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Organisation
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
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вопросам образования,
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
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19 – 20 November 2002
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Final Communiqué

1. We, the participants in the second meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All, met, at the invitation of the Director-General of UNESCO, during 19-20 November 2002 in Abuja, Nigeria. The Government of Nigeria generously hosted the meeting. In fulfilment of our mandate to promote political commitment and mobilize technical and financial resources, we examined the progress that is being made towards the achievement by 2005 and 2015 of six Education for All goals agreed upon at the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000.

2. We welcomed the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 (Education for All. Is the world on track?) as a valuable tool to hold governments and the international community to account for the delivery on commitments set out in the Dakar Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals. We find it alarming that, on present trends, only 83 countries have achieved or have a high chance of achieving by 2015 three of the six Dakar goals that can currently be quantitatively monitored - Universal Primary Education (enrolment and completion), gender equality and adult literacy.

3. In view of the urgency of the goal of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, we urge that countries at risk be assisted to accelerate progress on girls' education and specifically address cultural barriers. Multi-sectoral programmes and strategies must be implemented to combat forms of exploitation and other constraints that adversely affect female participation and performance in education. The production of gender-disaggregated data for secondary education must be given urgent and high priority to ensure monitoring at this level.

4. The impetus given by the World Education Forum to plan for the achievement of Education for All in a comprehensive, inclusive, gender responsive and outcome driven way must be sustained and urgently translated into action. External prescription, planning and reporting overload must be avoided and coordinated support for national processes at the country level promoted. In order to avoid parallel planning processes, we underline the necessity to view planning for EFA flexibly and according to the circumstances of individual countries. This may mean either a specific plan for EFA or one that is integrated with other education sector or wider development plans - with due attention paid to all six Dakar goals. The opportunities afforded by Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Fast-Track Initiative to promote EFA and the education-related Millennium Development Goals must be exploited.

5. National plans must be set in the economic context of countries and present a holistic approach to educational development that addresses challenges such as HIV/AIDS, conflict, crisis and transition to democracies. Country plans to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic must enable the

education sector to more strongly prevent the further spread of HIV, as well as engage the entire sector in addressing the impact of AIDS on the supply and demand for quality education.

6. We are seriously concerned by the reported decline in Official Development Assistance for basic education during the 1990s. Despite recent commitments from some countries, existing evidence suggests a serious gap in international support to achieve the EFA goals even after countries undertake maximum efforts to improve domestic resource mobilization and efficiency. We urge the international community to accelerate progress to deliver on the commitments made at Dakar. These commitments have been followed by the development compact agreed upon in Monterrey which necessitates mutual accountability and responsibility for global development between governments in the North and the South. We welcome and support the Fast-Track Initiative as one of the means to facilitate such compacts at the country level, building on existing development processes and matching credible plans with needed resources. The Initiative should be complemented with alternative instruments to reach other countries over time. International funding and technical assistance agencies must develop strategies for assisting countries outside the Fast-Track Initiative in their achievement of EFA. Country-led coordination and harmonization of procedures and reporting must be undertaken effectively with support from the international funding and technical agencies.

7. Concrete actions are needed, especially at the local and national levels, to broaden and intensify the involvement of civil society (including the poor, religious/faith and business communities) in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EFA. Timely information and outcomes must be shared openly with committed civil society organizations. Funding and technical assistance agencies and governments need to support capacity building of civil society to enable it to participate effectively in the EFA process. Policies and legislation recognizing the important role of civil society should be elaborated. Indicators for successful partnership need to be developed.

8. To improve policy formation and monitoring of all six EFA goals, more accurate and timely quantitative and qualitative data are needed. This calls for intensive capacity building for the collection and effective use of data for national policy and planning processes at the local, national and international levels. We welcome the announcement by the Government of Canada of \$5 million over five years for the UNESCO Institute of Statistics and encourage other partners to intensify their support for such capacity building efforts. We see the necessity for building on the synergy between the six EFA goals and the two education Millennium Development goals.

9. We resolve to intensify our advocacy at global, regional and national levels for increased political commitment and resources to accelerate progress on EFA.

10. As next steps we particularly recommend that:

(i) Governments in the South must ensure that free and compulsory primary education is a right reflected in national legislation and in practice. National strategies to achieve the goals of Education for All must receive its necessary share of government budgets and benefit from all possible funding sources, including debt relief.

(ii) Strong and committed action is required by Governments to improve the status and working conditions of teachers to address the anticipated shortages signaled by the monitoring report. This anticipated shortage is being exacerbated by the impact of HIV/AIDS, conflict and emergencies. This action is particularly important as young people are no longer attracted to the teaching profession in some countries.

(iii) Regional and sub-regional forums, starting with Regional Education Proyecto Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe (PRELAC) (November 2002), Conferences of the Ministers of Education of African Member States organized by UNESCO (MINEDAF) (December 2002), and regional initiatives, such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and Forum for African Women's Educationalists (FAWE) that promote South-South collaboration are important opportunities for mobilizing political commitment and resources for EFA.

(iv) The meeting of funding and technical assistance agencies in Brussels (November 2002) offers an important opportunity for bilateral and multilateral agencies to coordinate their commitment to deliver on the promises made at Dakar and Monterrey.

(v) The G8 meeting in Evian, France in 2003 presents a critical opportunity for this influential body to continue and to accelerate the valuable contribution made through its Task Force on Education.

(vi) An advocacy strategy on EFA must be designed and coordinated by appropriate agencies, to address specific areas of concern in different countries and regions (for example girls' education by UNICEF and teachers' conditions by UNESCO).

(vii) Every advantage should be taken of the coming UN Decade for Literacy and the proposed UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development to advance the EFA agenda.

(viii) Maximum use must be made of opportunities presented by the High-Level Group, the annual monitoring report, the annual EFA week and high-

level international events on development issues to underline the importance of education for global development.

(ix) UNESCO should strengthen urgently its capacity to fulfil its international coordination role.

(x) UNESCO and other key EFA agencies must devise and implement a strategy to ensure that subsequent High-Level Group meetings have higher-level representation with stronger capability of mobilizing political commitment for the EFA goals.

11. We acknowledge that important advances have been made in many countries that were not reflected in the data available to the Monitoring Report Team. We encourage the Monitoring Report Team to include case studies of good practice and successful experiences in achieving the EFA goals and of providing free education as part of the analysis of forthcoming reports. Future reports should also contribute to clarifying the concepts and indicators that would permit more effective monitoring of the three goals of early childhood care and development, adult literacy and learning needs of youth and adults through skills development.

12. We welcome the invitation of the Government of India to host the next meeting of the High-Level Group in November 2003.