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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING THE EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA) GOALS BY 2015

SUMMARY

In line with 174 EX/Decision 8 and 182 EX/Decision 10, the Director-General reports on international progress with regard to Education for All and on how UNESCO will respond to the challenges identified in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010* and during the Ninth Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All held in Addis Ababa (February 2010).

The financial and administrative implications of the planned activities fall within the parameters of document 35 C/5 or the activities will be carried out only if extrabudgetary assistance can be secured.

Action expected of the Executive Board: decision in paragraph 16.

1. Without significant acceleration of the current pace of progress, the Education for All (EFA) goals will not be met by 2015. Universal primary education – also one of the two education-specific Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – will not be achieved, with an estimated 56 million children still out of primary school in 2015 on the basis of present trends. Decisions taken now and in the next few years by national governments and education partners will be crucial if existing gaps in the areas of education policy, data, capacity, governance, finance, and awareness, are to be closed in many countries.

Progress and challenges in Education for All

2. The EFA Global Monitoring Reports (GMRs)¹ show remarkable progress since 2000, particularly as regards enrolment and gender parity at primary and lower secondary school. The number of primary school-aged children out of school has dropped by 33 million since 1999, and net enrolment rates in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have increased at three

¹ And other documents, including regional and country reports as well as thematic reports; monitoring work of various organizations (e.g. UNESCO Institute of Statistics, United Nations Statistics Division, the World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Eurostat), and documents prepared for major events such as the UNESCO global education conferences organized in 2008-2010.

and five times the rate of the 1990s, reaching 86% and 73% respectively.²

3. However, in some cases, advances in enrolment have been made at the expense of education quality. Nearly one in three children entering primary school in SSA and South and West Asia does not complete it. In many countries, large numbers of primary and secondary students leave school without having acquired the relevant knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary to fully develop their potential. Many children, youth and adults are ill-equipped to lead happy, productive lives as a result of inadequate education content and badly adapted teaching and learning processes.

4. Furthermore, equity is a major concern. Deep inequalities in education persist both between and within countries. Because of poverty, gender, disability, culture, language, geographical location or other factors, many people are still excluded from learning opportunities or are deprived of quality education. Of the 128 countries with data, only 62 had achieved or were close to achieving the four most easily quantifiable EFA goals in 2007.³ The GMR identifies 32 countries as far from achieving EFA, and this number would be bigger if data were available for several countries whose conditions are fragile.

5. Moreover, the strong focus on enrolment and gender parity in primary and lower secondary school has led to a relative neglect of the other education goals. Indeed, some 759 million adults, two-thirds of whom are women, still lack basic literacy skills; lack of vocational training and adult learning opportunities is reinforcing the marginalization of young people and adults; and missed access to early childhood care and education (ECCE) opportunities is limiting the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of millions of children. In addition, at least 72 million children globally are still deprived of primary education.

6. Meeting the EFA goals will remain a challenge if more funds are not secured. It is estimated that reaching some of the EFA goals⁴ by 2015 will require an additional US \$16 billion per year. While the share of gross domestic product (GDP) for education has increased in approximately 60% of low-income countries since 1999, investment is still uneven – ranging from more than 6% of GDP in some countries to less than 3% in others. Aid for education has risen overall in the last 10 years, but it is of great concern that in 2009 total aid to education dropped for the first time since 2002 (see Annex I for details). It is equally worrying that the Group of 8 (G-8) Muskoka Declaration (25-26 June 2010 Summit) did not make any reference to the replenishment of the EFA-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) and to education financing in general.

UNESCO's response to these challenges

7. As the lead coordinating agency for EFA, UNESCO is responding actively to these challenges. It is doing so by (1) improving the coordination of the EFA process, (2) enhancing the political will to invest in education, and (3) developing the capacities of Member States to plan, manage and monitor effective education systems.

A. Improving coordination of the EFA process

8. The efforts of the many stakeholders contributing to the achievement of the EFA goals will only have a tangible impact if there is effective coordination. In light of this, the Director-General is calling for a meeting of the heads of the five EFA convening agencies – UNESCO, United Nations

² In principle, the source of this report is the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010: Reaching the marginalized*. 2010, Paris, UNESCO/Oxford University Press.

³ This is based on the Education for All Development Index (EDI) developed by the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* to provide a composite measure of progress that takes into account the four most easily quantifiable goals (goal 2 – universal primary education, goal 4 – adult literacy, goal 5 – gender parity and equality, and goal 6 – quality of education).

⁴ The 2010 GMR assessment includes estimates for improved coverage in early childhood programmes, universal primary education and adult literacy, and covers 46 low-income countries for which data is available. This estimation counts the higher costs to enrol the last 10% of children currently not in school.

Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank – in order to advance cooperation on EFA by identifying a division of labour that better responds to countries' needs. This will be the first meeting of heads of agencies since the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000. Moreover, working relations between UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank are now being revitalized through regular meetings of the education heads of these agencies.

9. As a follow-up to the Addis Ababa Declaration, UNESCO is also exploring ways of enhancing the effectiveness of the High-Level Group (HLG) on EFA and the underpinning coordination architecture, through internal and external consultations. Thus, at recent meetings of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) on EFA and the Collective Consultation of Non-Governmental Organizations (CCNGO) with the EFA convening agencies, UNESCO has led the examination of existing EFA mechanisms, structures and meetings within the context of the Dakar Framework for Action and present challenges. These consultations revealed a broadly shared belief that current coordination mechanisms and the format of the HLG are not leading to significant increases in high-level political support or additional technical and financial resources. There is also a need for increased interaction and communication flow among actors, especially between major EFA events (see Annex II) as well as stronger accountability and closer linkages between EFA processes at different levels. Building on these consultations, a review paper on the EFA coordination architecture is currently being prepared.

B. Enhancing the political will to invest in education

10. Evidence shows that the most important factor of acceleration towards EFA is political will. Thus, increasing awareness of EFA, especially among the non-converted at both the political level and within society at large, is a crucial factor for the development of education. UNESCO is therefore working to influence governments to prioritize education within broader national policy as well as within development and poverty-reduction frameworks, and to take decisions that will close the financial gap and ensure the effective use and equitable distribution of funds.

11. With this in mind, UNESCO will continue to advocate for the importance of education at events that are high on the international development agenda, for example through the side event on education during the High-Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs and at the Group of 20 (G-20) Summit. The Education Sector will actively seek opportunities to promote its vision through media-friendly events such as the FIFA World Cup Education Summit held in South Africa on 11 July 2010, for which UNESCO provided significant input through developing the concept note and outcome document. The Organization will also organize a series of international events on education in the lead-up to 2015, starting with the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education from 27 to 29 September 2010 in Moscow, Russian Federation.

12. As an active member of the Task Force on Innovative Financing for Education created under the Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development, UNESCO will promote the search for alternative ways to secure financing – for example through the first meeting of the newly established Advisory Panel of Experts on Debt Swaps and Innovative Approaches to Education Financing (2 September, Paris). Although the global economic climate has not been conducive to the holding of a pledging conference in recent months, UNESCO will continue to explore this option in close collaboration with EFA-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI).

13. An important part of advocacy involves highlighting the contribution of education to other development goals. In order to link education more closely to other areas of development, UNESCO will continue to foster inter-agency cooperation and build on existing initiatives such as the Organization's planned initiative on education for climate change. Finally, UNESCO will be actively involved in the process of preparation for the next set of MDGs, which the Organization firmly believes must be strongly oriented towards equity and recognize the central role of education for development.

C. Developing the capacities of Member States to plan, manage and monitor effective education systems

14. Political will must be translated into appropriate legal, governance and administrative structures as well as into adequately resourced educational policies and plans. Good governance, defined as greater accountability, transparency and participation, can improve the efficiency with which other resources are used. For this to be instituted, sufficient capacities at the institutional, organizational and individual levels are essential. UNESCO is uniquely placed to assist countries in improving diagnostic work and to support them in planning for and delivering holistic and inclusive systems of quality education. Informed by the UNESCO National Education Support Strategy (UNESS), UNESCO is reinvigorating its country-level support in the areas of policy and planning, for example by enhancing educational management information systems (EMIS) that help policy-makers make better decisions and plans. In its normative and operational action, UNESCO will give increased attention to enhancing the quality and equity of education, while looking into educational needs in the future and responding to emerging issues.

Looking ahead

15. Responding to the EFA challenges in the coming five years requires strong leadership and efficient coordination of the EFA movement by UNESCO. With its constitutional mandate as well as the strategic vision and programmatic framework defined by the 34 C/4, 35 C/5 and upcoming 36 C/5 documents, and based on its holistic and inclusive vision of learning for all throughout life, UNESCO will continue to improve its coordination and implementation of EFA activities at the global, regional and national levels in the light of its comparative advantages, taking into consideration its modest budget.

In the coming months, UNESCO and its partners will build on the EFA coordination review paper and the momentum of the MDG Summit. The Organization will collectively step up action towards the 2015 EFA target date, while continuing to reflect on EFA beyond 2015, building on the debate held at the 2010 HLG meeting in Addis Ababa.

Action expected of the Executive Board

16. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 182 EX/Decision 10,
2. Having examined document 185 EX/8,
3. Noting with satisfaction the efforts of the Director-General to advocate for greater funding for EFA, including through alternative financing sources,
4. Also welcoming UNESCO's leadership in enhancing the effectiveness of the High-Level Group and underpinning EFA coordination mechanisms,
5. Recognizing the intensified efforts of the Director-General to reaffirm the crucial role of education for development at major upcoming events,
6. Notes with satisfaction UNESCO's continued collaboration with the EFA convening agencies and attempts to reinforce links with other relevant United Nations organizations;

7. Requests the Director-General to include in her activity reports at its 186th session information on the key outcomes of the MDG and the G-20 summits and planned follow-up activities;
8. Also requests the Director-General to present at its 186th session a report on key findings and recommendations of the EFA coordination review paper, and to include updated information on EFA coordination at global and regional levels.

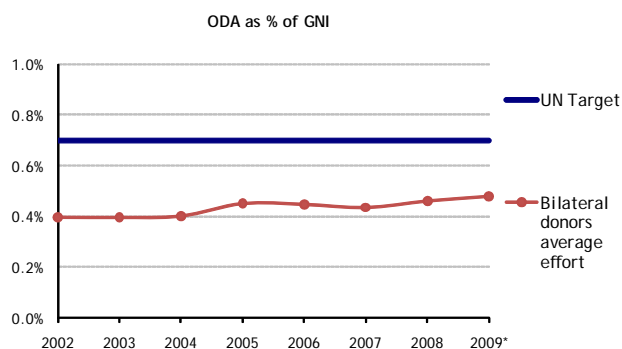
ANNEX I

Annex 1: Overview of total aid to education (2002-2008)

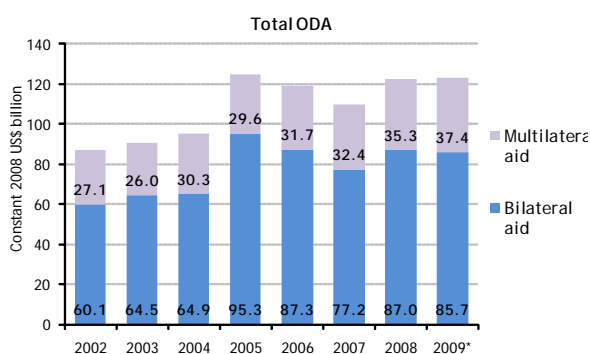
Overview of total aid to education 2002-2008

Aid disbursements to basic education stopped increasing for the first time since 2002.

Total Official Development Assistance (ODA)

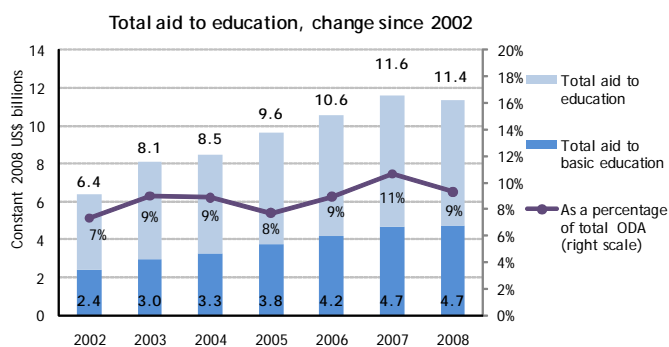


ODA as a percentage of GNI has increased slowly since 2002, with bilateral donors giving on average 0.48% of their national income to aid in 2009.

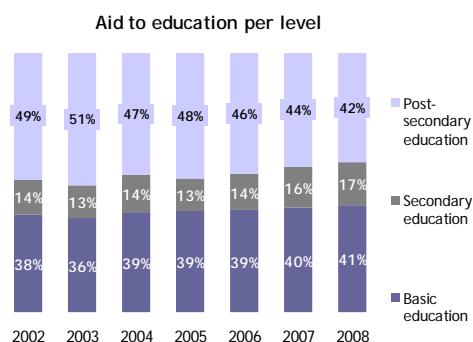


ODA has been increasing steadily since 2002, with a jump in 2005 and 2006 largely due to debt relief. However the increase between 2008 and 2009 was only 0.7%, with bilateral aid decreasing slightly.

Aid to education



Aid disbursements to basic education stopped increasing in 2008 for the first time since 2002. Disbursements of total aid to education decreased between 2007 and 2008, in large parts due to a change in reporting methods by France, but also to a drop in aid to education from the International Development Association (IDA-World Bank).



In 2008, basic education accounted for 41% of all disbursements of aid to education. There has been no notable improvement since 2002, and most aid still goes to post-secondary education.

Note:

- These analyses were developed by the EFA Global Monitoring Report Team in June 2010 based on data from the OECD-DAC Online Database on Annual Aggregates and the Creditor Reporting Systems (CRS) Online Database on Aid Activities. All figures are disbursements, which record the actual international transfer of financial resources or of goods or services valued by the donor, and are expressed in constant 2008 US dollars.
- **Bilateral vs multilateral ODA:**
Aid given by bilateral donors to the core budget of multilateral organizations is included under multilateral ODA. However, aid given by bilateral donors to multilateral organizations is included under multilateral ODA. However, aid given by a bilateral donor to multilateral organizations for a specific sector (e.g. education) is included as the bilateral aid from the donor.
- **Definition of total aid to education and total aid to basic education:**
Total aid to education includes 20% of General Budget Support, Total aid to basic education includes 10% of General Budget Support and 50% of education, level unspecified.
- Total ODA figures for 2009 are preliminary.

ANNEX II

Calendar of major meetings/events related to EFA coordination (as of July 2010)

Date	Events/Meetings	Location	Organizer	Notes
2010				
September				
2	First meeting of the Advisory panel of experts on debt swaps and innovative approaches to education financing	Paris, France	UNESCO	
Early Sept	Meeting of the International Advisory Panel on EFA	Paris, France	UNESCO	
8	International Literacy Day & Awards Ceremony	Paris, France	UNESCO	
20-22	United Nations MDG High-Level Plenary Meeting Side event on Education and the MDGs	New York, United States of America	UNITED NATIONS UNESCO, UNICEF, Qatar, and Save the Children	
27-29	World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education	Moscow, Russian Federation	UNESCO	
October				
5	World Teachers' Day Ceremony	Paris, France	UNESCO	
21-23	International Conference: Education for Human Resource Development	Bangkok, Thailand	UNESCO-APEID	
Unspecified	United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development Mid-term Report	New York, United States of America	UNITED NATIONS	
November				
11-12	5th G20 Summit	Seoul, Republic of Korea	Republic of Korea	
December				
TBD	11th Meeting of the Working Group on EFA	Paris, France	UNESCO	
2011				
TBD	10th High-Level Group meeting on EFA	Thailand	UNESCO	