are best placed to encourage independent thought, critical judgement, tolerance of dissenting opinion and creativity in their students.'

The existence of a free press is a prerequisite for the free expression of ideas essential to any democratic society. A free press can also serve as an important ally of schools in supporting basic education and promoting democratic values. In a plenary address, Timothy Balding, Director-General of the World Association of Newspapers, noted that no more than six or seven of the fifty-four African

nations have a 'fully free press.' He pointedly added that 'some of the greatest obstacles to the fight against illiteracy, the establishment of educational access for all and indeed human progress as a whole, are erected and maintained in place by scores of governments represented at this conference and in this hall.' Mr Balding also praised the 'handful of enlightened African leaders who do advocate and encourage a free press' and quoted President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, who recently told a delegation from his organization that 'you cannot build a new society if you restrict press freedom and freedom of thought.'

Mr Balding described how a growing number of publishers have developed partnerships with schools whereby newspapers are used in classrooms, sometimes in lieu of expensive textbooks. He cited research showing that children who learn reading and writing from newspapers not only have greater success than those who use traditional teaching materials but, significantly 'take a greater interest in the world around them.' He described examples of countries where newspapers have assisted financially-strapped ministries of education by publishing learning materials. In other places, including Northern Ireland and Kosovo, newspapers have run articles designed to help resolve conflict between sectarian groups. 'There are literally hundreds of examples of this kind where newspapers and education authorities can work together on a permanent basis,' he stated.

Mr Balding concluded by reiterating that the 'basic condition' for harnessing the influence of the media in support of basic education and democratic values is that 'governments must respect the right of their citizens to enjoy full freedom of information and expression, and that they must respect the freedom of the press.' ■

## Making education for all a living reality

Ten years ago, in Jomtien, the international community proclaimed its commitment to a broad and forward-looking vision: a world where education for all was no longer a cherished dream but a living reality.

A decade later we have moved some steps closer to that world, but we are still far from fulfilling the promise of Jomtien. Too many young children are denied the good care that they need to prepare their minds and bodies to learn. Too many school-age children are still excluded from education, while others are consigned to environments that discourage real learning – environments that are unhealthy, unsafe, ineffective and unfriendly to girls. And too many young people and adults are still denied access to the knowledge and development of skills they need to build a better future.

Education is the right of all children and the obligation of all governments. Education is a key to the fulfilment of other human rights. It is the heart of all development [and] it is the essential prerequisite for equality, dignity and lasting peace. As the late President Julius Nyerere of the United Republic of Tanzania reminded us, education is not a way to escape poverty – it is a way of fighting it. Ensuring the right of education is a matter of morality and of justice. It is also a matter of economic common sense, for in this new and information-driven century, the world simply cannot afford the loss of so much human potential. Mr President, delay is no longer acceptable. The commitments made at Jomtien must be kept.

There is no single solution to increasing access to education and improving its quality. Rather, there are thousands of proven local and national solutions. And that is why we must continue – in tandem with governments and ministries, schools and communities – to identify the gaps that remain in achieving Education for All, and to design concrete actions to achieve it.

UNICEF strongly endorses the statement in the Framework that ‘no country seriously committed to basic education will be thwarted in the achievement of this goal by lack of resources.’ We and the whole of the international community must redouble our efforts to ensure that education for all plans and programmes are never again without adequate support.

Ten years after Jomtien, let us see to it that the future begins here and now, in Dakar.

*Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, in a plenary address*

# Beyond Dakar

At the final plenary session the World Education Forum adopted a Framework for Action committing their governments to 'the achievement of education for all (EFA) goals and targets for every citizen and for every society.' They characterized the Dakar Framework as 'a collective commitment to action' and specified mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to co-ordinate the global push for education for all. The participants also committed themselves to finding the financial support necessary to assure that 'no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.'

## *The Commitment*

In adopting the Dakar Framework, participants in the Forum reaffirmed the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All that had been adopted ten years earlier at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand. They also reiterated the conviction that education is a fundamental human right and 'the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries':

The Framework cited the significant progress made toward education for all in many countries but added that it is unacceptable that in the year 2000 more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, that 880 million adults are illiterate, that gender discrimination persists, and that many children and adults are denied access to the skills and knowledge necessary to be full participants in their societies. 'Achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer,' the Forum declared. 'The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency.'

## *Goals*

The Forum participants collectively committed themselves to attaining six specific goals related to EFA. Running through the goals were the major themes that were repeatedly voiced in the plenary, sub-plenary and strategy sessions, themes such as the need to concentrate on the

most vulnerable and excluded children, and the importance of maintaining a focus on the education of girls and women. The goals reflected the growing awareness that access and quality are inter-dependent, and three of them took note of the call by many participants to establish specific target dates.

These goals are:

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

## *Strategies*

In order to achieve these six goals, the delegates pledged to collaborate on a dozen broad strategies that had also been shown to have had strong support in Forum discussions. The list of strategies began with an over-arching plan to 'mobilize strong national and international

political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education.' Another broad strategy was to 'create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all.'

Specific strategies agreed upon in the Framework included linking education for all policies to anti-poverty and development efforts, collaboration with institutions of civil society, and the devising of new and improved educational accountability systems. Still others emphasized the need to push for gender equality, to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic and to address the problems of education systems affected by conflict.

The delegates also pledged to work together on programmes to enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers, to harness new information and communication technologies to achieve the goals of education for all and to monitor progress toward these goals in a systematic manner.

### *National plans*

The Framework for Action emphasized that the heart of EFA activity lies at the country level. It called for the establishment or strengthening in each country of National EFA Forums that would include representatives national civil society organizations. 'They should be transparent and democratic and should constitute a framework for implementation at subnational levels,' it stated.

The Framework calls upon each country to prepare a comprehensive National Educational for All (EFA) Plan by 2002 at the latest. 'These plans should be integrated into a wider poverty reduction and development framework,' it says. They should also establish budget priorities reflecting a commitment to achieving EFA goals and targets as soon as possible but no later than 2015. The plans themselves should 'be time-bound and action-oriented' and provide for mid-term assessment of progress.

'Where these processes and a credible plan are in place,' the Framework states, 'partner members of the international community undertake to work in a consistent, co-ordinated and coherent manner. Each partner will contribute according to its comparative advantage in support of the National EFA Plans to ensure that resource gaps are filled.'

### *Regional support*

The Dakar Framework asserts that regional activities in support of national plans and strategies will be based on 'existing regional and subregional organizations, networks and initiatives.' Delegates pledged to help strengthen regional and subregional EFA forums that will be linked with, and accountable to, national EFA forums. Functions of the regional and subregional bodies will include policy co-ordination, technical co-operation, monitoring for accountability and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned.

The Framework adds that the challenge of education for all is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, in South Asia and in the least developed countries. 'While no country in need should be denied assistance', it said, 'priority should be given to these regions and countries.'

### *Resources*

The Dakar Framework for Action acknowledges that many countries lack the financial resources to achieve such goals within an acceptable time-frame and observes that 'New financial resources, preferably in the form of grants and concessional assistance, must therefore be mobilized by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies.' Such agencies include the World Bank, regional development banks and the private sector.

In order to carry out the pledge that no countries 'seriously committed to education for all' would be kept from achieving this goal because of lack of resources, the Framework calls for 'a global initiative aimed at developing the strategies and mobilizing the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts.' It listed options to be considered under this initiative ranging from enhanced and more predictable external assistance and better co-ordination among donors to debt relief and more effective monitoring of progress toward EFA.

The Framework emphasizes that 'countries with less developed strategies – including countries in transition, countries affected by conflict, and post-crisis countries – must be given the support they need to achieve more rapid progress towards education for all.'

### *Co-ordinating mechanisms*

The Dakar Framework says that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

will continue to perform its role of co-ordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum. It specifies that every year UNESCO's Director-General will convene a small and flexible group of highest-level leaders from governments, civil society and development agencies to serve as 'a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization.'

Participants in the Forum also directed UNESCO, in its role as Secretariat, to 'refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work.' The Secretariat will work closely with other organizations and may include staff seconded from them.

### *An \$8 billion price tag*

The Dakar Framework for Action concludes with the observation that achieving education for all will require 'additional financial support by countries and increased development assistance and debt relief for education by bilateral and multilateral donors.' It estimates the cost at about \$8 billion a year.

'It is therefore essential,' the Framework states, 'that new, concrete financial commitments be made by national governments and also by bilateral and multilateral donors, including the World Bank and the regional development banks, by civil society and by foundations.' ■

## UNESCO's commitment to education for all

**F**rom the first day of my election as the head of UNESCO, I have given a clear and strong undertaking that Education for All will be the foremost priority of this Organization – its most urgent, but also its noblest, challenge. I intend to fight this fight with all the resolve and all the moral and intellectual force that I can muster, with the aid of all UNESCO's partners.

This World Education Forum, with the unprecedented participation of governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, education specialists, bilateral and multilateral development partners and the media, cannot – you will agree – be treated as 'just another major conference'. It must close one chapter in the history of universal literacy and open another. The last day in Dakar must be the first day of a collective and victorious struggle to achieve Education for All.

I call on all States to draw up national plans of action immediately after Dakar. The public and private resources to be allocated to education will need to be proportional to the vital importance we attach to it. Governments will have to make clear, coherent and courageous choices in this respect.

I am also fully aware of the need for a substantial increase in the volume of aid for basic education. The donor community must undertake to grant any country submitting a realistic and practical plan in this field the financial and technical support required to attain its objectives. Special grants – and not simply loans – and an easing of the debt burden must be proposed in exchange for social investment programmes, particularly in basic education.

UNESCO, as the United Nations specialized agency for education, will go on fully assuming its responsibilities in this global and collective bid to achieve Education for All. We have been ensuring the co-ordination of the EFA movement for the past ten years. You can continue to count on UNESCO. Education for All is at the very heart of the mandate entrusted to it within the United Nations system.

*Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, in a plenary address*

## Education for Africa in the twenty-first century

**H**uman beings are the architects and engineers of progressive change and development, and they constitute the most important resource a nation can have. Internally, Africa's development and progress will remain circumscribed for as long as ignorance prevails as a result of inadequate education. It follows that without that level of education internally, we cannot even begin to think of becoming part of the knowledge driven, information-conscious, high-tech controlled, and economically competitive world of the twenty-first century.

An essential element of the transformation that the educated African of this century will have to uphold is a new work ethic which places a high premium on the pursuit of excellence through enduring hard thinking and hard work

Let us be blunt about it, the blight on African economic prosperity, now known as the lost decades of the past century, has left many African societies living from hand to mouth, so to speak. It is only natural that under the circumstances, education would seem a luxury item on the list of priorities for national development for many of our nations.

The most visible remains of those lost decades is the crippling debt obligation hanging over the entire continent. And to make matter worse ... Africans are being threatened with decimation by the lethal nexus of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The twenty-first century promises to be an exciting period in the evolution of humanity, with its potentials for wonders in various spheres of endeavour. This is already evident in current developments in the information and communication technology as well as in various areas of science and technology.

The global village of the new century cannot afford (for reasons of equity, equality of nations and world security) to have impoverished ghettos in its fringes. It is, in fact in the interest of the richer countries to come urgently to the assistance of the poorer ones. The operative word is assistance – that is, technical, logistic and financial help in articulating endogenous ideas for development and seeing them to fruition, as well as in strengthening individual and institutional capacities.

African co-operation in education should be formed on adaptation of what has been applied and proven to work elsewhere; we cannot afford the time nor the luxury of re-inventing the wheel.

The international community will be required to assist the poorer countries of Africa to meet these challenges so that Africa will, early in the century, rise educationally to be part of the great world momentum of the current century. The principles of international solidarity demand no less. And it is only then that globalization can begin to have meaning and relevance for Africa and Africans.

*Olesegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in a plenary address*



# Annexes

## 1. Address to the World Education Forum by Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

### Building a partnership for girls' education

Thank you, Mr President. I am heartened to see so many nations represented at such a high level, as well as so many non-governmental organizations.

But first, let me thank and pay tribute to the people and nation of Senegal for giving the world a gift twice over: in the free and fair elections which inspired the continent and impressed the world; and in the commitment to education you have displayed by hosting this forum. It is a commitment you have sustained since your earliest years as an independent nation.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues and friends, This conference is a test of all of us who call ourselves the international community. Ten years ago, at Jomtien, we set ourselves the goal of basic Education for All. We are still far from achieving it. Let us start this conference by resolving not to rest until we have made it a reality.

As we open the twenty-first century, we do have some achievements to celebrate. Educational levels in many developing countries have climbed dramatically. The percentage of adult illiterates in the world has declined steadily. An explosive innovation of technology has brought new learning opportunities to millions. We have reached a new level of capacity-building and understanding in our work to attain basic education for all.

And yet, at least 880 million adults worldwide are still illiterate, most of them women. A yawning digital divide exists between those who have access to new technology and those who have not. A quarter of a billion children work, in often hazardous or unhealthy conditions. And according to conservative estimates, more than 110 million school-age children are not attending school.

These millions of children are not only being denied something many of us take for granted; they are being denied a fundamental human right spelt out in international instruments their Governments have signed on to – such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child – the right to education.

What is more, the communities where these children live are not only being denied a future labour force of healthy, literate and employable citizens: they are being denied the foundations for development and a future place in the global economy. They are, in fact, being denied the future itself.

The most tragic and unjust dimension of this state of affairs is this: of the more than 110 million children who should be in school and who are not, two-thirds are girls. For them, the denial of human rights has struck twice over. For they are also denied something proclaimed on the first page of the United Nations Charter: the equal rights of men and women.

From issues of morality to issues of mortality, the denial of girls' rights begins in early childhood. When a choice has to be made between educating a boy or a girl, girls are more likely to be kept at home. When a family income needs to be supplemented, girls are more likely to be sent to work. Even when girls do go to school, they will often have to do housework at the expense of homework. When they become pregnant, school policies force them to drop out. When parents consider their daughters' future, they often see education as a hindrance, not a help, to successful marriage and motherhood. And when catastrophe strikes – whether in the form of illness or conflict, displacement or hardship – women and girls, from 65 to 5 years old, are more likely to shoulder the burden of keeping family and household together.

Nothing illustrates their burden more amply than the impact of HIV/AIDS. Girls are more likely than boys to care for a sick family member and help keep the household running. Deprived of basic schooling, they are denied information about how to protect themselves against the virus. Without the benefits of an education, they risk being forced into early sexual relations and thereby becoming infected. Thus, they pay many times over the deadly price of not getting an education.

But by the same token, education is the tool whereby we can break the vicious cycle of AIDS and ignorance. The key to all the locks that are keeping girls out of school – from poverty to inequality to conflict – lies in basic education for all.

It is often said that education empowers girls by building up their confidence and enabling them to make informed decisions about their lives. For those of us who attend conferences such as these, that statement may seem to be about university degrees, income or career fulfilment. But for most of the world's girls, it is about something much

more fundamental. It is about escaping the trap of child labour, or the perils of going into the labour of childbirth while still a child yourself; about managing pregnancies so that they do not threaten your health, your livelihood or even your life; about ensuring that your children, in their turn, are guaranteed their right to education.

It is about being able to earn an income when women before you earned none; about protecting yourself against violence and enjoying rights which women before you never knew they had; about taking part in economic and political decision-making; finally, it is about educating your children to do the same, and their children after them. It is about ending a spiral of poverty and impotence which previously seemed to have no end.

No development strategy is better than one that involves women as central players. It has immediate benefits for nutrition, health, savings and reinvestment at the family, community and ultimately country level. In other words, educating girls is a social development policy that works. It is a long-term investment that yields an exceptionally high return.

It is also, I would venture, a tool for preventing conflict and building peace. From generation to generation, women have passed on the culture of peace. When ethnic tensions cause or exacerbate conflict, women tend to build bridges rather than walls. When considering the impact and implications of war and peace, women think not only of themselves, but about the future of their children. Educating girls to build an empowered electorate of women could be the most cost-effective form of defense spending.

Clearly, spending is required to meet this challenge. There is no substitute for good teachers who have to be paid and good textbooks which have to be bought. But spending is not all that is required. We need to remove the constraints that lead parents to keep their daughters from getting a basic education. We must ensure that girls are free and fit to make the best of learning opportunities by raising them in a sound, safe and stable environment. We must involve the community and family in quality, non-formal learning approaches for girls who are prevented from attending school in a formal setting, and build bridges to allow them to continue in the formal system. Once girls are in school, we must work to ensure that school prepares them for life, by developing curricula and materials, and by encouraging attitudes among teachers, that emphasize the life skills these girls will need.

And we must give them access to another skill they will need for life in the twenty-first century: the use of information technology, which has become an indispensable tool for learning, communicating and development.

But the first step is for societies to recognize that educating girls is not an option; it is a necessity. For many families faced with immediate household priorities, acting on that recognition will mean stark choices. We must

ensure families get the support they need from their local communities and governments, backed by the wider world, so that they can educate all their children – girls and boys alike.

There are already encouraging examples of such support – local and national, inter-governmental and non-governmental – and several of them are here in Africa. Guinea has reduced the domestic burdens of girls by providing wells and mechanical mills. Malawi has cut the costs of schooling for parents by eliminating school fees and abolishing compulsory uniforms. In Ghana, the Alliance for Community Action runs a Girls' Education Credit Scheme to enable parents to pay for textbooks and tuition.

There are many examples from other parts of the developing world too. In Cambodia, floating schools have been created for populations that move their boat homes with the seasons, with a double school shift that makes it easier for girls to attend. In some areas of Brazil, the Bolsa Escola programme pays a monthly scholarship into a family account that can only be drawn upon only after the child – boy or girl – has successfully completed four years of schooling. In Bangladesh, an NGO known as BRAC has opened schools with high girls' enrolment in the poorest rural communities, where previously schools did not exist. In the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, 14,000 girls attend schools taught by women teachers from their own communities, thanks to the Baluchistan Mobile Female Teaching Training Programme. In fact, I am pleased that we have with us at this conference a woman from Baluchistan who began her career as a teacher. Today, she serves as Pakistan's Minister of Education.

These are indeed inspiring examples, and I could give you many, many more. But they would still not be enough. We need to support and harness the ingenuity of these approaches to make them functional at the national level. We need all those with the power to change things to come together in a global alliance for girls' education. That is why the United Nations is launching a new global initiative to educate girls. I have chosen to launch it here in Dakar, for this initiative must be an integral part of the global movement of Education for All, the motto and the *raison d'être* of this conference.

The goals of this initiative are simple to express: to demonstrably narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005; to ensure that by 2015, all children everywhere – boys and girls alike – will be able to complete primary schooling education; and to ensure that by then, boys and girls will have equal access to all levels of education.

Implementing these goals will require all our sensitivity, imagination and determination. It will, indeed, be a test of our entire international community.

It will be a test of the United Nations system and its ability to support countries. More than a dozen United Nations entities, led by UNICEF, are involved so far; it is

an open partnership. I am sure more will join us soon, for no entity is unaffected by this issue. We must make sure that we all work together smoothly, without obstructing each other's efforts.

By next year, with each of the main countries affected, we aim to have a plan of action which will promote gender equality and sensitivity in all aspects of education: in enrolment policies and practices; in the curriculum; in teachers' attitudes and the composition of the teaching community; in a learning environment that is safe and free of sexism and sexual harassment; in information, skills and teachers' support that enable girls to make choices in reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention; and in access to new technologies.

No matter how good the plan, it will not succeed without political will in each of the countries concerned. And political will must be underpinned by resources. We will help countries free up funds for girls' education by advising and assisting them on reaping optimal benefits from development co-operation, policy and education reform, and on relief from the crippling burden of debt repayments.

We will also, I hope, make educating girls an early test of UNITeS, the United Nations' new corps of high-tech volunteers. This consortium, which I announced in my Millennium Report, is designed to train groups in developing countries in the uses and opportunities of information technology.

But the United Nations can do nothing single-handed. We must build and expand partnerships with Governments, civil society and the private sector. The initiative will be a test for all of them.

It will be a test for all Governments in developing countries, a test of their willingness to make girls' education a real priority. And it will be a test of donor countries, a test of their leadership in mobilizing resources.

It will be a test for non-governmental organizations and for their new generation of activists enabled by the Internet. Individual NGOs have made remarkable contributions towards education in many countries and they have now joined in a global campaign for education. Today, I say to the NGO community: we cannot win the battle to educate girls without your expertise, your energy and your expansive reach. And I promise you: your views will be heard here too.

Similarly, the challenge will be a test of the private sector. Already, business is working in partnership with the United Nations to promote good practices in the areas of environment, labour standards and human rights. Foundations like those of Ted Turner and Bill and Melinda Gates are contributing millions to reproductive health

initiatives and vaccination campaigns in the developing world. We need their support in education to sustain the advances they have helped achieve in health.

The information technology industry recognizes the need to complement the next generation of software with a new generation of *savoir faire*. This industry has an enormous role to play in education. It also needs educated people, as both producers and consumers. Educating girls is therefore a natural cause for it to adopt. Should anyone in it be looking for an entry point, the UNITeS high-tech volunteer corps would most certainly welcome their support.

Finally, the initiative will be a test for communities and families, a test of their understanding that education is a help, not a hindrance, in building a strong and healthy family structure, and improving a family's fortunes. That it is the key for enabling succeeding generations to succeed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we meet in Dakar today, let us look to one of this city's most celebrated daughters, who had to start by defying the odds against her as a girl. I mean Mariama Bâ. She was educated sixty years ago against the will of her family, but with the encouragement of one good teacher who believed in her. She went on to a teachers' training college and achieved the highest exam score in the whole of what was then French West Africa. She became in her turn an outstanding teacher, and also wrote *Une si longue lettre*, a novel which has been called the most deeply felt presentation of the female condition in African fiction. Even today, almost twenty years after her death, she inspires three generations of women throughout Africa and the world by her ethos and her example.

As Mariama Bâ said not long before she died: it is families that make up the nation and it is among the children that the nation recruits its leaders.

The aspirations I have expressed on behalf of girls today apply to all children in every nation. These aspirations are at the heart of this conference, dedicated to the goal of Education for All. They are linked to issues such as quality, inequality and financing, which you will be discussing over these three days. They are expressed in the Framework for Action which you will adopt at this Forum, and which UNESCO and its partners will support and follow up. They form part of the recommendations I have made to world leaders when they gather for the Millennium Summit in September. Because the key to empowering succeeding generations lies in educating children today.

That is the test our international community faces. That is the test we must pass. And we shall pass it only if children all over the world can pass the tests of basic education and go on to pass the tests of life. ■

## 2. Dakar Framework for Action

### Education For All: Meeting our Collective Commitments Adopted by the World Education Forum Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000

1. Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, we, the participants in the World Education Forum, commit ourselves to the achievement of education for all (EFA) goals and targets for every citizen and for every society.
  2. The Dakar Framework is a collective commitment to action. Governments have an obligation to ensure that EFA goals and targets are reached and sustained. This is a responsibility that will be met most effectively through broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by co-operation with regional and international agencies and institutions.
  3. We re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990), supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.
  4. We welcome the commitments made by the international community to basic education throughout the 1990s, notably at the World Summit for Children (1990), the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (1994), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the Mid-Term Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (1996), the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (1997), and the International Conference on Child Labour (1997). The challenge now is to deliver on these commitments.
  5. The EFA 2000 Assessment demonstrates that there has been significant progress in many countries. But it is unacceptable in the year 2000 that more than 113 million children have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are illiterate, gender discrimination continues to permeate education systems, and the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills fall far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies.
- Youth and adults are denied access to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and full participation in their societies. Without accelerated progress towards education for all, national and internationally agreed targets for poverty reduction will be missed, and inequalities between countries and within societies will widen.
6. Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are affected by rapid globalization. Achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency.
  7. We hereby collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:
    - (i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
    - (ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
    - (iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes;
    - (iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
    - (v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
    - (vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.
  8. To achieve these goals, we the governments, organizations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to:
    - (i) mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education;
    - (ii) promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies;
    - (iii) ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development;

- (iv) develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management;
  - (v) meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict;
  - (vi) implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices;
  - (vii) implement as a matter of urgency education programmes and actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
  - (viii) create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all;
  - (ix) enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers;
  - (x) harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals;
  - (xi) systematically monitor progress towards EFA goals and strategies at the national, regional and international levels; and
  - (xii) build on existing mechanisms to accelerate progress towards education for all.
9. Drawing on the evidence accumulated during the national and regional EFA assessments, and building on existing national sector strategies, all States will be requested to develop or strengthen existing national plans of action by 2002 at the latest. These plans should be integrated into a wider poverty reduction and development framework, and should be developed through more transparent and democratic processes, involving stakeholders, especially peoples' representatives, community leaders, parents, learners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. The plans will address problems associated with the chronic under-financing of basic education by establishing budget priorities that reflect a commitment to achieving EFA goals and targets at the earliest possible date, and no later than 2015. They will also set out clear strategies for overcoming the special problems facing those currently excluded from educational opportunities, with a clear commitment to girls' education and gender equity. The plans will give substance and form to the goals and strategies set out in this Framework, and to the commitments made during a succession of international conferences in the 1990s. Regional activities to support national strategies will be based on strengthened regional and subregional organizations, networks and initiatives.
10. Political will and stronger national leadership are needed for the effective and successful implementation of national plans in each of the countries concerned. However, political will must be underpinned by resources. The international community acknowledges that many countries currently lack the resources to achieve education for all within an acceptable time-frame. New financial resources, preferably in the form of grants and concessional assistance, must therefore be mobilized by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, including the World Bank and regional development banks, and the private sector. We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.
11. The international community will deliver on this collective commitment by launching with immediate effect a global initiative aimed at developing the strategies and mobilizing the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts. Options to be considered under this initiative will include:
- (i) increasing external finance for education, in particular basic education;
  - (ii) ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance;
  - (iii) facilitating more effective donor co-ordination;
  - (iv) strengthening sector-wide approaches;
  - (v) providing earlier, more extensive and broader debt relief and/or debt cancellation for poverty reduction, with a strong commitment to basic education; and
  - (vi) undertaking more effective and regular monitoring of progress towards EFA goals and targets, including periodic assessments.
12. There is already evidence from many countries of what can be achieved through strong national strategies supported by effective development co-operation. Progress under these strategies could – and must – be accelerated through increased international support. At the same time, countries with less developed strategies – including countries in transition, countries affected by conflict, and post-crisis countries – must be given the support they need to achieve more rapid progress towards education for all.
13. We will strengthen accountable international and regional mechanisms to give clear expression to these commitments and to ensure that the Dakar Framework for Action is on the agenda of every international and regional organization, every national legislature and every local decision-making forum.
14. The EFA 2000 Assessment highlights that the challenge of education for all is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, in South Asia, and in the least developed countries. Accordingly, while no country in need should be denied international assistance, priority should be given to these regions and countries. Countries in conflict or undergoing reconstruction should also be given special attention in building up their education systems to meet the needs of all learners.

15. Implementation of the preceding goals and strategies will require national, regional and international mechanisms to be galvanized immediately. To be most effective these mechanisms will be participatory and, wherever possible, build on what already exists. They will include representatives of all stakeholders and partners and they will operate in transparent and accountable ways. They will respond comprehensively to the word and spirit of the Jomtien Declaration and this Dakar Framework for Action. The functions of these mechanisms will include, to varying degrees, advocacy, resource mobilization, monitoring, and EFA knowledge generation and sharing.
16. The heart of EFA activity lies at the country level. National EFA Forums will be strengthened or established to support the achievement of EFA. All relevant ministries and national civil society organizations will be systematically represented in these Forums. They should be transparent and democratic and should constitute a framework for implementation at subnational levels. Countries will prepare comprehensive National EFA Plans by 2002 at the latest. For those countries with significant challenges, such as complex crises or natural disasters, special technical support will be provided by the international community. Each National EFA Plan will:
- (i) be developed by government leadership in direct and systematic consultation with national civil society;
  - (ii) attract co-ordinated support of all development partners;
  - (iii) specify reforms addressing the six EFA goals;
  - (iv) establish a sustainable financial framework;
  - (v) be time-bound and action-oriented;
  - (vi) include mid-term performance indicators; and
  - (vii) achieve a synergy of all human development efforts, through its inclusion within the national development planning framework and process.
17. Where these processes and a credible plan are in place, partner members of the international community undertake to work in a consistent, co-ordinated and coherent manner. Each partner will contribute according to its comparative advantage in support of the National EFA Plans to ensure that resource gaps are filled.
18. Regional activities to support national efforts will be based on existing regional and subregional organizations, networks and initiatives, augmented where necessary. Regions and subregions will decide on a lead EFA network that will become the Regional or Subregional Forum with an explicit EFA mandate. Systematic involvement of, and co-ordination with, all relevant civil society and other regional and subregional organizations are essential. These Regional and Subregional EFA Forums will be linked organically with, and be accountable to, National EFA Forums. Their functions will be: co-ordination with all relevant networks; setting and monitoring regional/subregional targets; advocacy; policy dialogue; the promotion of partnerships and technical co-operation; the sharing of best practices and lessons learned; monitoring and reporting for accountability; and promoting resource mobilization. Regional and international support will be available to strengthen Regional and Subregional Forums and relevant EFA capacities, especially within Africa and South Asia.
19. UNESCO will continue its mandated role in co-ordinating EFA partners and maintaining their collaborative momentum. In line with this, UNESCO's Director-General will convene annually a high-level, small and flexible group. It will serve as a lever for political commitment and technical and financial resource mobilization. Informed by a monitoring report from the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE), the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and, in particular, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and inputs from Regional and Subregional EFA Forums, it will also be an opportunity to hold the global community to account for commitments made in Dakar. It will be composed of highest-level leaders from governments and civil society of developing and developed countries, and from development agencies.
20. UNESCO will serve as the Secretariat. It will refocus its education programme in order to place the outcomes and priorities of Dakar at the heart of its work. This will involve working groups on each of the six goals adopted at Dakar. This Secretariat will work closely with other organizations and may include staff seconded from them.
21. Achieving Education for All will require additional financial support by countries and increased development assistance and debt relief for education by bilateral and multilateral donors, estimated to cost in the order of \$8 billion a year. It is therefore essential that new, concrete financial commitments be made by national governments and also by bilateral and multilateral donors including the World Bank and the regional development banks, by civil society and by foundations.

28 April 2000  
Dakar, Senegal

### 3. Joint statement by the convenors of the World Education Forum

We, the Convenors of the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000,

Recall that education:

- is a right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- is a sine qua non for all economic, social and human development and for ensuring each country's equitable access to the benefits of globalization
- plays a fundamental role in promoting civil and international peace as well as mutual respect for cultures and peoples;

Assert that Education for All should be placed within a sustainable and well-integrated policy framework linked to poverty eradication, population strategies, and promotion of gender equality and equity;

Fully support the basic vision and objectives promulgated by the world community in the World Declaration on Education for All adopted in Jomtien in 1990;

Acknowledge the considerable progress made in providing basic education in some countries;

Alarmed, however, about the unacceptable, and often deteriorating situations in other countries, marked by persistently high illiteracy rates, large numbers of children, especially girls, not in school, gender and other disparities in education, and educational systems and content of inadequate quality and relevance;

1. Stress the imperative need for immediate, strong and lasting commitments at all levels so as to ensure the effective provision of Education for All, in response to this inadmissible and reversible global calamity;

2. Appeal to national governments, especially in those countries where neglect of basic education has resulted in crisis or near-crisis situations, to give Education for All, as a matter of urgency, the highest political, budgetary and legislative priority, to reach out to all those excluded from education, and to recognize that the pressing challenges facing Education for All will not be met without resolute political will, radical reform and new approaches, at both the conceptual and practical levels;
3. Pledge to increase significantly the allocation of resources to Education for All and to redouble our efforts in respect of policy advice, technical co-operation, training and capacity-building, enhancing co-operation between governments and civil society, providing increased financial assistance to countries with a credible plan and demonstrated commitment to education, and expanding and strengthening the partnership for Education for All;
4. Call upon the international community, development and financial institutions, multilateral, bilateral and private donors to support the cause of Education for All as an integral part of their global responsibilities; to ensure effective mechanisms of co-ordination and collaboration, in particular at country level; and thus, to ensure that no country with serious resolve and viable plans to achieve Education for All is thwarted by lack of resources;
5. Urge non-governmental organizations, the media and civil society at large, including the private sector, to continue their mobilization and strengthen their participation in Education for All, particularly through innovative strategies, in support of the public authorities' efforts to discharge their obligation of ensuring education universally.

Paris, New York and Washington, 21 April 2000

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*Koichiro Matsuura,  
Director-General of the United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*

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*Nafis Sadik,  
Executive Director of the United Nations Population  
Fund (UNFPA)*

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*Mark Malloch Brown,  
Administrator of the United Nations Development  
Programme (UNDP)*

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*Carol Bellamy,  
Executive Director of the United Nations Children's  
Fund (UNICEF)*

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*James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank*

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## 4. NGO Declaration on Education for All International Consultation of NGOs, Dakar, Senegal, 24-25 April 2000

Ten years after the World Conference on Education for All, the World Education Forum in Dakar provides the opportunity to take stock of the achievements, the lessons and the failures of the past decade. The most disappointing lesson is that the objectives from Jomtien have not been achieved. Yet for 125 million children the right to education is violated every day, leaving them trapped in poverty. For millions more children, lack of teachers, classrooms, and/or books means their education is cut short and little is learnt. Girls account for two-thirds of the children out of school. One in three adults in the developing world – 880 million people – is still illiterate.

The World Education Forum provides an opportunity to deliver on the commitment to quality education for all. Governments and international agencies have to make a concerted effort to mobilize political will and financial resources. The price for realizing Education for All is an additional USD 8 billion a year. This amount is the equivalent of four days of global military spending and 9 minutes of international currency speculation. Nearly 300 NGOs gathered in Dakar on April 24 - 25 to discuss Education for All believe that Education for All is achievable if Governments and international agencies commit themselves to the following:

- There is a need to renew the commitment to education as a right as expressed in UN's declaration on human rights paragraph 26, The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 13 and the Convention of the Right of the Child, Article 28.
- There must be a commitment to providing free quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. Equity in quality must be ensured at all levels. All direct costs of basic education have to be removed.
- There must be a clear commitment to ensure that quality education for all includes all the marginalized and excluded groups like the disabled, ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons and refugees.
- There must be a clear statement that education is a core responsibility of the state.
- Education for all depends on the existence of a sound democratic system, with effective structures and mechanisms, that ensure space and voice to all stakeholders and benefits to be equitably shared.
- Governments, the international community and all stakeholders should commit themselves to establishing and reinforcing democracy, social justice and peace, as no learning can take place in times of war or conflict.
- Education systems must respect and be based on local culture and respond to local needs.
- Quality and learning for all must be at the centre of the education process. A concerted effort must be made to draw up quality indicators that set standards for EFA.
- There must a be clear commitment to ensure gender equity in education at all levels. Specific action plans with time bound targets including those based on affirmative action should be in place to eliminate all forms of discrimination of girls and women.
- Adult literacy must be integrated with a wider process of community development and empowerment. The right to education starts from early childhood and continues through adulthood into old age. Governments must commit themselves to reduce adult illiteracy by 50% by 2015.
- Governments must commit themselves to developing national plans of action for education by 2002. These plans must be transparently and democratically negotiated with all significant national stakeholders and set out how to achieve national education goals within the broad framework of the 2015 targets and within government expenditure framework. A central part of these plans should be the agreement by 2001 of clear and binding mechanisms for the ongoing democratic participation of civil society, including teachers, parents and learners, across all levels of the education system.
- The national plans of action must be developed within the broader framework of a global action plan, ensuring that no government with a credible strategy for achieving education will be allowed to fail for lack of resources. Donor governments should finance their contribution to the plan through increased aid and debt relief. Clear mechanisms for financing, implementing and monitoring the plan must be established by 2002.
- Governments must commit themselves to develop and improve mechanisms and structures of democratic participation of, and accountability to civil society, including teachers and their representative organizations, in education decisions at all levels.
- Governments must commit themselves to guaranteeing their part of the necessary resources for quality basic education, including increases in proportion of GNP allocated to education. Governments need to spend at least 6% of GNP on education. Governments



have to secure increases in revenue from progressive taxation, reduce excessive military and other unproductive expenditure and put an end to corruption.

- Governments should immediately identify and reverse existing disparities in per capita funding which discriminate against rural communities, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and under-developed regions, in order to achieve equitable spending per learner by 2005. They should further commit themselves to delivering extra funding to meet needs of schools in poor and marginalized areas, in order to bring all schools up to agreed standards by 2015 and to ensure that curricula, teaching materials and methods are responsive to the needs of marginalized groups. There must be a commitment to end child labour and to ratify the ILO Conventions No 138 and 182.
- Governments must develop innovative responses to ensure that learners in families affected by HIV/AIDS will not lose their access to education. Plans need to be made now to cope with the loss of teachers and with the new pressure on children. A close link has to be established between education and health as education has comparative advantage to support the prevention of HIV/AIDS in the population.
- Governments must ensure that new information technologies can be equitably accessed to promote quality of education. However, it must be recognized that indigenous knowledge and traditional forms of media are equally valuable.
- A core code of conduct for donors should be agreed within the framework of UN in partnership with civil society by 2002 to bind donors to following good practice in the relationship with partners and in disbursement of aid to education. Governments should have single accountability lines. The monitoring and control of aid programmes should be turned over to government in partnership with civil society.
- Positive changes to aid and international commitments must not be contradicted or undermined by wider institutional policies of international financial institutions. Policy advice and financial support from IMF, World Bank or regional development banks must be designed with education as an integral part of poverty reduction and human development.
- Donors must ensure that all governments that are serious about education have access to the necessary resources to achieve basic education for all. A key step toward this must be to increase aid to basic education to at least 8% of total aid budgets.
- Donors should commit to increased and rapid debt relief, improving progress of the Heavily Indebted Poor Country initiative (HIPC2). Debt relief should add to aid flows and not undermine them, and be linked to national education plans in the context of wider poverty reduction plans.
- A strong representation of southern governments and civil society has to be ensured in international EFA structures set up after the World Education Forum in Dakar. Resources, technical expertise and monitoring of progress must be decentralized with major investment in a regional level EFA capacity. These structures have to be effective, accountable and transparent.
- National civil society alliances should have the right to call for the international EFA structures to investigate cases where there are clear violations of the right to education. The EFA structures should have the power to call an investigation by the UN Special Rapporteur on Education or the regional Human Rights Commissions.
- A comprehensive review should be planned for 2006 to identify progress against the major international targets of education. Both national and donor action plans should specify mid-term targets for each EFA goal, and specify explicit additional resourcing and contingency commitments if these targets are missed. If the mid-term review shows that a substantial number of countries continue to be off-track then an official UN Conference on Education with Heads of State should be convened for 2010.

We the NGOs gathered in Dakar from all over the world are committed to work and co-operate with governments and a wide range of groups, individuals and institutions to reach our goal of quality education for all.

We want **action now!**

25 April 2000

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In April 2000 more than 1,100 participants from 164 countries assembled in Dakar, Senegal, for the World Education Forum. The participants ranged from teachers and researchers to government ministers and the heads of major international organizations.

The Forum opened with a keynote address by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who unveiled a major new initiative to promote the education of girls and women. It closed three days later when participants formally adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, committing themselves to achieving a set of educational goals by 2015 or earlier.

The goal of 'education for all' (EFA) had been articulated by the community of nations at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990. The purpose of the Dakar Forum was to review the progress made since then, to reaffirm commitment to EFA and to map out appropriate strategies and resources to reach this new goal.

Participants at the World Education Forum were aware that the world had changed in ways that could not have been anticipated at Jomtien. The end of the Cold War, the spread of HIV/AIDS, the emergence of the Internet and other new information technologies, the proliferation of ethnic conflicts and growing numbers of refugees and displaced persons, had all greatly altered the context in which the struggle for education for all was being waged.

This volume is a report on the people, the ideas and the commitments that shaped the World Education Forum and that reminded the community of nations at the dawn of the new millennium of the importance of achieving 'education for all'.

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