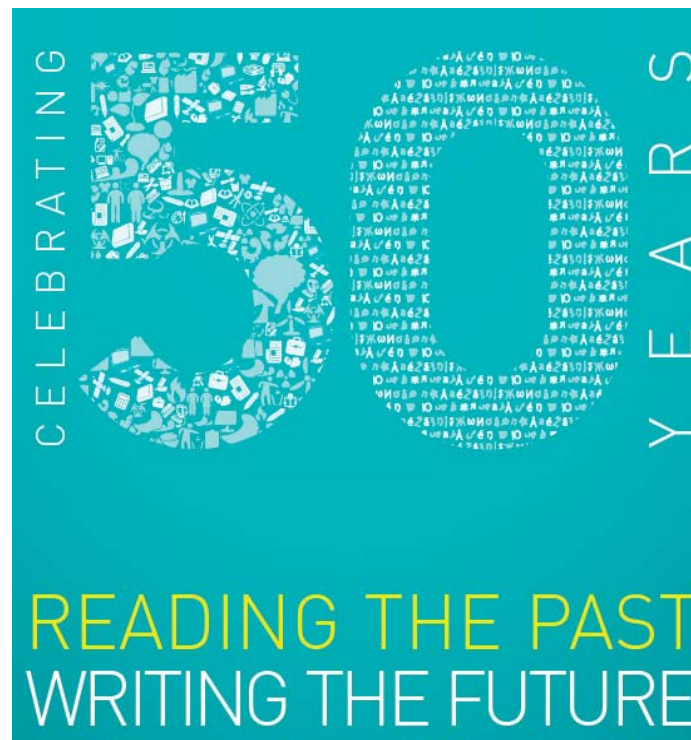


Global Conference on Literacy Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of International Literacy Day

A concise report



UNESCO – Paris
8 and 9 September 2016

**A concise report of the
Global Conference on Literacy
Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of International Literacy Day
*Reading the past, writing the future***

**Paris
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1. Introduction

The year 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of International Literacy Day which was proclaimed by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1966 on the recommendation of the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy (Islamic Republic of Iran, 1965). Moreover, 2016 is the first year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

In this context, the International Literacy Day was marked with a Global Conference on Literacy held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 8 and 9 September 2016, with the title 'Reading the Past, Writing the Future'. The conference aimed to:

- Celebrate the 50th anniversary of International Literacy Day and review literacy progress made by countries and partners;
- Examine and promote the 2030 vision of literacy within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Education 2030 Framework for Action and UNESCO's 2015 Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education;
- Launch the Global Alliance for Literacy, within the framework of lifelong learning (GAL);
- Launch the third edition of *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* (GRALE III).

Over two days the conference brought together approximately 200 participants including 70 from around 55 Member States, together with Ministers' Delegations, partners from development agencies, NGOs, bilateral, multilateral and national organizations, experts, and literacy prize-winners.

This report presents the main lines of contributions from speakers and panellists and salient remarks from the participants.

During the conference, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova awarded the King Sejong and Confucius International Literacy Prizes to five prize-winners. Information about the winners can be found at: <http://en.unesco.org/themes/literacy/prizes>.

2. Opening ceremony

UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova opened the conference by welcoming approximately 200 guests and participants. **Ms Bokova** stressed that the event was both retrospective – looking back at 50 years of International Literacy Days – and forward-looking in light of efforts to realise the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. She underlined the essential place of literacy in this agenda, cutting across the seventeen goals. Lack of literacy is a strong excluding factor in today's knowledge-driven society, and it can contribute to violence and strife. Recalling the 1965 Tehran congress, the Director-General presented data showing global progress in literacy since then, but underscored the fact that lack of literacy is not a necessary fate but a challenge that the world can overcome by working together. Innovation, gender sensitivity, international cooperation – these are some of the strategies that UNESCO deploys to promote literacy which is, ultimately, an essential aspect of human dignity.





Her Royal Highness Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands and UNESCO Special Envoy on Literacy for Development took the floor, reminding participants that International Literacy Day cannot be simply a cause for celebration because so many people are still waiting for the chance to become literate and participate equally in society. With the new SDG agenda, the functional nature of literacy must remain in focus as a universal issue – one person in five in Europe is functionally illiterate.

Across different contexts there are some common elements including quality of teaching, literate environment, intergenerational learning, digital skills, and reading for pleasure. The Princess asked why it was that the world could still not solve the literacy challenge; how we might put literacy higher on the agenda, make connections with other sectors and advocate better. She urged the literate to put themselves in the place of those without literacy and to use that as inspiration.

3. Ministerial panel: sharing experience about policies and strategies within the 2030 vision of literacy

Education ministers from Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, India and Senegal shared experiences from their respective countries including details on progress made and strategies adopted with regards to literacy. Elements of those strategies are highlighted here:

Côte d'Ivoire – H.E. Ms Kandia Camara, Minister of National Education and Technical Education: Literacy programmes are designed to target specific groups, with location, timing, instructional modes and materials adapted to each group. These groups include:

- Women market sellers learning during off-peak times;
Business employees with two and three hour sessions held during work hours with agreement from their bosses;
- Bus drivers;
- Prison inmates, with materials emphasising peace, human rights and citizenship;
- Children of herders in the northern pastoral area;
- Women running food stalls with practical help to improve their food cultivation added.



An inter-ministerial committee provides a forum to engaging all relevant government departments.

Cuba – H.E. Ms Ena Elsa Velázquez Cobiella, Minister of Education: After achieving universal literacy in 1961 and promoting adult learning to the equivalent of 6th grade, Cuba turned its attention to supporting literacy efforts in

other countries through its *Yo sí puedo* audio-visual literacy method which currently supports work in 12 countries reaching eight million people, across three continents.

India – H.E. Mr Upendra Kushwaha, Minister of State for Human Resource Development (School Education and Literacy): The size and diversity of India mean that a variety of

strategies are necessary to meet the challenge of 257 million adults without access to literacy. State governments, civil society organizations and local bodies offer:

- Functional literacy for non-literate adults;
- Skills development for newly literate adults, also in open and distance learning modes;
- Continuing education opportunities in adult education centres;
- Libraries to encourage lifelong learning.
- Programmes in 13 regional languages and 26 local languages.

As part of the country's commitment to the SDGs, India has set itself the target of 100 per cent literacy for adults aged 15-45 by 2030.



Senegal – H.E. Mr Serigne Mbaye Thiam: Since 1993, Senegal has demonstrated strong political will and clear policies for literacy promotion, with an emphasis on using local languages. Given the diverse nature of contexts, learners and learning needs, Senegal has an approach which is:

- Multi-functional: literacy learning linked with health, income-generating activities, trades and crafts;
- Multi-targeted: women, youth, people with disabilities, prisoners;
- Multi-approach: using ICTs (mobiles, computers), integrated with the basic education curriculum, traditional classes, different teaching methods;
- Multi-actor: literacy is the business of the whole society; an inter-ministerial committee provides coordination; civil society outsourcing (*faire faire*) is the key mode of implementation.

Senegal links literacy with respect for an active promotion of local languages.

4. High-level panel: reading the past, writing the future: literacy progress since 1966

Chair **Mr Venkata Subbarao Ilapavuluri** introduced the panellists and the session began with a presentation entitled *Reading the past to write the future* by **Mr David Atchoarena, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO**. The presentation provided a global overview of progress made, challenges encountered and lessons learned. Emphasis was placed on how conceptions of literacy have changed over the past fifty years together with the corresponding evolution of literacy rates at global and regional levels. Steady progress was made from 1950 to 1990 followed by a period of stagnation, especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Persistent gender disparities in some regions were also highlighted. In conclusion, the links between literacy and the SDG framework and lifelong learning were stressed. An intersectoral approach together with the need to focus on monitoring and assessment and the use of relevant ICTs will be critical in expanding access and improving the quality of literacy provision.

Three panellists then made presentations:

Mr Hervé Fernandez, Director of the French National Agency for Combating Illiteracy, focused on three key ideas: first, defining the problem adequately by clear assessment of whether a person is functionally literate or not; second, determining who does what, using diverse resources; third, drawing on civil society experience. Sharing ideas and lessons learned across Europe is also a key strategy.

Mr Francisco Romero, Council of Popular Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, focused on the role of civil society and the need for transparent relationships between civil society and government. Civil society organizations have contributed a great deal during the past fifty years, especially in the areas of advocacy, activism, monitoring, innovation, generating demand, promoting rights, promoting literate environments, and training. This is particularly important in Latin American where most countries are struggling to move the literacy agenda forward.

Ms Suwilai Premsrirat, Professor of Linguistics, Mahidol University, Thailand, noted that universities play a four-dimensional role in promoting literacy: prestige, capacity to build relationships and networks, credibility especially in relation to providing professional training, and action research. Work in Southern Thailand illustrates what can be achieved if universities are involved as key actors in the literacy agenda.

Questions from participants underlined the role of civil society, particularly in youth literacy programmes, the need to allocate funds strategically, the impact of literacy to empower learners, and the respect of linguistic rights with the need for a multilingual approach not just to learning, but to the organization of society.

5. Launch of the third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)

Mr Arne Carlsen, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, introduced the newly launched Global Report on Adult Education and Learning, the third in the series since CONFITEA VI in 2009. The report highlights the links between ALE and other sectors such as health and work. Mr Carlsen stressed the clear relationship between literacy/ALE and other



domains, from job performance to life expectancy. He noted that less than a quarter of the 139 countries which provided input into the report spent more than 4 per cent of their education budget on ALE.

More on the GRALE III Report at <http://uil.unesco.org/adult-learning-and-education/global-report-grale/third-global-report-adult-learning-and-education>.

Four panellists took the floor to stimulate thinking on intersectoral collaboration in literacy.

Mr Cyril Cosme, Director of the ILO office for France, illustrated eight links between literacy and the ILO 'decent work' agenda:

1. Work is not only a means of subsistence, but a contribution to society; decent work is a key factor in building links with literacy;

2. Literacy is a cross-cutting factor – connecting with gender, social equity, access to jobs, youth unemployment, social protection;
3. Basic competences, including literacy, provide a basis for lifelong learning and for exercising rights;
4. Literacy is a factor in fighting discrimination in jobs, particularly for women, who are at a disadvantage;
5. A culture of prevention of accidents and promotion of health and safety at work depends on literacy skills;
6. Employability: literacy is part of the lifelong learning that is part of professional development;
7. Literacy is a factor in further developing the informal economy;
8. Both decent work and literacy learning promote the development of new competences.

The **Special Advisor on Education to UN Women, Ms Patience Stephens**, asserted that literacy issues and measures are the same for both men and women, but women have greater problems of access. Artificial divisions between sectors (e.g. education, literacy, SDGs) are unhelpful – all aim for equitable development and empowerment. Literacy programmes for women are often irrelevant, do not respect cultural issues or are not linked with broader participation in society.

Ms Stephens underlined the need for pathways between non-formal and formal learning – avoiding dead-end literacy programmes with unsustainable results. Referring to Cuba's success in universalizing literacy in the 1960s, she remarked that such efforts require full mobilization, ambitious targets, diverse approaches and flexible strategies.

The **Chairman of the Indian NGO Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Mr Abdul Wahab**, noted that education, including literacy promotion, is the basis for other opportunities for lifelong learning, and that rural populations, who play a central role in agricultural production, need basic competences to maintain product quality, avoid exploitation and remain competitive. Women and their families are able to improve financial management with literacy, and digital literacy is now a key means of reaching excluded populations. He questioned whether adequate resources would be made available for literacy efforts in rural areas.

The **Vice-Minister of Education of Bolivia, Mr Noel Aguirre**, explained that literacy in Bolivia was previously side-lined but now has a central place in national policy. The literacy rate is at its highest level ever and literacy promotion is part of the National Development Plan, linked with family life and social policy – all part of the vision of *La Bolivia Digna* (Bolivia with dignity). The Vice-Minister also linked literacy with natural resource management, political life, cultural plurality, and accountability in policy and planning. Already part of the education system for the last ten years, literacy programmes for adults now include learning at the equivalent of secondary level. Community libraries and the local production of mother-tongue materials by indigenous groups are part of efforts to bring literacy closer to local needs.

6. Launch of the Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL)

Mr Arne Carlsen, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, presented the rationale, objectives and mechanisms of the newly launched Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL).

Rationale: Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Incheon Declaration, the GAL will set literacy in the context of lifelong learning. It's ambitious goal is that of the UN General Assembly – a world with universal literacy.

Objectives: Primary among the GAL's objectives is to link literacy learning with other domains and to harness the potential of ICTs; to do this it will seek to engage with a much broader range of stakeholders than previously.

Mechanisms: the GAL will build hubs for convergence on literacy issues, as well as regional networks. UIL will serve as the secretariat of the GAL.

More on the Global Alliance for Literacy at <http://www UIL.unesco.org/literacy/global-alliance-for-literacy>.

HRH Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands and UNESCO Special Envoy on Literacy for Development, called for optimism despite the fact there had been failures in the past. Her Royal Highness noted that in literacy:

- There are many good existing initiatives but they are fragmented.
- We should not just share what we do not know in order to solve issues.
- Without literacy no society can function.
- There are an infinite set of different contexts.

Literacy is the precondition for success and this idea needs to be backed with available data. This issue affects everyone and everywhere including Europe where many youth and adults still cannot read and write.

The GAL will play a catalytic and umbrella role to harness political power and put literacy high on the political agenda. In order to do this there is a need to “package” science for politicians, and to move on from conventional thinking to imagine literacy provision wherever learning takes place. As Einstein said, "We cannot solve problems with the same mentality that created them."

Mr Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Education of Senegal, underlined that African countries are multilingual and so must literacy programmes be. The use of African languages in home and community is not paralleled in government where official languages are used. High rates of illiteracy will continue as long a language is used in learning which is not that used at home. The solution is not to replace one language with another but to use both. Using a truly multilingual approach is a way to make sure that literacy will be integrated into the social and economic aspects of life in ways that makes sense to people.

In welcoming the GAL initiative, the Minister asked what role regional organizations would play. They give more attention to formal than non-formal education but there is a need for support across sectors and countries in the promotion of literacy, particularly in planning and monitoring. ADEA, CEDEAO, UMOA and other sub-regional organizations have a key part to play.

The Director-General of the Arab League's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Mr Abdullah Hamad Muhareb, asked participants to focus on ‘illiteracy’ rather than ‘literacy’ since the challenge is so huge. If, in 50 years, we have not reached the goals we set, is it because education and culture are side-lined. In the Arab region, 13 million children have never been to school, overwhelmingly because of conflict. Lack of education and literacy are some of the reasons for the tragic conditions in the Arab region

“*Reading the future*”?... there is unfortunately no future to read in the region. The root of the problem is political will, and we must be careful of public statistics which may not be trustworthy.

In welcoming the GAL initiative, the Director-General said there was little basis to speak of an alliance in the Arab region although sharing information, identifying plans, building capacity and adopting innovative methods could bear fruit. One approach was to work with parents who don't send their children to school but unfortunately some sent their children to work instead in order to support the family.

Reactions from the participants reflected the need to identify and address the real issues: improving relations between stakeholders, building democratic processes which favour transparency, and recognizing that universal literacy is not a sufficient condition for peace.

The **Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova**, officially launched the GAL, highlighting shared beliefs regarding the power of literacy as a force for transformation in knowledge societies and an ever more connected world. Literacy is a key element to combat poverty, advance gender equality, improve family health, protect the environment and promote democratic participation. She acknowledged efforts made across the world and stressed what remained to be done to achieve the SDGs. She called for new holistic and inter-sectoral approaches, and new partnerships for innovation to give a fresh impulse to the promotion of literacy. The GAL embraces this objective within the 2030 Agenda and gathers Members States, UN agencies, donors, the private sector, civil society and others together with a common goal. The GAL is a key way to share knowledge and lessons learned to generate intersectoral synergies and, as described in the latest GEM Report, to put education as a key element to achieve the SDGs. She closed by inviting all countries, partners, CSOs, universities and media to join the GAL.

7. UNESCO International Literacy Prize award ceremony

The Literacy Prizes are the oldest UNESCO prizes in education, and the 2016 theme was *Innovation in literacy*. Since 1967, more than 475 programmes undertaken by governments, NGOs and individuals have been awarded the Prizes. After 50 years of literacy promotion, the **Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova**, emphasized that ILD 2016 is a key moment to recognize innovation, reward commitment and renew the determination to ensure literacy for all within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and specifically regarding SDG 4 which seeks to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. Universal literacy is the common goal to be achieved through collaboration, creativity, the right policies, commitment and resources. This year's Literacy Prizes reward programmes which, by improving access, encouraging persistence, developing relevant learning, and mobilizing funding, provide learners with a pathway to lifelong learning within a continuum of proficiency levels and a wider set of key competencies needed for life, work and sustainable development.

The Ambassadors to UNESCO from Korea and China introduced the awards and congratulated the winners.

The UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize was awarded to:

- the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia of the Mahidol University in Thailand for its programme 'Patani Malay-Thai Bi/Multilingual Education Project'; a quality literacy provision in a conflict zone for 9 years.

- the Center for Knowledge Assistance and Community Development's programme "Books for rural areas of Viet Nam"; 9 000 libraries built in 26 provinces to reach 400,000 readers.

The UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy was awarded to:

- the South African Department of Basic Education's 'Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign'; a governmental programme which has exceeded the 4.7 million expected beneficiaries.
- the Directorate of Literacy and National Languages in Senegal for its 'National Education Programme for Illiterate Youth and Adults through ICTs'; providing around 14,000 adults (15 and over) with life-skills to promote their integration into working life.
- the Jan Shikshan Sansthan organization in Kerala, India for its programme, Vocational and Skill Development for Sustainable Development since 2006.

Each of the award-winners took the floor to present their prizewinning programmes.



8. Literacy and the sustainable development agenda

Mr David Atchoarena, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO, opened the panel session by noting that the low priority given to literacy by national policies and donor support is at odds with the positive rhetoric which is often heard. What links may develop with the sustainable development agenda?

From the context of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) support to literacy and education in Pakistan, **Ms Nazia Seher** and **Ms Chiho Ohashi** observed that 50 per cent of the population are not literate, including 25 million children who are not in school. Access and quality are key challenges, both for adults and children. Low quality schooling discourages parents from sending their children to school or keeping them there. JICA seeks to link the formal and non-formal modes of education, as well as working to create vertical connections from basic to tertiary education. In promoting literacy, links with other sectors where literacy is required and used are essential.

Both speakers stressed the high importance of partnership, not only as a practical mechanism, but as an orientation to educational work. In addition to intersectoral collaboration, coordination among donors makes for greater effectiveness and impact.

The **Director of Microsoft's Worldwide Education Strategy, Mr Steven Duggan**, pointed to the need to use technology to reach the vast numbers of people currently without access to literacy but set five essential conditions:

1. Technological solutions should not depend on a single device, but should work on multiple platforms, both those of the past and those of the future;
2. Solutions should work both on- and offline;
3. They should not only lead to the consumption of material, but also enable the production/creation of knowledge at local levels;
4. They should support the creation of mother-tongue material;
5. They should save rather than cost money. Technology should always be cost-saving.

Ms Katarina Popović, Secretary General of the International Council of Adult Education, stressed the importance of resources and the need to invest in literacy if we want to advance on the sustainable development agenda. She pointed out that national resources are not always sufficient, hence the importance of the private sector as a partner. However, states remain ultimately responsible for ensuring that everyone can achieve literacy as it is part of the human right to education.

She also made the point that despite the fact that literacy is a multi-faceted concept - there are multiple literacies - it is still measured in a uniform, dichotomous way. Levels of functional literacy are more relevant than simply limiting assessment to reading or writing; when a more differentiated scale is used, the number of people who are functionally illiterate is higher than the figures normally quoted.

The **Senior Coordinator of Education International, Mr Dennis Sinyolo**, focused on seven gaps with regard to teachers:

1. Quantity gap: not enough teachers – 3.2m more required for universal primary education;
2. Data gap: not enough data/information on how many teachers are needed;
3. Quality gap: not all teachers, including those in adult education, have appropriate training;
4. Resources gap: lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials;
5. Equity gap: majority of teachers are male so girls and women lack role models;
6. Trust gap: educators are hardly trusted today – calls to 'supervise more...' are often counter-productive, and reduce initiative and innovation by teachers;
7. Remuneration gap: teachers earn less than comparably qualified people in public and private sectors.

Mr Sinyolo went on to list seven areas of positive action to address these challenges:

1. SDGs: strategy 4c is applicable to all other education targets – more teachers are needed across the sector;
2. Professionalizing the education workforce: better trained, with minimum standards for teachers;
3. Global guidelines for benchmark minimal professional standards;
4. Equitable distribution of female and male teachers and across rural/urban/remote contexts;

5. Empower teachers and head teachers – to create, innovate, research, and encourage peer evaluation;
6. Improve salaries and working conditions;
7. Promote social dialogue with teachers, as people who invest in the youth of society.

In the ensuing discussion, participants raised the following points:

- It is important to involve the ministries of culture and communication in any discussions related to literacy programmes as it is also part of their mandate, and the media are highly influential;
- Partnerships are important for supporting projects that help literacy and for ensuring that resources for implementation are identified and mobilized;
- Numeracy is as important a concept and skill as literacy;
- The GAL should provide conceptual and terminological clarity to facilitate the discussion and implementation of programmes (e.g. terms such as functional literacy);
- Political will to promote literacy will depend on what kind of society and what kind of education we wish to develop.

9. Enhancing an evidence base for literacy: data, statistics and research

Professor Dan Wagner, UNESCO Chair in Literacy and Learning of the University of Pennsylvania, introduced the session by asking how literacy can best be measured and the data best used.

The **Director of the Global Education Monitoring Report, Mr Aaron Benavot**, noted that strong progress had been made in measuring literacy over the last decade and that the question now was how to link literacy to progress in the Sustainable Development Goals. Studies have established links with



the six areas of the SDGs: planet, prosperity, people, peace, place and partnership. In the new SDG agenda, ecological/environmental and technological literacy will be of central importance. The mutually reinforcing aspects of literacy and other domains of development – health, infrastructure (such as electrification), women’s realisation of their rights, political participation are documented. An underlying principle in establishing these linkages is the understanding of literacy as a continuum and of its connections with the learning of other skills. Two conclusions flow from discussion of these connections:

- How can the complex links and correlations between literacy and other domains best be measured?
- How can these connections best be leveraged to enlarge the concept of literacy and engage actors in other domains?

More on the Global Education Monitoring Report at <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>.

The Director of the Education Indicators and Analysis Section of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Mr Albert Motivans, drew attention to the need to be clear about what existing

data say about literacy and whether they are appropriate for the intended purposes. Data over the last 50 years show that countries have advanced at quite different paces, a phenomenon that requires explanation. With regard to the monitoring processes around the sustainable development agenda, it will be essential to monitor links between literacy learning outcomes and equity and inclusion and to disaggregate data by gender, locality, income, and disability. The GAL can play a key role in fostering coordination of monitoring processes.

Improving the quality of literacy data should be at the heart of national education agendas, along with clarity on how data will be used and by whom. The SDGs span many sectors, and so a much more diverse group of stakeholders than in the past will need to be involved in collecting and utilizing data.

More on literacy statistics at <http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Pages/default.aspx>

Mr William Thorn, Senior Analyst in the Directorate for Education and Skills of the OECD, presented the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) which focused on basic skills, including literacy (reading), numeracy, problem-solving and computer manipulation among adults in OECD member countries initially. Other countries were included in subsequent rounds of data collection, and the question arises whether it can be applied in middle and low-income countries.

PIAAC results showed that few people in the countries surveyed were completely illiterate, but that a significant proportion had only a low level of literacy inadequate for more complex texts and for extracting information from them. The results also showed correlations between literacy and employment, levels of health, participation in public life and volunteering, and social activities. Currently, the OECD, the World Bank, UNESCO and UIL are working on a short-form questionnaire which could be administered as part of household surveys, thus putting more countries on the PIAAC benchmark.

Mr Mahmoud Abdessamih, Director-General of the National Agency for the Fight against Illiteracy in Morocco, explained the development and application of the RAMAA research programme¹ to assess the value added by literacy programmes. Using a baseline test to assess initial levels of learners before attending a literacy programme, a further test was administered at the end to assess achievement. The experience of RAMAA gave rise to a number of issues and questions:

- Most surveys only assess reading, not the full scope of literacy;
- How can surveys move beyond numbers to address concerns such as identity, culture and the self-perceptions of learners?
- Beyond quantitative and qualitative data, how can surveys focus more on impact?
- Speed of comprehension is also a useful indicator;
- How can RAMAA be sustainably integrated into the national education evaluation system?
- How can we achieve reliable data on people who are literate and those who are not?
- What kind of innovation is necessary to produce more precise data?

Participants stressed the importance of writing as part of literacy, called for ways to measure the intangible benefits of literacy and appealed for a strong emphasis on assessing impact.

¹ Recherche-action sur la mesure des apprentissages des bénéficiaires des programmes d'alphabétisation/Action Research: Measuring Literacy Programme Participants' Learning Outcomes

10. Closing session

Mr Qian Tang, UNESCO Assistant Director-

General for Education,

closed the conference by recalling that lessons learned over the last 50 years should inform the strategies to achieve the ambitious plan set by the international community for the next 15 years. He underscored the collective commitment to a vision of literacy which, as part of education, is a fundamental human right, foundational to lifelong learning, and a driver for sustainable development. He

recognized the diversity of learning needs, learning settings and literacies and the importance of literacy in realising every one of the SDGs. This will require not only the innovative use of ICTs and other approaches, but above all strong intersectoral collaboration and partnerships, for which the GAL will play a major role.

