

**Hundred and sixtieth Session**

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**IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE FRAMEWORK  
FOR ACTION OF THE WORLD EDUCATION FORUM IN DAKAR**

**SUMMARY**

Pursuant to 159 EX/Decision 3.2.1, this brief report presents UNESCO's follow-up activities to the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000).

Decision required: paragraph 20.

1. The World Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000, reaffirmed the leadership role of UNESCO in the Education for All movement. UNESCO acquired in Dakar not only a bolstered mandate but also a responsibility of the first order. Now the Organization has to reinforce its unique profile: its capacity to mobilize both the political will of governments and the commitment of civil society.
2. UNESCO has taken up this challenge by reorganizing its Secretariat and by adjusting and streamlining Major Programme I (30 C/5) in accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action and the results of a broad consultation among Professional staff members of the Education Sector. An informal technical secretariat was established under the ADG/ED a.i. to coordinate follow-up activities to the Dakar Forum. It comprises some 10 Professional staff members drawn from all parts of the Education Sector. In parallel, the ED/EFA and ED/BAS Divisions have merged and the secretariat of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All was disbanded as of 17 July 2000 (Framework for Action, Articles 12-21).
3. The Steering Committee of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All was dissolved in late June. The Director-General addressed the Committee and thanked its members for their valuable contribution to the EFA movement over the past 10 years. The Director-General also met twice with the Chairman of the Committee, who shared with him

the recommendations on follow-up to the Dakar Forum made by the members of the Committee at its last meeting in June.

4. An intersectoral strategic group, comprising ADGs, Directors of UNESCO institutes, Directors of Divisions in the Education Sector and Directors of Regional Offices, was also established to coordinate follow-up activities and to ensure that the Dakar Framework for Action is reflected in all relevant UNESCO activities (Framework for Action, Article 20).

5. A draft action plan has been prepared (covering the period from August 2000 to August 2002). It is currently being sent to the relevant partners for comment. It outlines concrete modalities for implementing the Dakar Framework for Action at national, regional and international levels. It also includes implementation arrangements and budget estimates varying between US \$8 million and US \$10 million. While a very limited number of activities of the draft action plan have already been budgeted within UNESCO's Programme and Budget for 2000-2001, most financial requirements will have to be met by existing or additional voluntary financial contributions from our major partners.

6. In this regard the Director-General will soon decide on the best possible modality to accommodate voluntary financial contributions, after consulting the relevant central services. The Director-General also wishes to invite UNESCO's partners to inform him about their willingness to financially support the implementation of the action plan.

7. UNESCO's priorities are clear and three-fold. The first priority is to focus on action at country level, thereby ensuring that the developing countries play the role of prime movers in the implementation of UNESCO's Action Plan; the second is to strengthen cooperation with bilateral and multilateral donor agencies; and the third is to improve partnerships with non-governmental organizations and ensure the synergy of all stakeholders in the Education for All movement (Framework for Action, Article 9).

8. UNESCO is also preparing a position paper describing how education and, in particular, Education for All programmes can contribute concretely to poverty eradication strategies. It will be instrumental in assisting Member States to give education greater centrality in poverty reduction strategies, particularly within the framework of the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

9. To further reflect on how to rationalize and intensify the flow of financing in favour of basic education, UNESCO has engaged in a broad consultation with bilateral donor agencies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the G-8 countries, the European Commission, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Paris Club. Issues raised include: how to reinforce mechanisms for forecasting aid flow; how to improve the statistical evaluation and reporting of these flows; how to increase coordination among donors in the field of financing, at country level; how to deal with the problem of debt relief and debt cancellation, and its impact on all aspects of basic education; how to optimize utilization of SWAP mechanisms, etc. (Framework for Action, Article 11).

10. As a concrete result of these consultations, the G-8 countries made specific reference to the Dakar Framework for Action in the final communiqué of the July meeting in Okinawa, Japan. It reaffirmed the commitment made in Dakar, stating that "no government seriously committed to achieving education for all will be thwarted in this achievement by lack of resources ... We therefore commit ourselves to strengthen efforts bilaterally and together with international organizations and private sector donors to achieve the goals of universal primary education by 2015 and gender equality in schooling by 2005".

11. UNESCO also ensured that the Dakar Framework for Action was on the agenda of recent international conferences such as Beijing+5, Copenhagen+5 and the meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

12. Based on the experience acquired during the global EFA 2000 Assessment, which preceded the Dakar Forum, guidelines for country action have been prepared and are currently being discussed with relevant EFA stakeholders. These guidelines will help countries to “get down to work” and, in particular, to establish national coordination committees (Framework for Action, Article 16).

13. Two follow-up mechanisms will be established to serve as levers for political commitment, and for technical and financial resource mobilization (Framework for Action, Articles 19 and 20):

- (i) The Director-General will convene a high-level informal group of some 20 to 25 individuals, including representatives of developing countries, of donor countries and of multilateral aid agencies. The objective of the group will be to sustain and accelerate the political momentum created at Dakar. Its first meeting will take place before the first anniversary of the Dakar Forum.
- (ii) A working group on Education for All, more technical in nature, will be responsible for discussing and supervising the implementation of the Dakar follow-up activities and will provide technical guidance for the EFA movement as a whole, create and sustain partnerships, support regional and subregional networks, and ensure coordination between the diverse inter-agency initiatives related to EFA. It will also facilitate donor coordination at all levels. This group will comprise some 30 representatives of developing countries, and bilateral and multilateral agencies, as well as representatives of civil society, from regional networks, OECD and the G-8. It will be chaired by UNESCO’s Assistant Director-General for Education and will hold its first meeting in November 2000.

14. UNESCO will promote the consolidation of a series of inter-agency flagship programmes that respond to objectives set in Dakar. The programmes will cover a number of strategic areas crucial to achieving the Education for All goals, *inter alia*, early childhood development, girls’ education, literacy, education in emergencies, HIV/AIDS and health issues.

15. Monitoring the state of basic education in the world plays a key role in UNESCO’s Action Plan. The Organization is pursuing the setting up of an observatory to evaluate progress achieved in Education for All. This observatory function will be confided to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Its objective will be to collect, analyse and disseminate the quantitative and qualitative information on the state of education that countries, regions and the international community need in order to monitor progress towards the goals of Education for All. Regular assessment will enable governments to review and amend national policies as necessary to ensure that the EFA goals are achieved in all countries and as soon as possible. Among other innovations, the Institute will develop an “EFA development index” that will bring together several pertinent indicators as regards progress towards the objective of Education for All; new indicators will be developed, making it possible to tackle more precisely questions of quality, results, etc. (Framework for Action, Article 19).

16. The Action Plan proposes to organize regular regional and subregional technical meetings, enabling all EFA stakeholders to discuss the regions’ needs, financial mobilization

and modalities for cooperation. During the period 2000-2002, regional meetings will be organized in Africa and South Asia, as well as a meeting of the E-9 countries. It is planned that these meetings address both policy and technical issues, including coordination of existing/new networks.

17. Extensive consultations have taken place with the heads of the other convening agencies of the World Education Forum (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank). Discussions focused on the draft action plan mentioned above and on inter-agency cooperation on EFA, including the questions of membership of the working group on Education for All, financial contributions to Dakar follow-up, inter-agency flagship programmes and secondment of staff to UNESCO. The Secretary-General of the United Nations and permanent delegations to UNESCO have also been informed about UNESCO's follow-up activities.

18. In order to build on the momentum created at Dakar and to reinforce UNESCO's leadership role in EFA, a well-planned communications strategy is currently under preparation. The Education Sector and the new Bureau of Public Information will cooperate closely in the implementation of the communication strategy.

19. UNESCO has given much importance to the dissemination of World Education Forum documents. The Dakar Framework for Action, the accompanying Extended Commentary and the Final Report of the Dakar Conference will be available in the six official languages of the United Nations. Most language versions are already available on the World Education Forum website, where the regional frameworks for action can also be found. The global and regional frameworks will be published together with the Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990). Twelve thematic studies on educational issues of global concern, prepared for the EFA 2000 Assessment, are currently being prepared for publication in a revised format in English and French. All documents will be widely disseminated to all EFA constituencies. They will also be available on UNESCO's website.

20. In light of the foregoing the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Having examined document 160 EX/8,
2. Welcomes the Report on the Follow-up to the World Education Forum in Dakar;
3. Reaffirms its commitment to the importance and centrality of the follow-up to the World Education Forum in UNESCO's education programme;
4. Invites the Director-General to continue to give high priority to this follow-up, including the coordination dialogue with all the relevant partners;
5. Requests the Director-General, when preparing the next Medium-Term Strategy (31 C/4) and Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (31 C/5), to take into account the views formulated in document 160 EX/8 as well as those expressed during the debate relating to the follow-up of the World Education Forum in Dakar.